

**The Thai Government's Policy towards Minorities; a Case Study of Southern
Provinces 2001-2013**

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for award of the degree of*

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

SUNAINA



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DECLARATION

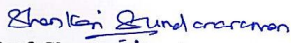
I declare that the dissertation entitled "THE THAI GOVERNMENT'S POLICY TOWARDS MINORITIES; A CASE STUDY OF SOUTHERN PROVINCES 2001-2013" submitted by me for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this university or any other university.



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CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.


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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AHRC: Asia Human Rights Commission

ASEAN: Association of Southeast Asian Nations

BNPP Patani National Liberation Front (Barisan Nasional Pembebasan

BRN National Revolution Front (Barisan Revolusi Nasional)

BRN-C National Revolution Front–Coordinate (Barisan Revolusi

CPM 43 Civil–Police–Military Taskforce 43

DSW: Deep South Watch

GAMPAR: United Greater Patani Malays Movement (Gabungan Melayu

GMIP: Patani Islamic Mujahidin Movement (Gerakan Mujahidin Islam

HRW: Human Rights Watch

IMT-GT: Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle

ISOC: Internal Security Operations Command

Jl: Jemaah Islamiyah

JPF: Justice for Peace Foundation

NRC: National Reconciliation Commission

OIC: Organization of the Islamic Conference

PAD: People's Alliance for Democracy

PPM: Patani People's Movement

PULO: Patani United Liberation Organization

SBPAC: Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre

UDD: United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Map of Southern Thailand:



Source: National Reconciliation Commission , Thailand

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INTRODUCTION

Thailand is a country of different ethnic communities. Along with the majority Thai Buddhist, Khmer and Mon Khmer, Malay, and many hill tribes like Hamong, Karen etc. Among all the minorities Muslims are the largest minority group. Muslims themselves in Thailand are not homogenous, as there are Chinese Muslims in North, Cambodian and South Asian Muslims in Central Thailand and Malay Muslims in South (Satha-Anand 2006). Malay Muslims are in majority in the southern part of the country which includes Yala, Pattani, Narathiwat and four districts of Songkhala province. The total population of these three districts is around 1.8 million, out of these 80% are Malay Muslims (McCargo 2014). These areas are inhabited by ethnic Malays comprising 80% of the population of the South. They speak Yawi, which is a Malay dialect. They are different from the rest of Thailand at the basis of religion, language, and ethnicity. Economically, these regions are fertile and rich in natural resources such as tin, gas and crude oil (Croissant 2005). However, these are still behind in development due to continued political turmoil. This Southern part of Thailand is facing an insurgency for last many decades. The roots of insurgency go back to history. This region was a part of Pattani kingdom which was a major centre of Islamic education and scholarship (Moorhead 1957). Later on, this kingdom became a tributary of Ayuthhya (a forerunner of the Modern Thai state). Two Anglo Siamese treaties of 1902 and 1909 resulted in the formal incorporation of these provinces in Thailand while the rest of the Pattani kingdom became a part of British Malaya. It was the treaty of 1909 that demarcated the territorial boundary between the kingdom of Siam and British colony of Malaya (Klein 1969). This accidental mapping of four provinces during colonial rule sowed the seeds of insurgency. As Amitav Acharya (2000) says,

“The political boundaries, then were drawn on the basis of geographic location of a particular people rather than their ethnic spread or loyalties and without regard for the network of overlapping hierarchies and personal allegiances existing in Southeast Asia”.

Although these treaties resulted in a political segregation of the Malays but in cultural, commercial and personal bonds between the Malay communities on either side of the border were sustained. Pattani kingdom had been a part of Siamese authority for many years, but this region does not face such conflicts as it faced in 20th and 21st century. It was this assimilation and state's policy towards it that till today, this area is facing insurgent movements. States policy or response has been an important factor in promoting or mitigating the insurgency; as it has been changing from time to time along with the nature of leadership. The period of colonization did not directly affect the sovereignty of Thailand, but indirectly it witnessed the development of a strong nation. Rama V or Chulalongkorn (1868-1910) kept the country away from the British colonial influence. Thainess or uniformity was promoted like Adat and Sharia law were replaced by civil law (Hall 1955). In this process Pattani kingdom faced an era of losing its sovereignty completely. In 1932 monarchical rule came to an end in Thailand and paved the way to democracy. Malays also obtained seats in the national assembly, but these were for a short period. The country soon came under military rule and policy of forced assimilation was still continued. Under marshal Phibun Songkhram (1938-1944) the nation building programmes were started under the slogan of "Nation, Religion, and King" where nation refers to Thai nation, religion refers to Theravada Buddhism and king to the Chakri dynasty (Mulder 2000). It led to the enforcement of cultural mandate and Siamese laws over the South. Religious holidays of Malays were abolished. Malay Muslims were prohibited from wearing traditional dress, teaching Yawi and practicing Sharia law; they were also encouraged to adopt Thai sounding names. Resettlement of Thai Buddhists was promoted and encouraged to change the demography (Aphoransuwan 2007). These efforts were perceived as state sponsored attacks against ethnic Malay identity and led to many demands from south to centre about preserving their culture and religion.

During the Second World War (1945-49) leaders from Southern Thailand supported the British in Malaya while Thai government supported the Japanese (Aldirch 1988). In this scenario British even tried to annex Pattani and Satun but due to the threat of communism and American pressure it could not do it (Waytt 1984). This period threatened the Thai government of losing the region and in response policies became

tougher. The increasing dissatisfaction due to this response led to a more structured conflict. Many organizations emerged in coming decades like GAMPAR (Gabungan Melayu Pattani Raya) in 1940s, BRN (Barisan Revolusi Nasional) and BNPP (Barisan Nasional Pembebasan) in the early 1960s and 1970s respectively, PULO (Pattani United Liberated Organization) in the late 1960s, GMIP (Gerakan Mujahideen Islamia Patani) in mid 1980s etc. But the state's policy under Phibun's successors continued the unification and efforts regarding language and education system etc. It kept on making these areas more apprehensive about asserting their culture and identity.

It was in 1980s that Thai government took some different attitude towards this region under the prime ministership of Prem Tinsulanonda (1980-1988). For the first time state recognized this problem as a political one. Now a kind of real democratization was seen in this area. Focus of the state was on assuaging local grievances, developing the South's economy and improving coordination (Storey 2007). Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre (SBPAC) was established for this purpose. It is still an authority to look after the implementation of socio-economic development projects and to communicate between locals and the centre (Patrick 2007). Palace also implemented development projects. In 1990s democratic government formulated National Security Policy for South. At the central level armed forces were withdrawn from politics in 1992 and amnesties were offered to separatists. Under this full democratic government Malay Muslims entered in national political mainstream. All these combined factors resulted in a sudden decrease in violence. By the end of the decade insurgency was judged to be quelled.

But in the early years of 21st century, these speculations went wrong. It was a period when international outrage was there against Muslim jihad after 9\11 attacks in 2001 on America. Thai government supported America's war against terrorism, which was perceived against Islam in the South. War on drugs in 2003 also fuelled the situation. It was to eradicate the illegal drug use, but its implementation was highly criticized as it resulted in the loss of common men in the South (Mutebi 2004). In the year 2004 a strong reemergence of the conflict was seen when militants attacked Thai authorities and the army, which state handled in a heavy handed manner (Storey 2007). Thaksin government (2001-06) relied only on military and security measures. Martial law was declared there

in the South in 2005. The responsibility of the region's security was transferred to police from army. Both these policies exacerbated the situation (Albritton 2005). Meanwhile, two major incidents of atrocities by police on Krue se Mosque and Tak Bai were highly condemned even at the global level and attacks of militants were increased. Later on Thaksin government was overthrown in a bloodless coup in 2006. Political scenario was changed along with the policies towards the conflict.

In 2006-07 General Surayud became interim Prime Minister. He adopted a more conciliatory approach to end the violence. He even publicly apologized for the Tak Bai incident. But it could not mitigate the intensity of the problem because no comprehensive political solution was given to this conflict (Askew 2008). Even after emphasizing on reconciliation, the government used military security measures (Harish and Liow 2007). From 2008-2011 democratic party was in power and Abhisit Vejjajiva became the new Prime Minister. This government also realized that political resolutions were necessary and pledged to resolve the conflict but failed to check the violence (Storey 2008). Southern most provinces were still under emergency imposed since 2005. The process of peace dialogues was dismissed. A report (2010) made by International Crisis Group also mentions, "no serious attempts had been made to explore possible methods within the principle of a unitary Thai State". From 2012 onwards Yingluck Sinawatra's period also made some promises like to establish an economic zone in south, to abolish the controversial emergency decree and new governance arrangements were also discussed, but due to political disturbances, many of these were left only on paper as the treacherous political environment has constrained it to work (McCargo 2014). This government faced a coup in 2013. And during this political instability issues of conflict were at the periphery.

This brief analysis of state policy shows that separatist sentiments were present from the very beginning. Further, these sentiments took the form of insurgency due to Bangkok's lack of its real understanding, maladministration, poor governance and political marginalization of its people. Political instability is an important factor in this regard. Yala Narathiwat and Pattani are economically poor provinces. One cannot deny that there was also a time when many administrative and political measures had helped in

controlling it, but a comprehensive policy is lacking till now. There are many factors that control the state's response, whether related to the history or geography of the region (most of the southern regions share border with Malaysia) or national politics, state's perception of the conflict etc. But the thing is this conflict is still simmering and its intensity is a threat to the state, domestically as well as internationally.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Conflict in Southern Thailand is the outcome of the multiplicity of factors such as ethnicity, religion, history which are often fuelled by poor governance and fear of losing identity. This multiplicity provides a variety of literature. Assimilation of Pattani kingdom triggered some rebels in early 1920s, but it was after Second World War that the conflict had emerged in a more structured form and it continues till today. So the literature covers a long span of period. For this study the reviewed literature is from 1990s onwards and is focused on the period from 2001-2013.

The literature available on this issue can be divided into these three categories:

1. Theoretical interpretation of separatist conflicts
2. Nature of the Conflict in Southern Thailand
3. State's perception and its policies

Theoretical interpretation of Separatist conflicts

Many separatist conflicts are directly linked to the concept of the modern state which emerged with the treaty of Westphalia, where the most important tenet of state was territorial boundaries, in later periods one more tenet was added that was an identity which came as the form of 'Nation'. The boundaries in many regions, especially in the global south were decided secretly which did not address ethnicity many times and have created many conflicts. In the era of globalization, it seemed that boundaries will disappear along with many conflicts related to them. But its impact on these conflicts is not as straightforward as it seemed. As Marie and Nagashpour (2008) say that globalization has many aspects some of them increase and some of them decrease the

conflicts. These aspects are various like economic changes, growing diplomatic relations, NGOs, etc. Nationalism and ethnic conflicts also have connections. Wirsing (2010) discusses two schools about it. One is realist pessimists who argue that ethnic separatism will challenge the countries as it is an effort to break up nations. They give example of Europe till the second world war, which, is triumph of ethno- nationalist ideology ; second is liberal optimists who argue that ethnic hatred is constructed by elite manipulations but governments have to learn lessons and many alternative solutions must be used otherwise the world would be in small pieces.

In the book “Fixing Fractured Nations”(2010) it is discussed that general reasons of these conflicts are complex mix of history, ethnicity, religion fuelled by poor governance, which leads to economic deprivation, poor education, marginalization of ethnic minorities and alienation from the dominant society. The book mentions that it is quite common in many separatist ethnic communities that government policies have created dissatisfaction which leads to slow rise of separatist’s sentiments culminating in full blown independence movements. This book presents a view that only political solutions for these problems can make situations easier for multiethnic countries. David Galula also argues in his book “Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice” (1964) that three principles should be considered while dealing with insurgency. First is that military action should not be the main form of action. Military operations can only prepare the stage for the further development of counter insurgent actions. Second; primary goal should be to win the hearts of the neutral majority as insurgency can only be liquidated by obtaining the active support of the population. It should be followed by fair local elections for self-government which Galula mentions as a constructive part of counterinsurgency. And third is insurgencies never collapse early and seeking political options to address the conflict outrights the country’s dependency on a military approach.

Term ‘Insurgency’ itself has become an issue of debate among academicians. It is being interpreted in a diversified manner according to the changing international political scenarios. During the times of cold war ‘insurgency’ was usually seen as a part of communism. Besides cold war, in many parts of the world anti colonial movements were also occurring. Both these types of movement were about overthrowing the current governments for political power. It was defined as organized violent activities against

state. The objectives were to overthrow the power of state by use of guerilla warfare. But afterwards, these definitions could not fit to all sorts of insurgencies. New liberal broad definitions of insurgencies came soon after. In his work North (2008) explains that how these definitions were very narrow for contemporary times. According to North (2008) these kind of earlier labeled “organized movement” were very less but these movements had taken many new forms such as extremists, gangs, militias or combination of many. These movements are not necessarily in an organized manner, but they have different objectives and motivations. These movements are divided by area, composition and their objectives which are loose sometimes for the sake of survival only. Keeping all these factors together North came with a new liberal definition, “a violent struggle among state and non state actors for legitimacy and/or influence over relevant populations”. Aschew (2010) explains the nature of Southern Thailand insurgency while saying that this insurgency includes all the characteristics of both classical and revised definitions such as; (a) ideology or legitimacy claims in support of their actions, (b) an organization (loose or decentred), (c) guerrilla style of war. Many security and research analysts also interpreted it as a counter term for terrorism (which is linked with jihad). In this way insurgency in Southern Thailand can be understood. During the attacks on Bali in 2003, it was often considered that terrorism has spread its influence over transnational boundaries in Southeast Asia and Thailand was considered a part of this. But soon many researches and nature of attacks both proved that it is not a part of jihad but has a local nature.

Nature of the Conflict in Southern Thailand

The real nature of the conflict is an issue of debate among scholars. In a variety of manners this conflict has been explained. The available literature is very vast as this problem is very old. But there are some common arguments that try to explain its nature, such as Jihad or Islamic revivalism and transnational conflict, a mere result of Socio-economic grievances and exclusions and in a few places as tensions among the Bangkok political elite have been the issues

Many scholars have tried to explain the conflict through global terrorism and jihadist’s angle, especially after Bali attacks (2002) in Indonesia. Mullins talks about

many transnational linkages in variety of forms like sponsorships of developmental infrastructure and other basic amenities, in media technology etc. Abuza (2011) also links it with global jihad. He has proved this linkage with a series of articles and books. Sources behind all these articles are talks with Thai security forces, who portrayed the insurgency as jihad. Abuza argued that there was reason to be suspicious that the southern insurgency was linked to Al Qaeda funding networks, senior Al Qaeda operational leaders, and Al Qaeda local leaders in South East Asia. These reports were adopted by Thai government. By linking these groups as a part of global jihad was a political move. This link helped in getting more assistance from the United States. But there is not yet any concrete evidence that could explain that this region has been transformed into a new beachhead for pan-regional jihadism. The clear reason behind this argument is that this conflict has not metastasized into a broader jihadist struggle (Chalk, 2008). Many scholars give plenty of reasons behind this argument. If it was related to global terrorism, it could have spread in northern regions and there are no direct attacks over foreigners, tourist resorts etc. By contrast, Jemaah Islamiyah, which is clearly an Al Qaeda-linked terror group that has operated in Indonesia for more than a decade, has attacked western interests such as the Bali nightclub strip and the JW Marriott hotel in Jakarta. Liow and Pathan in "Confronting Ghosts" (2010) also analyze that it is more of a local conflict where JI and Al-Qaeda do not relate themselves to it. Bradford (2012) in his study also reaches to conclusion that it is because of the differences at the level of ideologies that international terrorist groups do not involve themselves in southern Thailand conflict. Nature of insurgents is widely studied. Their nature has kept on changing from the hierarchical and structured struggle of the past to a fluid and shapeless organizational structure (Liow and Pathan: 2010). The goals of the militants are unclear but they range from a simple desire to antagonize the Thais to demand for a separate state and aspirations for substantive autonomy (McCargo 2009). They conceal their identity and refrain themselves from issuing demands.

Socio-economic grievances are focused as the main factor responsible for the conflict. Economically, these regions are fertile and rich in natural resources such as tin, gas and crude oil. However, these regions are still behind in development. Report of International Crisis Group 2010 shows the justice system very clearly. It says that

physical abuse and torture of detainees continue while demands for justice for past abuses remain unanswered. Mala Sathian (2009) even talks about a new kind of rights such as human security and human rights which are still not achieved. But Jitpiromsri and Sobhonvasu (2006) in their article 'Unpacking Thailand's Southern Conflict' claim that social grievances may serve as necessary conditions behind the bloodshed as unemployment, poverty, justice system and quality of life are still not improved but the decisive factor lay in the movement's ideological beliefs. They believe that though socio economic condition is very poor, and use of the drugs made it more complex. However more references to socio-economic problems are not sufficient to understand the conflict. Ideology also offers a credible lesson for understanding the complexities of the conflict.

While sudden increase of militant attacks in 2004 favored the argument that this conflict is merely an issue between elite political group between pro-Thaksin and pro-royalists as the legitimacy of state is contested in this region. Mullins (2009) explains this argument further that the regional conflict in Thailand could be seen as a microcosm of the greater geo-politics being played out at national level. Sometimes old elite rivalry between the military and the police is manifested at local level as a sideshow of it. But McCargo claims that this is not simply a reaction against Thaksinization. Even after the period of Thaksin this conflict could not be controlled. Roots of the conflict are deep rooted and cannot be superficially fitted into the elite's debate. These different narratives about the conflict which Abraham and Nakaya (2007) call 'hybrid narratives' make the conflict difficult to name. And these hybrid narratives produce different type of understanding of the purpose and meaning of violence in Southern Thailand.

State's Perception And Policy

It is observed by many scholars that state does not perceive the problem in its real form. Its nature is played down, misrepresented and inaccurately characterized. Many a times Thai military claims that these violent incidents are normal crimes but Srisompomb and McCargo (2010) in their article "The Southern Thailand Conflict Six Years On: Insurgency not Just Crime" argue that all these manipulations are given to validate

tougher security measures in the area. The insurgency is fueled by political frustrations. The core grievances are political not religious or socio-economic. The Thai state suffers from a legitimacy deficit in the south. This argument is accepted by many scholars. Liow (2009) also agrees with this point while explaining the security issues regarding this conflict. Liow argues that the Thai government is unable to control the situation, so the search of reason is continuously preoccupied with the Islamic component and role of outsiders in spite of recognizing the complex reality on the ground. And if this situation of misinformed policy is continued it may lead to alienate the South and which may result in creating a suitable environment for international terrorist movements to establish here. He firmly continues that situation in the South has been aggravated by repeated failures on the part of government security agencies and intelligence to gather the credible information. Abraham and Nakaya (2007) also analyze the misinterpretation by the state. They argue that conflict related knowledge is that it comes from many direct sources and is duplicated across state agencies and synthesized in different ways to become the basis of its own actions.

The state's response or policy has been changing from time to time. Both forced assimilation and conciliatory approach are considered appropriate to deal with the conflict. Many research scholars believe that governance is an important factor. Ian Storey in his article "Ethnic Separatism in Southern Thailand: Kingdom Fraying at the Edge" claims that by the late 1980s, it was Thai authorities that defeated the separatist insurgency while the administration of Thaksin served only to fuel the violence and increase the distrust between Malay Muslims and Thai authorities. Mark Askew (2008) argues that there are many key political/discursive, and operational/military reasons for the failure. Militant's political efforts continue to exploit the state's mistakes. Government of Abhijit came with promising reforms like Southern cabinet, judicial reforms and localization of security measures, etc. but none of them were introduced (McDermott: 2012). It failed to make any concrete policy shift in the south (Asia Report: 2008). Later on in mid 2011 Yingluck Shinawatra was elected which initially planned to establish an economic zone in south, to abolish the controversial emergency decree and new governance arrangements were also discussed but due to political disturbances many of these were left only on paper. Reasons for failure are highly centralized administrative

structure, rigid national identity and old fashioned bureaucratic outlook. All these factors affect in analyzing the problem as well as policy formulation and implementation. This also makes it difficult for Thai leaders to understand the political dimension of the conflict. They kept on increasing the budget of army. McCargo in his article “Mapping National Anxieties” says that communities in the south feel that despite the vast budget only little benefit is gained in terms of enhanced security or economic assistance. This vast budget itself works as a hindrance to the military’s attempt to search for a solution to the problem, which will stop these budgetary incentives.

The state’s policy in terms of autonomy for the region has got enough attention of many scholars. It is observed that some form of political autonomy or decentralization is required, but it is considered against royal prestige in Thailand as all see it with deeply related to the pride of nation as Mala Sathian (2009) has correctly said that national (Thai) identity has been the core of state policy. It is always considered as ‘off the table’ since the Thai constitution specifies the country an indivisible unitary state. To advocate autonomy could be considered a treasonous act of disrespect towards monarchy (McCargo 2009). But few people like Parwase Wasi, Srisompob and Chavalit Yonghaiyudh have proposed different forms of autonomy for this region. Their proposals show three types of approaches towards autonomy. McCargo (2010) explains them as

- Regionalization
- Administrative reform
- Devolution.

Regionalization advocates to a small number of regions with greater authority, while devolution emphasizes on creating new representative mechanisms at the local or regional level. In general all these proposals suggest that the region had to be urgently restructured. But Thai elite views any kind of autonomy as a potential threat to integration and national security. McCargo points out many obstacles in the way of autonomy for the region such as; constitutional barriers, linguistic barriers, lack of political will, lack of clarity about the demands of militants and lack of sympathy for Malay Muslims, fear of being accused of disloyalty etc. Though many scholars have

agreed on the argument that this problem needs a political solution, but there are many hindrances to this as discussed above.

This study will try to critically analyze the state's policies for this conflict by putting them in different categories. It will look at the new dimensions of the conflict and how state is managing with these situations. By analyzing these two threads together, it would be easier to understand why till now the insurgency is not under control and what could be the possible solutions in this scenario.

The available literature throws light over many aspects of the conflict, whether it is the roots of the conflict, its transnational aspects, religious aspects, nature of militants etc. but it is observed that how the state is handling the conflict is not been holistically discussed to reach at the possible future solution. The politics of Thailand itself has been very dynamic. Instability of many governments, short term of governments, changing nature of government itself, etc. are some critical issues that affect the insurgency indirectly, are less focused in the studies. The pillars of government policy are not comprehensively mentioned. This study, while looking at the changing nature of the conflict will try to find out how the state perceives and responses to it. It will also look at the possible solutions.

DEFINITION, RATIONALE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The state of Thailand has adopted different types of policies towards this conflict from very heavy handed to liberal and sometimes conciliatory. This changing nature of policies will be well analyzed in the study, which will not only help in understanding the factors that affect the policy makers but also future prospects and possible solutions to the problem. Thailand is a constitutional monarchy. This study uses the term state policy, and state means monarch and government (after 1932). The monarch is also an integral part of "state" and is involved many times in developmental projects in the country. Here in the proposed study state generally means government; whenever study will mention the works of the monarch, these will be notified exclusively. The conflict's nature is very much related to ethnicity. Ethnic identity itself is a very complicated term which has been

widely studied. Here ethnicity in the study simply means collective identity and which is based on the assumption that a collectivity has its roots in common ancestry, heritage, religion, culture, nationality, language and a territory. Choosing a topic about such insurgency is of much relevance in today's international political scenario. As the ethnic conflicts have a long history, but protracted experiences still has not come out as a useful guide to look for viable approaches to resolve the ethnic matters. It is noteworthy that whatever course or shape these conflicts will take, are going to obviously impact political scenario of Asia. It also impacts the national and regional security so the study will help in understanding these issues also.

This study will focus basically the three areas in southern Thailand Yala, Pattani and Narathiwatt and four provinces of Songkhala province. Though the conflict in this region has a long historical background as these areas belonging to Malay ethnicity were included in Thai empire, but time period taken for this study is 2001-2013. It will help in focusing on the aspects of the conflict and state policy over more than one decade. The time frame is appropriate to the study. Violence emerged with a renewed intensity in late 2001. This year witnessed a terrorist attack over America and Thai government stepped up counterterrorism cooperation with the US. Over the few next years Thai government supported the US war in Iraq and Afghanistan also. This step was unpopular as the Thai Muslims and Malay Muslims perceived it as a war against Islam. And suddenly 2004 militant attacks indicated the level of conflict that was present. So it can be said that the low intensity violent conflict has been under way in South Thailand since late 2001, with violence increasing sharply after January 2004. In the year 2013 political unrest in Thailand hindered the process of governance. The religious nature of this conflict is an issue of debate among scholars. This study does not deeply analyze this part of the conflict as this part is itself very vast to work on. Due to the lack of time it would be appropriate to limit the study of the state's policy. This would be analyzed under three categories: administrative and political, socio-economic and security measures.

RESEARCH PROBLEMS

The thesis will seek to answer these problems:

- Does the absence of stable and independent political institutions help in increasing the intensity of insurgency?
- What are the various state and non statefactors that work behind the formation of various policies of government for this region?
- What are the motivations behind this insurgstorical process and how historical processes had helped in development of these motivations?
- How does the state perceives this conflict and to what extent, there are possibilities of autonomy for the region?
- How does the conflict itself has impacted the state and people of Southern Thailand?

HYPOTHESIS

- Thailand's historical experience of security determines a different approach to national unity whichlimits the prospectsfor autonomy in the South.
- The nature of national politics and leadership influences the nature of the policies on the ground in Southern Thailand

This study will use both analytical and descriptive methods. This is a qualitative historical study in which both inductive and deductive methods will be used to validate the hypothesis. As the insurgency has its roots back in the glorious history of Pattani Kingdom, historical analysis of it's gradual assimilation into the Thai kingdom will help in understanding the present ideology and motivations behind insurgent organizations. Comparative analysis of historiographical patterns in the southern region, both by state and nationalist Malay Muslims will be helpful in bringing out the purpose and policies of both state and insurgents. Events like colonialism, nationalism, globalization, etc. will

help to analyze the different aspects of the conflict. These events will not only help in analyzing the data, but also in understanding the origin and typical nature of this insurgency. As it was during the period of colonialism that new concepts like state, nationalism, modernity, etc. entered into third world countries and gave birth to many sorts of problem as these countries were not ethnically homogeneous. Variables to study this conflict will be ethnicity, insurgency, colonialism, state politics, terrorism, regional security, religion, military, etc. 'Threat perception' will work as a control variable in this study. Both primary and secondary resources will be used. The data collection will include many reports published by state and non state organizations, articles, books, newspaper clippings, through libraries and other online resources.

CHAPTER 1: HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE SOUTHERN THAI CONFLICT

The present day conflict in South Thailand has its roots in history. People in the South Thailand are ethnically Malay and their religion is Islam. This region, present day Southern Thailand constituted the Patani Kingdom which was a well known empire.

Patani¹ Kingdom

Patani kingdom was constituted of present day Yala, Pattani, Narathiwat and parts of western Sonkhala. It was a flourishing kingdom and played a major role in trade and education. Shipping trade was one of the strong pillars of this kingdom. It was an important maritime port² which flourished mainly in 16th and 17th centuries (Chusiri 1980). Many Kings personally participated in these commercial activities. There were many reasons responsible for this flourishing trade. It has been a center of trade networks between India and China as it was spread at the confluence of two sea routes. This geographic location boosted the process. It was also rich in natural resources. According to Welch and Mc Neill (1989) there were three main factors that determined the historical role of Patani kingdom:

- a) Gold, tin and forest products were produced in Patani area, especially aromatic resinous wood, aloeswood, Baruscamphor, Lakawood and ebony.
- b) From Patani there were two routes to the western peninsula coast.
- c) The location of Patani made it one of the important harbours at the eastern coast. Because it was protected by Patani cape.

So Patani was a flourishing center for trade and commerce. It was famous for textiles, gold, pepper etc and it was located between important routes.

Patani was also a great centre of learning as some scholars describe it as a cradle of Islam. Pondok schools were famous for this purpose. In the period of reawakening of

¹Patani with one “t” is a Malay spelling, which is used to refer Malay Sultanate of Patani. Pattani with two “t”s is the transliteration of Thai name for the province of Pattani Province in today’s Thailand.

² Patani is known to move its location around three times. The exact location of Pattani port is still not known (Chusiri 1980).

consciousness in the twentieth century, these Pondok schools used to draw students from all over the world to Southeast Asia (Liow: 2009). In the kingdom majority of the population is Muslim.

According to a folklore, it is said that Raja Intera came under influence of one Muslim who treated him thrice of leprosy in return, he became ready to be a Muslim (Porath 2011). Following their king people also embraced Islam. Patani kingdom basically had two dynasties: Patani dynasty till 1688 and Kelantan dynasty (1688-1729). It was one of the cradles of Islam in Southeast Asia, having many popular Islamic institutions like mosque, kadi and pondok (Che Man: 1990).

Patani and Early Europeans

Europeans came in the east in search of trade opportunities. Later on, these places were converted to their colonies. In the early seventeenth century Dutch, English, Japanese and Portuguese established their trading factories in Patani. Portuguese who first landed to East in India (1497) and there they heard about the Melaka's commerce. After having a few battles with Melaka's their ships landed to Patani and for many years before the Dutch came, they were involved in trade with Patani and other merchants there (Porath 2011). Firearms were the important things that were in high demand in Patani. Under the rule of Raja Hijau of Patani Dutch also came for trade, they were the second after the Portuguese (Moorhead 1957). Earlier they had fought with Portuguese over the trade concerns in Melaka and soon Portuguese lost their grip over Melaka. So after establishing themselves in Melaka first, they contacted Patani to earn huge profits. It was a challenge for both Japanese and Portuguese (Pluvier 1974). Dutch concentrated their trade with Patani till their strong hold on Java, which later on became their colony also. In these years Patani was ruled by a strong king and reached to a higher level of prosperity and progress due to all these trade links (Porath 2011). In 1611 English merchants also got permission. For Patani people more variety of traders were quite beneficiary in the beginning. But all the Europeans started fighting among themselves out of competition.

In the year 1618 war between the Dutch and English frequently occurred (Klein 1969). But Sovereignty of Pattani was still maintained with the strong position of King Hijau.

Patani and Ayutthaya

Relationship between Patani and Ayutthaya has been a controversial issue among historians. There are basically two perspectives to look at the history of the Patani. When the history of Patani is seen from the perspective of the Ayutthaya, Patani was never an independent kingdom it was always a tributary vassal of Siam. It legally became a part of Siam after the latter was conquered and signed a treaty in 1902. So it is a history of the rebellion. On the other side many people have written Patani nationalist history, which is the history of struggle for the freedom. It presents a different view which states that Patani was a strong independent country with whom Siam even lost many wars, but with the use of many tricks Siam assimilated the kingdom by deceiving the kings (Porath 2012). After the assimilation into the Thailand, control over them has been sometimes very direct and most often indirect. Scupin (1986) describes it as galactic polity and radical polity. Galactic polity refers to the policy of Siam when Thai people themselves were involved in developing their own identity so the states at periphery remained autonomous in their socio- economic and political matters. While during the phase of radical polity Thai kingdom was involved more into inter-ethnic relations that led to the growing direct control over the South.

The kingdom of Patani in the 19th century had been in a very different situation in context of administration. The autonomy of the kingdom was facing ups and downs in this century. Ayutthaya dealt with these provinces differently and its administrative policy had been affected by the outside politics also, sometimes it was British and sometimes other Malay kingdoms. Besides these outside factors the internal situation of Ayutthaya and Patani also played a significant role in the way these provinces were dealt. Geographically Patani was far away from the center of Ayutthaya kingdom, so initially it was not actually possible to have a direct control over it, on the other hand Ayutthaya was not at that time very keen about the strategic location that it had (Waytt: 1984). Like

the other parts of the northern Malay Peninsula it also experienced alternative periods of control. These southern provinces were assimilated into the Thai kingdom during the reign of Rama I in the campaign of 1785. After this victory these Patani provinces used to just send some symbolic gifts besides military aid and port facility (Haemindra: 1976), sometimes on several occasions they even refused to pay tribute to Siam. Against Thai authorities, these provinces revolted twice, but none of them was successful. One final rebellion was when Burma attacked Ayutthaya in 1767 but it resulted in the final subjugation of the Patani. Patani's relations with Ayutthaya thereafter were like of a vassal to a suzerain.

It can be said that till this time Thai control over this kingdom was not secure. As per the administration of British, Siam also started to have both direct and indirect rule (Brown 1978). The two conflicting areas of today's Thailand north part, Monthon Phayap and a southern part, Monthon Pattani were under indirect rule as it was kept under Nakhonsrithamarat, a Thai province under the control of Kalahom (Haemindra 1977). Later this authority was shared with Sonkhla another administrative center. But all these measures could not maintain peace in the region. In 1789-1791 a series of rebellion in the South gave birth to a new policy which was to control and reduce the autonomy and power of Patani and simultaneously control became tighter (Murushima 1988). This policy was of divide and rule under which Patani kingdom was divided into seven small provinces. These smaller provinces were administered through the royal commissioner of Sonkhala. This way of administration was the same like other outer provinces of Thailand. But this division also could not stop their involvement in rebellion sometimes against Thai control and sometimes their involvement in the rebellion of the neighboring states also (Melvin 2007). But soon after the division of Kedah also for a long time these rebellions were stopped. Because Kedah was also a Malay province, which was strong and gave moral support to these other provinces. But still it can be said that these seven states were more independent in their internal matters. As Haemindra (1976) states that "As these provinces were geographically remote and bordered on foreign countries, Bangkok had to tolerate the indigenous ruler's preservation of considerable autonomous powers. It had to allow Raja's discretion in matters concerning jurisdiction and local revenue raising." It was only occasionally that they had to show their loyalty by being

present in the Thai court (Klein 1969). But all this situation could not maintain in the coming years where the policies of Thailand were also affected by colonialism's elements. With the strong hold of colonialism in the Southeast Asian regions the Thai authorities felt more insecure about their sovereignty especially about the border regions. It strengthened the notion of Thai nationalism. This nationalism, then became the main factor in determining its relations with Patani region.

Colonialism and Thai Patani Relations

One of the countries within Southeast Asia, which was never colonized by any of the European country was Thailand. This independent status was the result of many factors such as geographical location, diplomacy and policy of modernization (Sardesai 1981). Its geographic location was important in the way that Indo China was colonized by the French at one side and Malaya peninsula was dominated by British on another. The able diplomacy of Thai rulers also worked on keeping it away from the field of colonialism. Thailand was also able to move towards a policy of reform and modernization. And above all it was the rivalry between French and British that paved the way for the decision of keeping it as a buffer state so as not to share a common boundary (Pluvier 1974). It ensured Thailand as an independent country. But it never meant that Thailand had nothing to fear about. It came under pressure from British to define its borders (McCargo: 2004). Thailand was always concerned about maintaining its boundaries which were very near to these colonies. Not only boundaries, it also kept on modernizing the state to strengthen it within itself. All these requirements were fulfilled by many diplomatic rulers (James 1931). Two of the most remarkable monarchs were Rama IV and Rama V (known as Chulalongkorn). Under all these situations Thai response to this political and economic environment was to reorganize the tributary system in the South. If it had continued it may have boosted the nationalist feeling of being independent in the Southern Malay states as their position was on the strategic trade route in that growing global trade scenario. Strategically also in Thailand it was important as the British had controlled Malay Peninsula. So the political status of the Patani became a central issue in the contest between Thailand and Britain, when Britain expanded its influence and

control over the Malay Peninsula (Aphornsuvan: 2007). In response to all these new calculations Kalaham, the ministry in South was turned into ministry of defense and like British Siamese adopted a mixture of direct and indirect rule (Vickery: 1970).

Thai Nationalism

It was with Europeans that the new concepts of a modern state came into the Southeast Asia. Earlier in Thailand there were many ethnic people who used to inhabit like Burmese, Mon, Khmer, Malay, Chinese and Lao. There was a system of tributary where subsidiary states used to accept the sovereignty of a kingdom and they used to send some gifts and sometimes their army in need on the other hand they enjoyed autonomy in all of their matters (Sardesai 1981). But with the arrival of Europeans this system lost its relevance. According to Selway nationalism in these Southeast Asians countries had been influenced by two; one was French nationalism and by German nationalism. French nationalism is more about institutional, the assimilationist and political while German nationalism was more about ethno culturalist and pre political (Selway 2007). As per these parameters Thai nationalism was more near to French nationalism. It tried to assimilate every ethnic community who came under its geographical boundaries. The Thai education system was the main pillar of this nationalism, but there was a liberal approach towards Malay states.

Nationalism in Thailand is considered to arrive during the period of colonialism when concept of modern nation was first arisen. At its earlier stage this nationalism was limited to the elite class to unite their own subjects (Mehdan & Fred 1974). The purpose behind this nationalism was to strengthen and preserve the autocracy in Thailand. It provided the validation to the monarchy. Two main factors were there that were behind this rise. First was the influence of western ideas and education (Murashima 1988). It was the elite class that got an education outside and came into influence of European political ideology of the state. When these western educated people came to the country they put this ideology of the modern state in the Thailand. This was inculcated mainly into the higher class during 1880s. King Chulalongkorn was the one who took this role and started the formation of the nation state in Thailand.

A second factor behind the rise of nationalism was the critical colonial period. Everywhere in Southeast Asian sovereign states were losing their own freedom and power under the influence of colonial profits (Pluvier 1974). For Siam, condition of Indo-China and Burma, which were its two neighbors had been worrisome and threatening in itself. In these situations it was obvious that nationalism developed in Thailand in this way. It came from higher to lower class. Thailand was the only Free State which was the result of two internal factors that saved it from losing its sovereign power. One was this nationalism that foothold in the elite class and along with it was initiatives to modern the state itself taken by many kings (Raynolds 2005). These programs of modernization and westernization never went so far as to change the basic political principles of the Thai state (Murashima: 1988). Powers of the king and its position could not be challenged by all these new initiatives which were taken to make Thailand more civilized and modern.³ According to Thai political principles King had enjoyed powers, which were bound to the moral law of the nation. Western ideology and institutions were not blindly followed. For Thai state, the word ‘chat’ had been used which means that people elect the king, which is the supreme holder of the power. This word identifies Thailand as a nation which was founded on Buddhist monarchy.

King Vajiravudh after Chulalongkorn was educated in England, he also continued the same ideology that his earlier generations had followed. There were not much foreign threat during his reign.

Chulalongkorn (1868- 1910) and Reforms

During the reign of King Chulalongkorn many administrative reforms took place. It was during Chulalongkorn’s period when the British attacked Burma and annexed it. It was a major threat for the Thailand from western colonialism. This threat and insecurity led to many transformations in the Deep South. The earlier system was not sufficient to cope up

³During Burma British war Chulalongkorn asked a Prince of Thailand who was minister to Paris in Europe that how they can preserve their state and in the reply which was in form of report change in administration and powers were suggested to modernize the state as per the standards of modern European nation (Klein 1969).

with external and internal situations in the kingdom. These reforms can be understood under these categories:

- Formation of Modern state: Administrative reforms
- A Modern education system

Modern State

Rama V initiated many policies to make the country a modern state. In this process the first and foremost step was to establish a national identity, identity of a consolidated Thailand. This identity was based on three institutions: Nation, Religion and Monarchy (Sardesai 1981). This identity was quite contradictory for an ethnically diversified country. The fundamental dilemma about the cultural identity among Southern provinces was born due to this. This identity was supported by a new educational and judicial system. Sharia law was the only acceptable judicial system in the South but in 1902 it was replaced by Thai secular law (Hall 1958). Though family and inheritance were left in Sharia law, but the judgement of the Muslim judge was not final until one sitting judge also agreed with it. Further the judgement could be challenged in Thai Supreme Court where judge used to be a Thai (Vickery 1970).

Earlier these provinces were administered under the system called Kin Muang where provinces had little interference from the state and state was also concerned about the taxes and fees only. This system was accepted by all to keep the peace in the region (Vickery: 1970). During the reign of King Chulalongkorn many reforms took place and one of them was administrative centralization it was also known as Thesaphiban system. This system strengthened the control over these tributary states. The ministry of the interior was made to centralize the existing administrative system. Now provinces were reorganized into Monthon. All provincial personnel at all levels had become a civil servant with regular salary (Haemindra: 1976). In 1902 as per the bureaucratic reforms Malay nobility or Rajas were replaced by Thai-Buddhist bureaucrats.

All these administrative reforms under Chulalongkorn (Hall 1985) were the result of many concerns which can be explained as below:

- Both Britain and France were strengthening their position in the Malay Peninsula and Indo-China which was a threat to both security and integrity to the Thailand in the last decade of the 19th century.
- In this last decade, British held Malay Peninsula quite rapidly and life of the indigenous people out there was improving which became an imperative for Thailand also to restructure the administration of Southern Provinces which are very near to these places.

All these factors were behind the administrative reforms which were done between 1892 to 1899. But soon it was realized that all these measures were unsuccessful to implement the integration of these provinces into the Thailand (Sardesai 1981). So in 1901 again all these seven provinces were integrated into one. But the process of centralization was still pursued. Next year Treaty of 1902 was done between Thailand and British. According to this treaty Thailand recognized British control over Kelantan, Trengganu, Kedah, and Perlis and British recognized Thailand's claim over north of these states (Baker & Phongpaichit 2005). Now these Thai controls over these areas was recognized by the British also which resulted in more control over these areas from Thai empire. Tribute was no longer required, but in place of that treasure of the area were under control of the Revenue Department of Thailand (Suwannathat Pian 1995). Because Thailand was in need of funding to fulfill the demands of other reforms which could be collected easily after this fiscal control (Haemindra: 1976). In return compensation and adequate pensions were given to nobility⁴. All these initiatives were not welcomed by Patani Rajas as these abolished their powers through direct control of Thailand. It was opposed and it is said that with help of conspiracy it was imposed on these regions. This occupation was opposed in 1903 by the last Sultan of Patani named Tengku Abdul Kadir. He was arrested with the charge of treason and for two years he was in jail in northern Thailand. Revolt against this direct control again led to some administrative changes and finally these provinces were converted into four provinces named as Pattani, Yala, Saiburi and

⁴Cited in Haemindra, N. (1977), "The Problem of the Thai-Muslims in the Four Southern Provinces of Thailand" (Part one), *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 203.

Narathiwat (Thanet 2007). Protests against this reorganization were finally coming to an end with British Thai treaty in 1909.

According to this treaty Siam ceded Kedah, Kelantan, Trengganu, Perlis and nearby islands of Langkawi. And British accepted Thai suzerainty over the northern part of the Malay Peninsula. Still, it is present Thailand, Malaysia border as decided in this treaty. In 1910 two revolts were led by Sufi Sheikhs named as To'tae and Haji Bula, they preached jihad against Siam government but were arrested (Suwannathat Pian 1985). Earlier in 1904 France had compelled Siamese to accept the absorption of Battambang and Siam Reap (Klein: 1969). With all these oppositions and pressure from internal and outsiders the system of Monthon Thesaphiban was discontinued to secure the sovereignty of the Siam in 1932 when the constitutional monarchy ruled the nation. So in a way, when Thailand was going under the process of modernization Patani kingdom faced an era of losing its sovereignty completely. Other Malay states also had been under the influence of Thai administration.

In 1932 when absolute monarchy was replaced with constitutional monarchy it was a hopeful and welcome event for southern provinces (Ferrelly 2013). Under these growing new institutions source of power was somewhat changed from a monarchy. It was an opportunity where people from the South could play a distinct role at national level. Now they could have put their problems on the national front. It gave them a new alternative to show resistance against integration into the Thailand. As Aphornsuvan (2007) states that this was the only period when considerable peace and order was maintained in this area, though mistreatment by government officials and police was continued. But soon ground realities dissatisfied them (Scupin & Pitsuvan 1988). In the first elections under these new arrangements first elections for representatives were held in 1933. All the elected members from these four provinces except Satun were Thai Buddhists. Later on in the elections of 1937 only Malay Muslims were elected. Before the Southern people could have resolved their issues through these political representation, Thailand experienced military rule under Field Marshal Phibun.

He came into power in 1938 and started a policy of extreme nationalism. After 1938 till 1948 in a less powerful assembly all seats from southern provinces were won by Thai

Buddhists except Satun⁵. Even after this constitutional monarchy where representatives could present problems of different areas, provincial bureaucracy was responsible for the implementation of policies which was corrupt (Suwannathat Pin 1985). During this period, even after the democratic set up people of the Southern provinces lose their belief on their representatives as their problems could not be resolved. So till Second World War economic hardships and insecurity was there in public. This failure of constitutional monarchy in winning the trust of people of the South was further intensified with the situation that arose during the war (Yakoob 2013).

Educational reforms:

One of the major changes was in the field of education. It served two purposes, first were to provide officers for Siamese bureaucratic service upon which modern state was to be built; another was to facilitate integration of ethnic minority into a coherent Siamese national identity (Liow: 2009). One cannot ignore the fact that control over the both the Pondok and Sharia law was understood as a compulsory step to control the movements against the incorporation of these provinces in Thailand. Religious teachers and jurists were considered as the basic source for intellectual and religious-cultural leadership.

Pondoks were the centre of education in these areas. They were associated with Malay Muslim identity as well as they worked like repositories for the Malay language, history and culture (Liow: 2009). From Southeast Asia many Muslim students used to come here for Islamic education. Religious teachers and scholars were very famous among Islamic institutions all over the Arab Muslim world (Winzeler 1975). The education at Pondok⁶ was basically about religion like fundamentals and doctrines of Islam, Sufi mysticism, law and languages (Che Man: 1990); they didn't provide academic courses. These Pondok, the educational backbone of the region were replaced with monastic system; Thai language was the medium of education in this new system which was like a foreign language for these Malay Muslim provinces. The most important thing was the newer

⁵In Satun in elections of 1933 Thai Buddhist was elected as MP but from 1938 to 1948 it was the only province where a Malay Muslim was continuously elected (Haemindra 1977).

⁶ Students in Pondok used to live in small huts which were also called Pondok and these were built around a central building where teaching was held. Students did not pay fee for Pondok and tuitions (Che Man 1990).

education system was based on Buddhist values (Waytt 1984). These initiatives were not welcomed by the people of the South as they took them as a threat to their identity both cultural and religious. Malay Muslim parents saw these schools as Buddhist institutions.⁷ So due to this and many other reasons like in these government schools most of the students were of Thai bureaucrats so normal Malay people hesitated to send their kids(Liow 2009). After the failure of these schools the option before Thai government was to eradicate the popular Pondok system as these were considered as a hindrance in inculcating the Thai consciousness into the Southern provinces. In the decade of 1960s, these were transformed into registered private schools with government designed curriculum to be taught in Thai as a language of the medium (Che Man: 1990). All these changes were viewed as forceful attempts to impose Thai values over Malay Muslims. In 1932 Thailand was transformed from an absolute to the Constitutional Monarchy. And the four provinces were incorporated into the territory of Siam. Under this Constitutional Monarchy national assembly was established where elected member was representing. From South also participation was there. It was given chances to have its representation in the highest assembly, but soon under the military rule under Phibun Songkram all these opportunities were lost. The national assembly was still there, but it lost its essence.

Second World War and Patani

During the Second World War Thailand supported Japan. But this was not complete support. Many studies show that Thailand's position during the war was very diplomatic. Thailand's inclination towards Japan was, according to the needs of the time. In this world war Thailand as being only independent nation in Southeast Asia had to maintain its position (Hall 1955). The strategic location of Thailand was very important for the Allied powers. Though Thailand was not the direct colony of Britain, but Britain had many indirect economic interests in it. Many places and ports around Thailand were under control of Britain like Honkong, Singapore, Penang, Calcutta and Rangoon. Export

⁷These "national schools" were mostly located within the compounds of Buddhist temples (Liow 2009).

and import were done with Thailand and these ports. 37% Thailand's import came from these countries which were colonies of the British Empire (Aldrich: 1988). The strategic location of Thailand was also important. During this war Japan was fighting under the banner of "Asia for Asiatics". For Japan roadway to enter in Malaya was through Thailand. That could have been a threat to whole British Empire in Southeast Asia. This threat came true when Japan advanced into Indo China in 1941. For France also Thailand's had many disputes about territory and Thailand's position in war mattered a lot for France. United States was not involved in the war from the start, but it was supporting other Allied powers. Besides rubber and Tin America was neither economical nor strategically concerned with the Thailand (Aldrich: 1988). Due to all these interests all allied powers, especially Britain had always been sympathetic towards Thailand. Thailand was maintained as a buffer state for a long time.

In this war Thailand had a very opportunist position and maintained diplomatic relations with superpowers (Flood 1970). It had offered a treaty to make sure its neutrality during the war. But this neutrality stand was compromised when it came to its own territorial profits. Thailand had considered Battambang and Siam Reap as its own territory that were under control of Vinche regime of Indo China. In 1940 Japan entered into Indo-China, where it got not only economic concessions but also army bases. Meanwhile, Thailand started wars over the long disputed borders in Indo- China (Hall 1955). Japan played a role of arbitrator in all these disputes. Thailand was not satisfied with the stand of Japan as it could not get whole of these two regions; Battambang and Siam Reap. The Japanese also wanted to maintain cooperative relations with Indo China, for this Thailand had to compromise in less territory from Indo- china. Many officials of Western Powers had suspicion that Japan and Thailand had agreed earlier for a secret *Modus Vivendi* about these disputed borders.

In Burma also Thailand's neutral stand was questioned. Governor of Burma complained about the secret meeting of Burma nationalists with Japan and Thailand in Thailand only. Burma was a colony of Britain and it was a direct threat to the Britain (Tarling 1992). Thailand's pro Japanese attitude was the result of many ground stations. It was not permanent support. Only in the initial years of war Thailand supported Japan to fulfill its

own national interests. But it was also clear that Thailand never supported wholeheartedly to Japan. Behind this partial inclination there were few reasons. As Crosby⁸ a British officer in Malaya claimed that there were three main factors that decided Thai foreign policy in the war.

- There was a belief that Japan was the only great power in East Asia.
- There was a conviction that the United States will never come to interfere in Malaya.
- A desire that Britain maintain itself as a counterpoint to Japan.

While taking help of Japan in 1940 Thailand was very keen about its own security and sovereignty. It is clear with the fact that there was no Japanese military base in Thailand. All these equations were accepted to Britain and it also tried to take Thailand to its own side after 1940 (Aldrich 1988). But in later years of war after 1942 Thailand's position was almost became neutral.

This period threatened the Thai government of losing the region. These policies in return threatened the Southern provinces that were afraid of losing their autonomy and identity (Wyatt 1984). This threat was more intensified for Thai State with two incidents that questioned its sovereignty. These are as below;

During the Second World War (1945-49) leaders from Southern Thailand supported the British in Malaya while Thai government supported the Japanese (Toland 1970). It saw Japan as a counterweight to Britain and France. In return for this support Japan gave Thailand those northern Malay areas which it lost in treaty with British Kelantan, Terenaggnu, Perlis and Kedah (Funston 2010). So this reunited the Southern provinces once again with the Malay provinces. After the World War the Southern Provinces tried to be a part of Malay, they even send application to the UN but nothing could succeed. It was the only attempt when they tried to assimilate into Malay (Aldrich 1988). It was during this time that Malay Association of Greater Pattani (GAMPAR) played an important role, but it failed (Harish 2006). The boundary between Malaysia and Thailand remained same. In this scenario British even tried to annex Pattani and

⁸Cited in Aldrich, Richard (1988), "A Question of Expediency: Britain, United States and Thailand 1941-42", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 19(2): 219..

Satun but due to the threat of communism and American pressure it could not do it (Jory 2007). So the boundaries remained same. It is a fact that boundaries during colonialism were fixed according to the interests of colonial powers which did not address the ethnicity or other regional factors.

Secondly, II World War actually challenged the integrity and national boundary of the Thailand in the east also. It was after this war that a territorial dispute had arisen between France and Thailand. During the war in the mediation of Japan one treaty was signed between France and Thailand to decide the boundary between them (Nitz 1945). According to this treaty, France had to surrender a few areas of Indo-China which were: Phibunsongkram, Battambang, Champasak, Lal Chang and a few islets to the west of the Mekong. Earlier some of the areas of Cambodia have been under the protectorate of France since 1867. In 1890s France also had increased its influence over areas of Laos. Siam was never happy with these extra territorial claims of these countries, but under the treaty of 1904 with France it accepted these under French influence (Hall 1955). Chakri dynasty ceded many areas, sometimes to France and sometimes to Britain in the name of survival, but during world war efforts were made to regain those areas. But after war France became a victorious country and it demanded those areas back on the ground that Thailand took those areas by the act of aggression. Other Allied powers also supported this demand and Thailand had to return these back (Suwannathat-Pian: 1996).

And in response to all these incidents/situations which questioned the sovereignty of Thai state policies became tougher for South. There was great dissatisfaction among these areas about the fascist ultra nationalist policies of Phibun Songkhram (1938-1944). It is said that King Vajirayudh was the father of Thai nationalism, but it was Phibun who gave a new momentum to this nationalism (Raynold 2004). The period of Phibun was the period of a new political leadership at the international level also. It was the period when the world experienced fascist leadership, whether it was Hitler in Germany, or Mussolini in Italy. In Southeast Asia Phibun Songkram adopted the same ideology of aggressive nationalism, both at internal and external level. Reynolds (2004) has observed that there was the influence of Chiang Kai Shek over his policies as both were seeing their countries with a lack of cohesion and national spirit. So in response to it, they used cultural revolutions in their respective countries.

Under the period of Phibun Songkram Thailand's population was mobilized under the ideology of nationalism. A policy of forced assimilation was adopted by central administration for all without acknowledging the uniqueness of other minorities in the country. His policies were mainly about reforms and reconstruction of society and cultural norms of the country (Murishima 1988). Many rules were formulated about the expected behavior and etiquettes of people in public. Women were now supposed to wear hats and western dresses, chewing betels and areca nuts were forbidden. Spoons and forks were to be used as national cutlery. Punishments were also prescribed in case of violation of these regulations (Sardesai 1981). All these declarations were a direct threat to the culture of Malay Muslims. Besides all these controversial rules most sensitive elements were disturbed in the Southern Provinces. Even after annexation of Patani into the Thailand law regarding family and inheritance was their own personal law other matters were under the civil law of Thailand (Peter 2008). But in 1944 this system was abolished. Now family and inheritance also became a part of Thai civil law. Islamic judge was also removed who used to deal with all these sort of cases. After this replacement all Muslims used to go to court in Kelantan, Kedah, Terangganu and Perlis to seek justice. In between 1943- 1947 there was not a single case registered in Thai civil court about these matters (Aphornsuvan: 2007). As a result of all of these policies Malay Muslims in the region were more dissatisfied.

Phibun started the nation building programmes under the slogan of "Nation, Religion, and King" where nation refers to Thai nation, religion refers to Theravada Buddhism and king of the Chakri dynasty (Mulder: 2000). The ethnically neutral name "Siam" was changed to "Thailand" in 1939. It further led to the enforcement of cultural mandate and Siamese laws over the South. Religious holidays of Malays were abolished. Malay Muslims were prohibited from wearing traditional dress, teaching Yawi and practicing Sharia law; they were also encouraged to adopt Thai sounding names. It was the effect of overall popularization of the language reforms done in his period. Siam was changed to Thailand, new spelling system; simplification of pronouns and a different list of proper nouns were introduced (Hudak: 1986). But the implication of nationalist program's this element (language) triggered tensions in the region. One more policy in this period was called *Rathaniom* policy. It was a most sensitive part of the National Cultural Act,

according to which only Thai cultural characteristics were allowed to grow. It was an act to promote Thai-ness and Thai nationalism. This policy was introduced in 1938 and it gave birth to outrage in the region of many minorities (Yacoob: 2013). Resettlement of Thai Buddhists in South was also promoted and encouraged to change the demography. These efforts were perceived as state sponsored attacks against ethnic Malay identity and led to many demands from South to centre about preserving their culture and religion.

During the period of 1945- 1947 under the leadership of Pridi Phanomyong radical political condition in Southern provinces were controlled. The government started some reforms which could reduce outrage among public (Che Man 1990). One of these reforms was an Islamic Patronage act. Under this act Muslim leaders were included under the state structure; in the Ministry of Interior. Friday was again declared as a religious holiday in the South. Malay Muslim laws regarding family and inheritance were again restored. Two Islamic judges were also appointed by the Ministry of Justice to advise the other judges about these issues (marriage and inheritance). But still Thai Buddhists judges were the highest authority (Melvin 2007). All these initiatives could have diminished the dissatisfaction among Southern areas if it would not have been a war situation (Aphoransuwan 2007). Many basic facilities were at scarcity like shortage rice and other economic hardships.

Revolt of Haji Sulong

In 1948 the revolt was under the leadership of Haji Sulong. The people of South presented their list of demand for government regarding political, cultural and judicial autonomy in the region (Forbes 1982). After Second World War economic and social condition, especially lawlessness and corruption was very depressing in Thailand and it impacted normal life of the country. This effect was worse in Southern Thailand. Southern Thailand had serious other problems also, during these years smuggling was increasing, particularly of rice to Malaya (Aldrich 1988). All these conditions led to the formation of a commission for this area by government. With the announcement of this government commission, political leaders of the Patani also got alert and active. They held meetings and prepared seven demands to the government (Aphoransuwan: 2007). These demands included:

- A person holding any high ranking administrative position and 80 % of government officials in these provinces should be born in the Southern Provinces.
- The tax collected from these areas should be spent on the Malay Muslim people only.
- The education system should be changed and structured in a way that Malay language get support and government should use Malay language in offices along with a Siamese.
- Government should separate religious court from civil court and these religious courts should get full authority and freedom.

Many of these demands were special in themselves as these were demanding more autonomy and freedom while being a part of Thailand. There was not a single demand in the direction of separatism. These seven demands were prepared under the leadership of Haji Sulong (Bonura 2008). But the government could not implement any of those as these were very liberal and progressive for the government at that time. Later on one more commission was established. During the inquiry people were treated badly by government officials. Violence started this time and police also took hard steps. During this time period in 1947 only around 200 cases of robberies and disturbances happened in Patani province alone (Aphorsuvan: 2007). According to the government the victims in these years were Thai Buddhists and situation became worse when there was no hope for any concession from the government's side. Meanwhile Haji Sulong started protesting 'Dato Yuttitham'. Dato Yuttitham were Islamic judges and according to new rules for their appointment Thai officials were the one who will appoint them (Bonura 2008). Besides this they made it compulsory for Dato Yutthinam to have knowledge of Thai language (Haemindra 1977). Their demand for separating civil and Islamic court was also ignored on the basis that it will be costly. These judicial issues were very sensitive as they were related to Islam. Haji Sulong protested against these rules.

In many ways this revolt was very different from earlier which were led by an elite class with very limited demands. Earlier it was the issue of Patani kingdom and its Rajas. When they were dominated and any threat to their own powers was there, they revolted. As Aphoransuvan (2007) says "the causes and outcomes were always same like clashes

over power, status and interests of both royal elites and the defeat of the weaker force, sometimes by means of trickery and deception in addition to military action”. The other major difference was that religion or Islam was a motivator in this revolt (Moorhead 1957). Haji Sulong himself was a religious teacher who went to Mecca to get the education in Islam when he came back, he found the situation of Malay Muslims very degrading and he started educating about the real Islam. Later on, new Islamic schools were also started by him that made him very popular with the public (Liow 2009). This popularity allowed him to move into politics. So in this revolt Islam was an indirect factor under the religious leadership of Haji Sulong. In 1948 Phibul returned to the power which triggered tension in South. Instead of addressing the demands, Haji Sulong charismatic leader of the South was arrested in 1954 he was murdered (Aphoransuwan 2007). It was with his arrest and murder that many more rebellions burst out in these southern provinces. This revolt in the 1940s had become a symbol of Malay Muslim problems and the suppression by government. During this period British also helped to eliminate GAMPAR (Aldrich 1988). In this process many Malay leaders went missing or they were murdered so for a while it was under control, but again in the 1960s and 70s this opposition to assimilation came forward with new organized movement

Organizational Development of Insurgency

In 1948 Phibul returned to the power. He was a powerful person during 2nd world war. In this war period he took anti Chinese decisions. Though he was chosen as a friend of America, but was declared a war criminal as well (Suwannathat- Pian 1996). But America’s strategy was to utilize his powerful position and this saved him being projected as a war criminal. He was also respected by military in Thailand⁹. During this period, due to Thailand’s friendship with America, it became headquarters of SEATO (Southeast Asian Treaty Organization), an anti communist organization. So under his period military became more powerful and a major tool to handle the ethnic conflict (Raynolds 2004). Successors of Phibun also accepted the power of the military. So the military was the one who handled all the conflicts. As a result the movement kept

⁹Phibun Songkhram had favoured military in many ways. One favour among them was when he nationalized the Chinese companies he allotted all to the military officials (Suwannathat- Pian 1996).

spreading after the war in these Southern provinces. It became more organized and many parties were established in coming decades (Chalk 2001). All these parties or organizations can be categorized as per their ideology or main purpose into two: One group was the one who wanted to get more autonomy for the region as being an administrative unit of Thailand only. It wanted to prosper with the help of opportunities provided by Thailand only. On the other hand, there was another group of ideology who wanted to be an independent country. Though joining with Malaysia was also there, but it soon vanished away as it was clear that in real practical situations they can get only moral support for it, nothing more than that (Haemindra: 1977). Arising of these organizations was because of two major factors. First after Second World War Malay nationalism was growing on the other hand Thai policies regarding education and language were considered as an encroachment in these areas (Harish: 2006). These parties and organizations are as below:

GAMPAR: (Gabungan Melayu Patani Raya): It was one of the earliest organizations that demanded independence for these Southern provinces. It was led by Tengku Mahmud Mahyiddeen and many other Malay elites. This organization was created in 1948. It was a pan Malaysian organization that wanted to merge Southern provinces with the Malay Federation (Yakoob 2004). It even got support from the Malay nationalist party of the Kelantan. Basically, it was the result of many earlier attempts during the Second World War to make it an independent country (Liow: 2010). But soon it started supporting leftist Malay parties. By doing so it came in opposition to British rule and result of this move was that Thai government and British met hands together to control it. Soon many leaders were arrested.

BNPP (Barisan Nasional Pembebasan Patani): It was the first group which organized armed resistance in the South in 1959. The uniting factor that motivated this party's ideology was based on Islam (Roux 1998). This was used as to gain support from outside countries. Leader of this party was Tegku Abdul Jalal who was a student of Haji Sulong. They saw Islam as the core force that unites the people. Their goal was to get full independence and for that they began guerrilla operations (Yakoob 2004). Their activities

were more against Chinese and Thai civil servants. But their effort to get support from other Muslim countries¹⁰ could not be successful and BNPP slowly faded away.

BRN (Barisal Nationalist Party): Origin of this party was very much affected with the liberation of Malaysia and Indonesia in the 1960s. It was also pan Malaysian party. It was led by Ustaz Karim Hajji Hassan (Forbes 1982). This group was more focused on political organization, particularly in religious school. Its origin was affected or the immediate cause of its origin was the Educational improvement Program by the Field Marshall Sarit Thannarat's military government¹¹. In this program secular curriculum was forced on Pondok by making them private schools. Karim Hasan saw these reforms as an effort to weaken the Malay culture and through the BRN, he tried to make an independent Malay republic. There were two main objectives (Chalk 2008) of this party;

- To get independence from Siam for Southern Provinces.
- And to merge these provinces with the Malay Federation.

But soon after this party, due to its pan Malaysian nature many divisions and groups emerged. Indonesian *konfrantasi* against Malaysia was one of the reasons behind splinters within it. It was split into BRN Coordinate, Congress and Ulama.

PULO (Patani United Liberation Organization): This organization was created in 1968 in India¹² (Chalk: 2001). It is the largest and the most prominent organization since 1960s. The different thing about this organization was that it did not believe in the descendants of Patani kings. So the character of the revolt was also different. It got support from many leaders from Arab (Harish 2006). For the first time issues of race and ethnicity were seen with Islam as an important component of identity. But Islam was highly emphasized. The ideology of PULO is based on UBANGTABAKEMA. It is derived from *Ugama, Bangasa, Tanach, Air and Perikeemaniaan* (Religion, Race/Nationalism, Homeland and Humanitarianism) (Chalk: 2001). Major part of its strategy was violence. There was

¹⁰To get the international Muslim support once they prepared a document "The Muslim Struggle for Survival in South Thailand" at the 7th conference of Islamic foreign ministers at Istanbul in 1976.

¹¹ Crisis Group Report, 2005, URL <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/south-east-asia/thailand/098-southern-thailand-insurgency-not-jihad.aspx> pp. 12.

¹² It was established at University of Aligarh in India. Later on it was shifted to Jeddah in Saudi Arabia (Chalk 2001).

one army wing of this party named as PULA (Pattani United Liberation Army). It attacks and makes target to government buildings, institutions, and symbols. The demands of PULO were as follows¹³:

- The Thai government should give the Pattani the freedom to decide its own future.
- All outsiders, whether they are Chinese, Thai or others should leave the Pattani.
- Use of Malay language should be promoted as an official language.

GMIP (Gerakan Mujahideen Islamiya Patani): It was established in 1985. Its objective was also to establish an Islamic state in Southern Thailand (Roux 1998). GMIP and PULO have become prominent organizations which gave the conflict a religious nature.

All these above mentioned organizations, basically demanded independence, though their ideology and philosophy was different from each other. In the recent years all these groups work under the name of “Bersatu”(unity) (Smith 2004). Along with the growing organizations the state’s policy continued to be of unification and efforts regarding language and education system etc. were the same. It kept on making these areas more apprehensive about asserting their culture and identity. During 1961 Field Master Sarit Thanarat introduced the Pondok Educational Improvement program (Harish 2006). The purpose behind this program was to give secular education at Pondok. This programme gave Thai authorities power over these Pondok about their curriculum. In a way this program privatized Pondok. It diminished the popularity of Pondok as the cradle of Islam where students from other countries used to come for Islamic education (Che Man 1990). It also reduced the number of students who from Pondok used to go for further studies in the Middle East about Islam. In 1973 for few years military rule was replaced with a democratic government for 3 years. During this period many students who returned from Middle East after completing their Islamic education found themselves in a quandary (Liow 2009). Due to their spiritual Islam education they were respected in society, but in spite of this social reputation they were nowhere eligible to fit themselves

¹³Cited in Yaacob, Che, Mohd. Che, (2013), “Aggressive Conflict in Southern Thailand: Roots of Hostility and Aggression”, *Malaysian Journal of History, Politics & Strategic Studies*, 40(2), 24-43.

in state bureaucracy (Harish: 2006). It was under all these circumstances that PULO was formed. In the decades of the 1960s and 70s guerilla activities kept on growing in the South while the government did many military operations to control them with the help of police.

It was in 1980s that Thai government took some different attitude towards this region under the Prime Ministership of Prem Tinsulanonda (1980-1988). He was a military commander who had experience in handling security issues in Northeast parts of Thailand (Sardesai 1981). Even after being a military commander, he had pro democratic ideas. In many of his orders he explicitly said “Political factors are crucial (for the success of counterinsurgency), and military operations must be conducted to support and promote political goals”¹⁴. He was ready to destroy the dictatorship for the sake of democracy¹⁵. For the first time state recognized this problem as a political one. Now a kind of real democratization was seen in this area. The focus of the state was on assuaging local grievances, developing the South’s economy and improving coordination (Mullins 2009). Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre (SBPAC) was established for this purpose in 1981. One of its purposes was to educate the general Thai public about the culture of the South¹⁶. It is still an authority to look after the implementation of socioeconomic development projects and to communicate between locals and the center. Besides this many developmental projects were also started. The tourism industry was promoted in the South. So in a way conciliatory approach was taken in this period (McCargo 2007). It even continued during the government of Chatichai. Many Malay Muslim politicians were incorporated in government. All these political, administrative and developmental measures were taken to handle the issue and the violence was reduced to some extent during this period.

History of Patani has been a history of struggle with Siam about protecting its sovereignty and autonomy in the 19th century. It was made a tributary sometimes semi-tributary but finally in early 20th century, it became a part of Siam. This assimilation resulted in many revolts by the elite class of the Patani kingdom and meanwhile

¹⁴Cited in, Marks, T. A. “Thailand: Anatomy of a counterinsurgency victory”, *Military Review*, 35- 51.

¹⁵ Ibid, Page: 46.

colonialism started spreading its power in Southeast Asia. Both these factors worked as a stimulus to the assimilation approach for Siam over these regions. Since then it has become a history of harsh assimilation policies, (sometimes soft approach by state, but rarely implemented for long) and resistance from these regions.

CHAPTER 2: STATE'S RESPONSE TO THE INSURGENCY

The state of Thailand has adopted different types of policies towards this conflict from very heavy handed to liberal and sometimes conciliatory ones. These policies have been affected by the politics at national level, the personalities of the leaders, and sometimes international factors also.

State's Response under Thaksin Government

In late 2001 violence emerged with a renewed intensity in the South but it increased sharply after January 2004. Thaksin Shinawatra was Prime Minister at that time. Thaksin and his party Thai Rak Thai¹⁷ adopted populist strategies that were welcomed by the poor, especially in northern Thailand (Ganesan 2004). Thaksin can be portrayed as a person with dynamic characters. He used to sell computers to the royal Thai police department. Later on he became a famous entrepreneur by establishing his own business during the boom period of 1986 to 1997. In 1994 he joined politics and became a member of Chamlong Srimuang's Palang Dharma Party to enhance his business with the support of politics. He even served as foreign minister during 1994-1995 (Case 2001). In 1998 Thaksin formed his own party Thai Rak Thai and soon he became a popular leader of the country. During 1997 when the Asian financial crisis occurred, Thailand's bubble economy also burst out. This gave a huge impetus to Thai Rak Thai party to grow (Hicken 2006). The 1997 crisis created enormous discontent among urban labor, farmers and migrant workers who often bore the burden of unemployment and falling real incomes. Phongpaichit and Baker (2008) argue that 1997 financial crisis gave a great push to the rise of Thaksin, the intensity of the crisis helped in changing the politics of the country.

Under all these circumstances populist Agendas of the TRT Party attracted people. The main theme of this agenda was self sufficiency at every level. For this, internal

¹⁷In English it means Thais Love Thais (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

sufficiency program economic support (one million Baht) to every village was given. The Thaksin government promoted “strategic industries,” and focused on mainly five sectors: food, fashion, automobile, tourism, and computer graphics (Ockey 2003). Industries like cotton industry were promoted. Public health policies were also made reachable by providing at affordable prices. ¹⁸He conducted many tours all around his country for the promotion of many reforms. With his populist agenda and pro poor reforms, urban population, which was displaced during economic crisis also got profit (Ganeshan: 2004). While rural population was very much attracted towards these populist agenda which was directly in their favor. In this manner he became very popular in rural areas, especially in the North and Northeast regions.

All these policies and the way the government was working made it popular, but this government also faced many problems; some of them were created by its own. One of them was an insurgency in the south. This insurgency has reemerged in 2004. Many analysts argue that it was the policies of government that helped in this reemergence. Ian Storey (2007) claims that the separatist insurgency was controlled by Thai government once in the late 1980s, while during the period of Thaksin its administration worked as fuel for the violence and increase the suspicion between Southern provinces and Thai officials. During the time of Thaksin the way government handled two incidents, one national and other international; War on Drugs and 9/11 attack on US respectively increased the feeling of alienation in the South (Chongkittavorn 2004).

9/11 attack and Southern Thailand:

America’s relations with Thailand were very friendly during the cold war. They had common anti- communist security concerns. America, even gave aid to Thailand, while Thailand became a member and centre for SEATO by signing Manila pact 1954 (Nuechterlein 1964). After signing this there was a joint communique between these two countries in 1962 that strengthened their relation in cold war(Ponsudhirak 2007). During Vietnam war (1960- 1974). Thailand supported US and even interfered into Laos during this war (Osornprasop 2007). But these friendly relations soon became a kind of

¹⁸Under the health care facilities each person was supposed to pay only 30 baht at government funded hospitals. This scheme became very popular among all the classes mainly lower class (Funston 2002).

neutral one when in the decade of 1970s when Thailand opened itself for other countries friendship also. Thailand opted a policy of ‘Omni directionality’ which equally gave importance to America, China, ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) (Pongsudhirak 2013). Thailand was a founding member of ASEAN in 1976. Change of government in Thailand had also affected this relationship. In the decade of 1980s Thai policy was more tilted towards economic gains. To achieve them, they (Thais) enhanced their links with Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. The purpose was to turn the Indochina into a market place (Buszynski 1994). Thailand independently had agreements with these countries individually. With Myanmar also relations became more constructive and practical as Thailand supported military there and secured the profits of investors as well as border security (Snitwongse 2001) . Meanwhile, America was left behind which even became more at side due to some disputes over intellectual property rights (Chambers: 2004). But after the cold war American government did not pay much attention to strengthen the relations with Thailand as its policy was more focused on trade rather than geopolitics. But still relations were not completely ended. Their joint military exercise “Cobra Gold” was still continuing and renewed. Thailand’s policy also turned towards a more balanced one (Kislenko 2002). In 1993 Thailand even joined the Non Aligned Movement that showed independent foreign policy of Thailand. But after 2001 both old allies Thailand and America again came close and worked together. It was the 9/11 terrorist attack over America that changed the international scenario. Anti terrorism became a major component of American foreign policy. Relations with Thailand during this time were more of military one like Cobra Gold, Karat joint military exercises were there, Thailand was beneficiary of American military technology (Chambers 2004). But after 9/11 attacks America also wanted to enhance these relations in the field of anti terrorism. Under these international circumstances Thailand was in serious dilemma due to its internal politics (Ganesan 2004). Internal politics this time was influenced Thailand’s foreign policy. It was mainly because of Southern Muslim community. Southern Muslims were pro Thaksin and they constituted major part of the votes for Thaksin’s victory (Funston 2010). On the other hand America was also an old friend of Thailand so denying cooperation was also diplomatically very difficult. And the issue of ‘Anti- terrorism’ was such that there was a common consent among most of

the countries to cooperate with. Terrorism was and still is a major problem for many countries (Chambers 2004).

Under all these circumstances, Thailand's stand was initially very confusing. Different officials were giving a different perspective, but finally Thailand supported America in anti terrorist plans in a variety of manners. Overflight rights were given, Thai port, naval base 'Uthapao', etc. were open for Americans. Even at the domestic level, many legislative efforts were done to tighten the anti terrorist law (It supported Anti Terrorism Declaration of APEC) (Chambers 2004). All these events were followed by Indonesian Bali terrorists attack in 2003 when it was said that in Thailand Al Qaeda affiliated group Jemmah Islamiyah had its bases (Mullins 2009). It was accepted by the Thai government and they had more pressure to cooperate in anti terrorism activities. Now cooperation with America was more strengthened, Thai troops were sent to Iraq.

All these activities gave birth to protests in Thailand, especially in Southern Thailand. It was perceived against Islam in the South and created more tension among the Muslims of South. They related themselves with the Muslims of Arab countries. Many of them boycotted US products and goods¹⁹. In December 2001 five well coordinated attacks were done in the districts of Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat. According to the Ministry of Interior incidents of these types of attacks increased from 50 in 2001 to 75 in 2002 and 119 in 2003.

War on Drugs and Southern Thailand:

In 2003 one more government policy exacerbated the situation in the South. It was "war on drugs". Its aim was to eradicate the social ill of drugs from the country. The declaration of this war on drugs was about emphasizing on education, awareness, and treating the drug users as patients not as criminals (Mutebi: 2004). But in reality police used very harsh policy. Many innocent people were arrested. Many were killed without being fairly tried. Many incentives were given to the officers for their work which was, according to seize of drugs. Many insurgent operatives were executed in South under the name of the War on Drugs (Storey: 2007). Around twenty people who were earlier

¹⁹ BBC News (2003), Many people or groups named as "Muslim for Peace" even protested against US embassy. BBC News, URL: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/2872667.stm>.

insurgents and were working as informants for the military were all assassinated under the name of war on drugs (MacDermott: 2013). This war was heavily criticized on the basis of human rights violations (shoot to kill policy of the police) both at national and international levels. These Southern Provinces were identified as the important smuggling route. So they were highly affected by these anti drug operations. They became more vulnerable when the government also started 'War on dark influences' which covered 15 criminal activities²⁰ (Mutebi 2004).

Government's Perception before and after 2004

Before 2004 Thai government considered the problem of the Southern provinces as a very normal one which could be handled with simple measures of law and judiciary (Chalk: 2008). The time when in 2001-2002 bombing and other attacks from militants were increasing Thaksin government ignored it and presented it as a war between two criminal groups (Storey: 2007). This misperception from the government side led to many administrative changes. One of them was to abolish SBPAC and the Civilian-Military-Police Taskforce 43 (CMP-43). SBPAC was one of the appreciative institutions that were established during the time of Prem Tinsulanonda²¹ especially in these three southern provinces (Harish & Liow 2007). Its purpose was to deal with the problems of the Southern provinces with the involvement of local people also. It gave the people of these areas a direct platform where they could present their problems. The deputy interior minister was to be its director along with some local members on the board. Most of the staff in SBPAC was locals from these provinces only. Non Malay staff was given training of language. It was responsible for the successful implementation of policies of government in these areas. It also worked as an authority who will listen to the grievances about corruption and other matters and if the allegations were found correct, related officials were transferred within 24 hours. Therefore SBPAC was working as a link between government and people. Abolishing this institution was the result of ignorance and misperception of this problem (Storey 2007). It broke the direct

²⁰ These 15 criminal activities were smuggling of drugs and labourers, women and illegal arms trafficking, corruption etc. (Mutebi 2004).

²¹ SBPAC was established in 1981 by Prem Tinsulanonda. Its purpose was increase the communication between government and Malay Muslims (Liow & Harish 2007).

linkage, the process of decentralization and participation in these areas. CPM 43 was also abolished. It has been a successful counterinsurgency tool since 1980s. All security operations were coordinated by this. Both SBPAC and CPM 43 had worked in coordination with each other, and to some extent situations were controlled in these areas (Liow & Pathan 2010). This dismantling of these institutions was very destructive for the region. The officials of these bodies had very good relations with the community leaders. These both also helped in maintaining the relation between security and intelligence authorities (Liow & Pathan 2010). The government abolished them, but could not provide any effective alternative in place of these two. Southern Border Provinces Peace Building Command was made by Thaksin in 2004 but it was highly politicized and could not work effectively²². Responsibility was transferred from army to police.

But in the year of 2004, these Southern provinces faced a series of violent attacks. Militants attacked many places, causing many deaths. It was on the 4th January that Royal Thai Army's 4th engineering battalion was attacked²³. This attack was followed by many bomb blasts, arson attacks on 20 schools, and three police posts were also attacked (Albritton: 2005). In April 2004 again attacks injured many people. In the past, victims of militant attacks were government officials mainly military or security officials, but in 2004 this nature was changed. This time targets involved teachers, villagers, security, government officials, religious leaders, etc. both from Buddhists and Muslims (Jory: 2007). Muslims were becoming victims because of their cooperative attitude towards local authority. Militants were confined earlier to the remote areas only with their tactics of guerrilla war, but during 2004 their attacks happened in cities and towns (Cline 2007). Militants even started organized and well coordinated attacks over police and army also. It was after these militant attacks in 2004 that they publicly accepted the intensity of the matter (Storey 2007).

²² Human Rights Watch, (2007), "No One Is Safe, Insurgent Attacks on Civilians in Thailand's Southern Border Provinces, URL: <http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/iraq0214webwcover.pdf>.

²³ International Crisis Group, (2005), "Southern Thailand: In Surgency, Not Jihad", URL: http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/asia/south-east-asia/thailand/098_southern_thailand_insurgency_not_jihad.pdf.

In response government adopted military security way. Martial law was declared in many districts of the provinces in the South. A deadline of seven days was given to the authorities to capture the militants responsible for the attacks. The heavy handed military approach of the government came with many atrocities. Albritton (2005) says that for many Muslims in South government itself became an instrument of horror. One of the examples of atrocity by security officials was the incident of the Krue Se Mosque. It was a religious sanctuary. It was the 56 anniversary of the Dusun Nyor rebellion that a series of violent attacks was there in Pattani district when around 32 militants took refuge in the mosque (McCargo 2007). In response without the concern of religious, sentimental aspects of the mosque, the military entered into it. Though all militants were collapsed, but it hurt the sentiment of the people in the South. Investigation the incident was demanded by many academicians and human rights activists. In response, one independent commission was appointed, it reported that the disproportionate security force was used in the mosque (Albritton 2004). According to this commission “the tactic of laying siege to the mosque, surrounding it with security forces, in tandem with the use of negotiation with the assailants, could have ultimately led to their surrender²⁴.” Thaksin’s insensitive response about this suppression again ignored the political aspect of the problem as he said “There is nothing to be afraid of they are drug addicts.”²⁵

Another incident was of Tak Bai. It is a town in Narathhiwat where people were protesting around one police station. People held a demonstration against the arrest of six local persons (Harish 2006). These persons were accused of providing weapons and other help to the militants who attacked in the region. Among these protestors who came there to protest many of them were not even aware of the reason, some were asked by friends, some were told there will be some lecture on Islam and some in hopes of seeing Thaksin and some were only curious passersby (Srisompob and Panyasak 2007). To disperse the crowd with water cannon, tear gas and then shooting was used. These protestors were stripped down and lie on the ground. After that they were made to crawl

²⁴Cited in Human Rights Watch, (2006), URL: <http://www.hrw.org/news/2006/04/27/thailand-investigate-krue-se-mosque-raid>.

²⁵ Cited in, Crisis Group Report, (2005), URL: [http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/asia/south-east-asia/thailand/098_southern_thailand_insurgency_not_jihad.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/asia/south-east-asia/thailand/098_southern_thailand_insurgency_not_jihad.pdf).

on their bellies to the army trucks²⁶. Seven were killed on the spot and many of them were taken to army camps by trucks. During this journey till army camp 78 people died out of suffocation in army trucks. This incident outraged people²⁷. Moreover Thaksin again made an insensitive comment after the incident that it was because of their having Ramadan fast, “It’s normal that their bodies could not handle it, it’s not about someone attacking them”²⁸. This type of insensitivity was condemned by all at national and international level. Later on a commission was set up for investigating the incident. Government commission that investigated the incident also accepted that excessive force was used and it asked for justice. The committee found the commander of the fifth infantry division was responsible for both incidents. Instead of justice, commander of the operation was promoted (Storey: 2007).

At ground level a policy of both ‘Iron Fist’ and ‘velvet glove’ was taken together, though it worsened the situation (Liow & Pathan 2006). A government survey was done by the government to categorize the villages on the parameters of their cooperation and degree of violence there. Some 1580 villages were surveyed and were categorized under red, yellow and green²⁹. According to this categorization economic support from centre was given. ‘Red’ villages were those where highest amounts of violence was found and they were given no money as the Thaksin himself said:

“We won’t give money to raid villages because we do not want money to spend on explosives, road spikes and assassinations”.

It was a kind of pressure on those who had sympathy with the insurgents, but on the other hand, this pressurizing policy in a way pushed people to seek other alternatives; sometimes towards militants.

In 2005 when the provinces were under martial law an emergency decree³⁰ was issued which transferred the emergency powers to the Prime minister. It gave the responsibility

²⁶Noor Farish A, *Thailand's smiles Fades Away*, (2004), <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/4017551.stm>

²⁷ It occurred in the Ramdan, a muslim month of fasting.

²⁸Cited in, Crisis Group report, 2005, URL: [http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/asia/south-east-asia/thailand/098_southern_thailand_insurgency_not_jihad.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/asia/south-east-asia/thailand/098_southern_thailand_insurgency_not_jihad.pdf).

²⁹ BBC News, Three hundred and fifty-eight villages are cited as red zones, including 200 in the province of Narathiwat., URL: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/4272893.stm>.

³⁰ Full name was ‘Executive Decree on Public Administration in Emergency Situations’. Emergency Decree, 2005, URL: <http://thailand.ahrchk.net/edecree/edecree2548-eng.pdf>.

to supervise the implementation of the law in the hands of government from the army. Under this decree interior ministry and police officials got the powers to handle the security operations alongside the military. This decree also included media censorship and detention without trial. Under martial law, police or military could hold suspects for seven days only, but this decree extended these to 30 days. According to the Crisis Group report “Thailand: Political Turmoil and the Southern Insurgency”, (2008) these security officials used ‘Seven+ 30’ formula where they keep the accused without trial seven under martial law and 30 days under emergency decree³¹. It also provided government officials immunity for law who kill suspects while performing their duties. This decree was opposed by many opposition parties, academicians, human rights members and the National Reconciliation Council also but the government insisted the necessity of such a decree to combat the problem in the south. Thaksin himself denied always that it is not a license to kill (as it was perceived among the southern provinces) it was a tool to fight with the separatist ideology and prolonged violence.

In march 2005 the government of Thailand took one more initiative, it formed an independent commission to report on the situation in the provinces of the South. It was named as National Reconciliation Commission (NRC). Many academicians, politicians, retired security officials and religious leaders were the members of this commission, but very few of them were from the South (Storey: 2004). Under the leadership of Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun it gave many radical proposals to solve the violence at different levels, such as at agency levels, structural and cultural levels. At the agency level report suggested to form an Unarmed peace unit (Shanti Sena) and to have dialogue with militants. It also suggested to change the structure at many levels, whether it is about the situation of law and order or about enhancing the social and economic condition. It stated that though structural gaps in law enforcement, judicial processes, etc. are also in other parts of Thailand, but due to the historical, cultural, linguistic, ethnic and religious distinctiveness of the South it creates severe impact on the public

³¹ During these 37 days they were denied access to lawyers and not allowed to meet the family members also. (International Crisis Group Report 2005, URL: http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/asia/south-east-asia/thailand/098_southern_thailand_insurgency_not_jihad.pdf).

(NRC: Report of the NRC 2006³²). The report says that these gaps create disbelief among the public so the law enforcement should be more careful and unified especially regarding judicial justice in these areas. In this context report also questioned the results of the emergency decree. In the context of the economic situation the report, while accepting the deterioration of the economy suggested the people should be given more rights to utilize the resources and not to pressurize the natural resources which lead to the poverty, lack of education and unemployment in the region. It suggested to adopt the Yawi Malay dialect as a second official language and to implement the Sharia law. In brief this report maintains that southern violence is a political problem that needs to be solved politically.

But by the time this report came to the government, Thaksin himself was facing a political crisis. So the report could not get much attention. This commission was the only political initiative taken by the Thaksin government otherwise, all other measures were heavily dependent on the military and the police. The state used martial law; emergency decrees etc. as the tools to control the situation. This heavy handed military response fomented suspicion and distrust between military and local population (Harish and Liow, 2007). The thing behind all these heavy handed tactics was that state never recognized the problem as a political one. Srisompomb and McCargo (2010) argue that manipulations were given by state to validate tougher security measures in the area. It kept on blaming the criminal gangs for the violence. The roots of the problem were never addressed by the state. Though once money was used to cure the problems, but the red zone districts were highly criticized as it strengthened the feeling of alienation in the public. All the repressive measures taken by the Thaksin government created an environment of the fear and insecurity among the public. Army and police were considered as those who prosecute not the one who protect.

Thaksin had ruled for many years due to his populist policies, he even won the elections again in 2005 and made government of majority but soon he was ousted by a bloodless

³²Report of the National Reconciliation Commission (2006), WEB: http://thailand.ahrchk.net/docs/nrc_report_en.pdf.

military coup. Instant reason behind the coup was the use of political power to strengthen its business and extend support base in the business community (Maisricrod 2007). It was a sell by Thaksin family of a Shin Corporation to an investment company of the Singapore that outraged people against him as they did not pay taxes over this cell. Before this also, Thaksin was criticized many times for his crony capitalism. It is considered that mishandling of this issue led to the coup against Thaksin's government in 2006. It is true that Thaksin's government more or less intensified the problem in the South due to its own policies. But it cannot be the only central or a major reason for the coup in 2006. As Harish and Liow (2007) argue that mishandling of the southern conflict was at peripheral to the elite politics at centre level that caused the coup.

State's Response Under Surayud Government

Though this coup was a major setback for the democracy, but people in the South had hopes of the new government to opt a different attitude towards the south (Harish & Liow 2007). This hope was the result of the leadership in the coup. It was General Sondhi Boonyaratkalin who was Thai Muslim and had given his support to the report of the NRC (Storey 2007). The military council nominated General Surayud³³ as interim Prime Minister and also gave a short term constitution. It was promised that in the 2007 elections will be held. It is a special characteristic of the Thai military coup. They do not control the whole government for long, but work as a savior of the system in the country (Maisricrod 2007). Whenever there had been a coup against government, military comes and holds the situation temporarily until the new elected government comes (Rodbamarung 2011). General Surayud made two issues his priority one was the political division and another was to end the insurgency in the South³⁴. General Surayud was a former army chief; he was a member of the King's Privy Council also. He himself had enough experience in counterinsurgency operations as he fought against the Thai-Communists insurgents in the 1960s. He left the army in 2003 and became a senior

³³ He was the only Prime Minister after 1992 who did not win the position by the elections. Asian Tribune, (2006), <http://www.asiantribune.com/?q=node/2252>.

³⁴BBC News, (2006), "Thailand's new leader starts work", URL: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/5397914.stm>.

adviser to the King by being a member of the Privy Council. Earlier, he always demanded that the army should be more accountable and it should never involve itself into the politics. It was very ironical that he himself took the post of prime minister by saying that he had to take the job “because of the necessity to address the country's problem” General Surayud issued a public apology for the policies adopted by earlier government. He said “I come here today to reach out to everyone and say: ‘It’s my fault. I am sorry³⁵’.” He apologized that as being a former army chief, he could not oppose the policies of Thaksin Shinawatra. This apology left positive impression and was appraised by the public (Storey 2007). It was important as Thaksin never apologized even after the heinous atrocities showing very unempathetic and insensitive attitude towards the people of the South. After this apology many effort were made to do justice. Charges against 56 protestors who were arrested during Tak Bai and were still in detention were dropped (Harish and Liow 2007). Compensation was agreed to those who had died in the police custody.

The government also initiated to have constructive dialogues with the militants of all the parties (Askew 2008). It was suggested by the National Reconciliation Council also. These dialogues were offered, but with the condition that independence will not be discussed at any cost. Surayud himself said that separation won't be allowed that would be the only condition. The constitution of the Thailand also does not allow the separation of any part. But these dialogues never came to success. The reason behind this is that militants saw it as a way of marking them for assassination.

The government of Surayud while adopting a soft approach towards the people of the South advocated about the big role of Sharia law in the region where 80% people are Malay Muslims (Askew 2008). Islamic education was once again promoted in the region (Liow 2009). The education department created a standardized curriculum for the screening of school owners and teachers so that undesirable teachers could be removed as well as it could prevent the teaching of Pattani nationalism (Storey 2008). At the economic level many new incentives regarding tax were given to the investors. Patani,

³⁵ The Nation, (2006), “Surayud apologises for govt's abuses in South”, URL: http://www.nationmultimedia.com/2006/11/03/headlines/headlines_30017938.php.

Yala, Narathiwat, Satun and Sonkhla were declared as SEZ (Special Economic Zone) (Tsuneishi 2008). Besides this, in 1993 there was one joint effort among Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand was started naming as Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT). It is a sub regional cooperative initiative to accelerate the growth of less developed provinces in these countries³⁶. The private sector was invited to promote the economy in these regions. It covered all the southern provinces of the Thailand such as Narathiwat, Pattani, Sonkhala, Satun, Yala etc. During Surayud's government many plans were revived³⁷. The most important policy was to revive three conflict management bodies. SBPAC which was dissolved along with CMP-43 by Thaksin Shinawatra were once again revived as these were the only mechanisms to deal with the conflict at ground level (Storey 2007). It dealt with the complaints regarding corruption, unjustified arrests and detention of suspected insurgents. Subcommittees were set up to investigate these matters. While investigating about these complaints, it even transferred two officials in 2007³⁸. It was under the increased authority of the SEPAC that now it could transfer even the soldiers otherwise earlier its powers were to transfer only civil servants and the police. One more step was to revive ISOC (Internal Security Operations Command). Both SBPAC and CPM-43 both had to report ISOC. ISOC was originally established to fight against the communist insurgents. It was later given the responsibility of whole internal security. This new structure seemed to be a well organized one, but in practice it took a longer time to work properly. Meanwhile the government was changed and the roles also for these institutions.

But all the policies of Surayud were somehow failed. In 2007 the highest casualty rate was noticed since the violence of 2004. According to the data collected by Political scientist Srisompob Jitpiromsri in 2006 1877 people were killed in violence while in 2007 this number reached to 2295. The reason behind the increased violence even after the soft approach by the government was that Surayud government could not make progress on many important issues like freedom of culture, education, justice for earlier atrocities (Askew 2008) (Storey 2007). When the time for elections came more near he

³⁶Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle, WEB: <http://www.imtgt.org/>.

³⁷ In 2007 meeting of IMG-GT was held in Sonkhala only, <http://www.imtgt.org/>.

³⁸ International Crisis Group Report, (2008), "Thailand: Political Turmoil and the Southern Insurgency", URL: http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/asia/south-east-asia/thailand/b80_thailand__political_turmoil_and_the_southern_insurgency.pdf.

lacked the time and credibility. As an interim government it got only less than two years to work before it could implement its agendas and policies, the political situation was changed with the coming of government. According to Harish and Liow (2007) Surayud government inherited many problems from Thaksin government. They further argue that Thaksin's policy mistakes set the Thai government back several decades in terms of critical intelligence gathering. So the Surayud government was clueless about the leadership of insurgents³⁹. It was the SBPAC which was though revived, but could not work to its best as it faced many problems. One was that it lacked the staff because of lack of funding. It could not win the trust of the public this time. The first thing was that its director was not from the South and his experience was very less in the South. On the other hand this time it was under the authority of ISOC, which was headed by the army. All these factors, not only affected the efficiency of its work, but also its reputation among public faced decline. Meanwhile, increased violence worked as an obstacle in attracting investment from outsiders even after the IMT-GT was a quite good platform to boost up the economy of this region. The unsecure environment, even led to the migration of Thai Buddhists from this region which worsened the economy. All these measures which were adopted by the Surayud government needed time and overall cooperation from all authorities which was lacking. Soon elections were declared and new government came with a different approach to deal with this problem.

State's Response under Samak Government

These elections removed the military rule in Thailand and democratic government was established under the leadership of Samak. Samak Sundaravej was from PPP, People's Power Party. The formation of this party in itself was a result of Thaksin's downfall. After the coup in 2006 Thaksin went to Britain under self exile and his party was dissolved in 2007 by a constitutional court for violating the election law⁴⁰. Many members of TRT were not allowed to enter in politics for five years. Rest of the

³⁹ International Crisis Group, (2008), "Thailand: Political Turmoil and the Southern Insurgency, URL: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/south-east-asia/thailand/B080-thailand-political-turmoil-and-the-southern-insurgency.aspx>.

⁴⁰Ibid, Pg. 35.

members of this Thai Rak Thai party formed a new party named as People's Power Party (Lintner 2009). In the elections this party won and a new a coalition government was formed. It was five party alliances that further faced a political crisis (Prasirtsuk 2009). As soon as the PPP party came to power speculations were started about the end of Thaksin's self exile. Samak himself had been a supporter of Thaksin. This government was seen as a "trojan horse" that would eventually ease the reentry of Thaksin in the politics⁴¹. It was not long that these speculations started turning into reality. After the coup military dominated rule Thailand actually changed many provisions in the constitution on 1997. These reforms were actually not in line with the development of democracy. It changed the pattern of representation in the senate. Earlier all members in the senate were elected members while after reforms only half members of the senate (76) were elected others were appointed (Prasirtsuk 2009). In a way representation of elite members was increased. These reforms also gave more powers to anti corruption authorities and constitutional courts⁴². It is important to note that all these initiatives were taken to control the re entry of Thaksin and his party. But these reforms or the changed law became a threat to the new government. This government tried to amend these changes which were done during the coup environment. One of the proposed amendments was about abolishing 'Assets Examinations Committee'. This committee had investigated the charges against Thaksin and his party. There were two reasons behind it. First was this government wanted to help Thaksin, who was barred from politics for five years, another reason was very much the result of a coalition government (Prasirtsuk 2009). This government was formed with the help of five small parties out them three were facing charges of corruption. According to newly added provisions⁴³ if these charges were proved, these parties would have been barred also for five years and it could raise questions over the stability of the Samak government itself. Under all these situations when the

⁴¹ BBC News (2008), "Unravelling Thailand's political turmoil", URL: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7471180.stm>.

⁴² In may 2007 it was constitutional court that dissolved the Thai Rak Thai party (Chachavalpongpun 2009).

⁴³ Article 237: Election fraud by board of directors of the party will result in the complete dissolution of the party and five years ban for the members of the board of directors.

Article 309: It sets up the Asset Scrutiny Commission, Prasirtsuk (2009).

government tried to amend the provisions, it faced huge protest. These protests were led by the People's Alliance of Democracy (PAD) which was the only opposition party in Thailand. Samak was blamed for being a puppet of Thaksin. Three ministers of this government were forced by protestors to resign one among them was Foreign Minister also (Ockey 2008). This incidence raised a question of legitimacy of the government. PAD became more aggressive after Preah Vihear was listed as a world heritage site of Cambodia by UNESCO (Chachavalpongpun 2009). The mishandling of this case stirred nationalism in PAD and more demonstrators stepped up to protest. Political conditions were more exacerbated when the National Counter Corruption Commission was set up to investigate the charges about violation of the constitution of the whole of Cabinet.

Under all these circumstances, it was obvious that many serious issues in Thailand could not get proper attention from this government. The government due to its nature of being a coalition government could not take strong steps in many fields. It kept on struggling for survival and its stability. All this resulted in the stronghold of the military in the Southern provinces also. As Prasirtsuk (2009) claims that PPP based governments have given up on the Southern problem. The military now took the full responsibility to handle the problem in the South. This political crisis in the country also distracted the public from the issues of the South⁴⁴. All these situations explicitly presented the power relations between government and army. The more the government is unstable or uncertain more power's military enjoys. Samak had good relations with Commander-in-Chief General Anupong Paochinda which was perhaps the result of its uncertain government. The growing relations with military resulted in full control of military to tackle the South (Jitpiromsri and McCargo 2010). The existing institutional mechanisms were all affected by this changing nature of authority. ISOC under which other institutions were collectively working which was uniting unit among all was now fully controlled by the military. Anupong was made director of ISOC and was handled all

⁴⁴ Crisis Group Asia Report, (2008), Thailand: Political Turmoil and the Southern Insurgency, URL: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/south-east-asia/thailand/B080-thailand-political-turmoil-and-the-southern-insurgency.aspx>.

responsibilities. This increased influence of military of institutions affected the working. Now SBPAC became weak and one of the reasons was its subordination to military⁴⁵.

Under the leadership of Anupong a well planned strategy was adopted to handle the problem which was there for long. This strategy was at two fronts, one was giving response at the level of military and another was on the developmental basis (Charoensin-o-Larn 2010). It was a four year long strategy where first two years (2007-09) were about first front where with the use military action violence would come under control⁴⁶. In this phase, the targets were militants and purpose was to end the violent activities. The next two years (2010-2011) were to be basically focused on the sustainable development process and strengthening the community at different levels (Aschew: 2008).

The first part of the strategy was actively started as Anupong reallocated the military units. New military units were sent to the South from other part of the country. Four army regions were deployed in Southern provinces Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat. This rearrangement increased the number of troops from 26000 to 38000. Earlier army region, which was responsible for the whole of the South was now left responsible only for the five districts of Sonkhala (Charoensin-o-Larn 2010). This rearrangement was very much in line with the targets of the above stated strategy. Deployment of different army regions was to enhance competition and efficiency of their work (Lintner 2009). Many incentives were also provided like if they perform well they will be promoted to the post of regional chief. Along with this restructuring, patrolling activities were also increased. In late 2007 the military companies were splited into small platoons.

According to some army officers whose interviews were taken by Crisis group (2008) in Patani, only 40 units were divided into 150 platoons. So in the coming years, both the number and activities to control were increased in the military. The military also tried to control the red zone villages which were declared a red zone under the rule

⁴⁵ Ibid, page 6.

⁴⁶ This strategy was devised after a conference of Senior personnels in which a phased timetable was adopted to end the problem in 4 years.

of Thaksin government on the basis of more violent activities out there⁴⁷. Sweeping campaigns were started to make these villages more like others.

On the other front of this strategy which was about the development of this region, few efforts were done in this respect also. Efforts were done to win the hearts and mind of people. ‘Nuyay Pattana Santi’ units were set up which dealt with peace and development. Developmental works were implemented by this. Each village was provided economic support of 1 million Baht for the projects. Due to these cumulative efforts by the military and some development projects that a decline in violence was there in the year 2008. The military was successful in Yala where militants hold was strong. Local people⁴⁸ from this region also came forward and declared that now they do not support the militants in any way (Askew: 2008). But violent attacks could not come to end. Instead of their less numbers their intensity was increased. Now high profile attacks were done, which were carefully targeted. Many scholars analyze that more focus during this period was given to military operations. The non military approach was not that progressive as the conflict management system became weak. One example of it was the SBPAC which could not work as effectively as earlier due to the impact of an army. To resolve the problem dialogues with insurgent are important, but it could not happen in this period. There were two reasons behind it. One is that there is no identification of who the militant’s leaders are. Government is not clear with whom to have dialogues. After attacks, none of the organization took responsibility, it is a complicated aspect of Thai insurgency. On the other hand government itself was not also very keen about it. Samak himself denied for negotiations. Once he blamed the insurgent organizations that they were trying to internationalize the question while a leader of PULO announced that failure of the talks were because of the aggressive nature of military (Funston 2010).

Under all these situations it can be said that during the government of Samak due to the national politics appropriate attention was not given to the Southern conflict. More and

⁴⁷Asia Times, (2012), Better-armed, Better-trained Thai insurgents, URL: http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/NA12Ae01.html.

⁴⁸ Among these group there was one of 53 women who were all member of PURMUDI who declared that they no longer support the insurgents (Aschew: 2008).

more rights were given to military⁴⁹. Military handled it with hard ways of its own. It resulted in short term gains such as numbers of attacks were in decline, but for long term nothing much was achieved. One example for this short term was clearly seen in the “Yaha model”⁵⁰. Yaha is a district in Yala province where many times military clashed with militants and killed many of them including their leader also. ‘Peace Outreach Centre’ was also established there. ISOC presented it as a model for example, but it could not do it for long (Aschew 2008). One more effort by the government was to understand the gaps between public and military, which was considered a result of misunderstanding. By many statements ISOC tried to clear the situations that how insurgents use the uniforms of police and military⁵¹. Support from the media was also asked so that efforts could be done collectively and trust among public for government authorities could be enhanced. Media members were invited from other regions to check the evidences and to attend seminars about the condition in the region. It was claimed that the media is working with the state officials. But situations like this could not continue, soon after a few months this district again faced violent attacks. Due to many powers of military many cases of human rights abuse were reported. Martial law, internal security act, etc. was still continued and many suspected were killed. Many civilians were killed in the operations done by the military. According to Barun decrease of violence was the result of only heavy tactics by the military, when military strength will be reduced these incidents will occur again⁵². General Anuphong himself was worried about the growing mistreatment with the suspects by the military⁵³. All the mistakes by officials regarding security measures were well taken by the insurgents as opportunity; this gave them a space to flourish more.

In 2008 the constitutional court in Thailand banned the party of Samak in case of election fraud. Though this was the last incident, but there was a long political crisis going on in

⁴⁹ International Crisis Group, (2008), “Thailand: Political Turmoil and the Southern Insurgency”, 80, URL: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/south-east-asia/thailand/B080-thailand-political-turmoil-and-the-southern-insurgency.aspx>.

⁵⁰Ibid, Pg. 47.

⁵¹Cited in Askew, Mark (2008), “Thailand’s Intractable War”, *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 30(2): 209.

⁵²Ibid, Pg. 4.

⁵³ Human Rights Watch, (2010), “Targets of Both Sides, Violence against Students, Teachers, and Schools in Thailand’s Southern Border Provinces”.

the county (Ockey 2009). Many protests were happening against this government. There were many reasons behind it. Samak government was always considered as favouring to Thaksin. Cabinet of Samak government was very unpopular among the public. As it is earlier mentioned it was a party originated from Thai Rak Thai only. The Board of Directors of Thai Rak Thai was banned from politics for 5 years, which were guilty of election fraud, so instead of them many of their spouses and relatives took their place. These people were not competent and experienced in the politics (Pratirustak 2009). As a result three ministers of this government were forced to resign one among them was Foreign Minister also (Charoensin-o-Larn 2010). This incidence raised a question of legitimacy of the government. Along with all these, economic situations also became worse as like other Southeast Asian countries, Thailand also faced rising oil and other commodity prices. The government of Samak could not produce any credible policy to address these problems.

State's Response under Abhisit Jejjajiva Government

Political conditions were more exacerbated when the National Counter Corruption Commission was set up to investigate the charges about violation of the constitution of the whole of the Cabinet. This gave a chance to the opposition party without facing elections. Abhisit Jejjajiva became the next prime minister of the country. He was from opposition party 'Pie Thai Party' which was one among the group of many parties. In late 2008 Pie Thai Party broke away from the five party coalitions. But this party was the largest in parliament so many times. Thaksin supporters raise the question about the legitimacy of this government also. It can be said this government has started working among the political conflicts. Clashes between red shirts⁵⁴ and yellow shirts⁵⁵ also

⁵⁴Red Shirts are united under a party named as United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship (UDD). They are supports of Thaksin who was removed by military coup in 2006. Its members are mainly from north and northeastern rural workers (Connors 2011).

⁵⁵ Yellow Shirts are represented by People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD). Its members are against Thaksin. Mostly urban middle class, royalist etc. belongs to this group (Connors 2011).

began. Pro Thaksin or the red shirts questioning about the verdict of the constitutional court. Many of them claimed that its decision was the result of conspiracy among traditional elites which was led by Prem Tinsulanonda who wants to destroy Thaksin (Prasirtsuk: 2010). But the coming of Abhisit Jejjajiva as Prime Minister gave hope to the people of Southern Thailand. There were many reasons for the optimistic environment. “He was highly qualified, respectable, had a clean image and above all he was from Bangkok” (Jitpiromsri, McCargo: 2010). This government came with many promises such as creation of a “Southern Cabinet”, judicial reforms and localization of security arrangements (but none of them were introduced) (McDormett: 2013). Abhisit himself declared that political solution should be preferred rather than military for southern problem. He also said that success in maintaining security can be achieved by withdrawing the troops. But somehow these words were not followed by the works of his government. The first among the many policies adopted in this region was the increasing or deploying many more military persons. An additional 4000 troops were deployed⁵⁶. In these southern regions already 30000 troops were there and one third of them were paramilitary forces. But on another front two developments during this government were pushed. One of them was that many efforts were started in the context of quasi amnesty policy under the provision of Internal Security Act (Chambers 2010). This way of dealing with insurgents had been an important tool in handling communist problem also. Internal Section included section 21 under which any person who was criminal could have one more chance. All allegations on him could be dropped in once and the person was sent for six months training and rehabilitation program⁵⁷. This was not a simple process and many times lack of initiatives from officers used to delay as it demanded approval from the court and cabinet and procedure was also not clear. So even after the inclusion of this section amnesty processes were at a halt. But with the efforts of a new government this section was focused once again and a four step clear mechanism was created to process the rehabilitation of the offenders. The first step was that a task force commander will head a committee, which will ensure the surrender of

⁵⁶ These were deployed under the 15th infantry division.

⁵⁷ International Crisis Group, (2010), “Stalemate in Southern Thailand”, URL: [http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/asia/south-east-asia/thailand/B113%20-%20Stalemate%20in%20Southern%20Thailand.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/asia/south-east-asia/thailand/B113%20-%20Stalemate%20in%20Southern%20Thailand.pdf).

the criminal with the help of family members, lawyers and civil society members. At the second stage police investigation was to be held to collect all the evidences of the committed crime. It was further followed by the legal consent of the criminal and family by SBPAC. At last the reports were sent to the police and if the director of the ISOC approved that then the prosecutor had to file a case for the dismal in court and it would further take the person to the training program⁵⁸.

Though this program was a commendable step by the military and the government as it could have encouraged the militants to return home but practically results were not that satisfactory. Militants and their families were very skeptical about the program. Some of the militants were in trouble that what if they use gained information from them during the inquiry, against them only in the future (Askew 2010). At the level of security personnel also there was a fear that this section could be misused by the militants. There was a chance that after gaining the training they can again join the insurgency. On the other victims of these militant violence were among those who were not happy as it was not justice for them. People who had done the serious crime could get pardons with six months training. All these different perspectives were there, but it could be said that if implemented well it was an initiative that could have changed the mind of militants (Prasirtsuk 2010). But it was implemented in four districts of Songkhla only. There were speculations that if implemented well it could have replaced emergency decree.

But only this initiative was not enough, there were many social- economic problems that this region was facing. For that many administrative changes were required. There was a long demand about the reformations in the functioning of SBPAC especially about its independence from military controlled ISOC. This demand was not very new, during the period of Samak government also a law was proposed, but due to the political crisis in the country it was not passed (Askew 2008). But with the new government initiative this bill was again proposed and passed also. It gave more independence and powers to SBPAC. It was empowered as a small ministry. A different committee was set up to approve the strategies which were proposed by it. This committee was called “Strategic

⁵⁸International Crisis Group, (2010), “Stalemate in Southern Thailand”, URL: [http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/asia/south-east-asia/thailand/B113%20-%20Stalemate%20in%20Southern%20Thailand.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/asia/south-east-asia/thailand/B113%20-%20Stalemate%20in%20Southern%20Thailand.pdf).

Committee on Development in Southernmost Provinces”. Many ministers and civil representatives from Southern districts were members of it. It was headed by Prime minister only. SBAPC also got the powers to transfer the civilian officials; transfer of police officers was also under its powers (Wheeler 2010). This bill, along with the SBPAC gave many more powers to its advisory council⁵⁹. This council was a very important part of it as the eligibility of its members itself fulfilled the function of making a strong bridge between government and the public. It comprises of representatives of the local government, provincial Islamic councils, private and government Islamic schools, media and businessmen. The main task of this advisory council was to review and evaluate the reports and it was empowered to give its outputs directly to the minister or Prime minister. All these powers, which were given to these bodies enhanced the civilian role in this region (Poocharoen 2010). This paved way for the more local participation and consequently a level of satisfaction was achieved regarding justice and development. It is also worthy to mention that this government took many measures to enhance the role of civilians in the region, but powers of the military were not diminished.

These measures taken by the government seemed to be very enthusiastic in diminishing the insurgency, but it was not all needed. This problem had its socioeconomic roots that could not be addressed properly. Soon in 2010 protests erupted against the Abhisit Jejjajiva government. These protests were led by UDD. In 2009 also Red Shirts as protesting the government forced it to cancel the summit of ASEAN, which was to be held in Pattaya (Dalpino 2012). After one year Red shirts demanded Abhisit to resign and to call for fresh elections. They considered the Abhisit government as illegitimate and a puppet of the military. Protestors controlled Bangkok and had clashes with the military that resulted in death of around 50 protestors. After a long standoff between protesters and government, government declared to hold an election.

⁵⁹ It was formed in 2006 by a prime ministerial order (Prasirtsuk 2010).

State's Response under Yingluck Shinawatra Government

These political changes once again interrupted the efforts started by Abhijit government. In mid 2011 Yingluck Shinawatra became the next Prime Minister after the elections. She was the younger sister of Thaksin Shinawatra, who had been Prime Minister for almost three years. In May 2014 constitutional court ordered to step down to this government also. Yingluck Shinawatra was found guilty of abusing her power in many manners. Before this decision Thailand faced huge protest from the public which was followed by military intervention which dismissed the constitution. Military controlled legislative assembly further passed the impeachment against Yingluck Shinawatra and she was also banned for 5 years in politics. The small period of this government struggled with its identity as it was seen as a puppet government of the Thaksin and his allies. Critics considered her as a proxy for Thaksin, who was living abroad. When it comes to the policies towards South during this period, the government tried to handle it politically along with many security and administrative measures. From the time of election campaigning Yingluck proposed certain level of autonomy for the region. But soon due to the opposition from the military idea of autonomy was never discussed. It also planned to establish 'Special economic Zone' and to abolish the emergency decree. But all these plans could not be implemented due to various reasons. The approach of government was summarized by Yingluck Shinawatra herself as once she claimed "Thailand was willing to engage in the process of inclusive dialogue with all relevant stakeholders and groups to address root causes of the problem within the framework of the constitution".

One of the most focused elements in the policy of this government has been 'compensation'. It included a long time period, such as victims of Tak Bai and Krue the mosque in 2004. Both the families of state security officials and who were detained without charge got the compensation. A compensation committee was set up to identify the beneficiaries. Victims of red shirt protest and military crackdown were also given

compensation⁶⁰. Though the compensation scheme was to pay for injustice but it was criticized by the families. First thing was the amount of compensation was changed again and again, which raised questions about the intention of the government. Earlier it was said that families of Tak Bai and Krue Se mosque will receive 7.5 million Baht each but after a few months it was changed to 4 million Baht only. Meanwhile, these victims were identified as people who died while fighting security forces not due to the state abuse. This claim hurts the people who thought compensation is the result of state recognition of security official's mistakes. Compensation was also given to the victims of the 2010 protests. According to Human Rights Watch world Record 2013 many families feared that financial compensation has been offered as a substitute for full investigation and commitment to bring justice.

In 2012 a new National Security Policy (2012- 2014) was approved. It was in the Southern Border provinces and its report worked as direction to resolve the problem in the South. In drafting policy research and discussions among the academic institutions, administrators and security officials, civil societies and most importantly SBPAC advisory council, which was formed during Abhisit government, played an important role. National Security Policy was important in its two recommendations. First was that it supported the dialogue process with the insurgents who are ideologically motivated. On the other hand it also encouraged dialogue process about political decentralization. In a way this policy recognized the political nature of the problem. Both security and development strategies were addressed in this policy.

The process of peace talks was started soon. One important deal was signed in Malaysia with BRN, one of the groups of insurgents in South Thailand. It was different with earlier ones. On one hand BRN left its nature of complete secrecy and openly communicated on the other Malaysia played a role of broker in the deal⁶¹. Malaysia has always opted a balanced approach towards insurgency in Southern Thailand. It had to

⁶⁰Cited in International Crisis Group report, 2012, "The Evolving Conflict in the South", URL: [http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/asia/south-east-asia/thailand/241-thailand-the-evolving-conflict-in-the-south.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/asia/south-east-asia/thailand/241-thailand-the-evolving-conflict-in-the-south.pdf).

⁶¹International Crisis Group, Asia Report, 2015, "Southern Thailand Dialogue in Doubt", WEB: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/asia/south-east-asia/thailand/270-southern-thailand-dialogue-in-doubt.pdf>.

keep two important sides, one about its own internal security which may hinder if terrorists spread in this country. But besides this, commonalities between the people as they are linked not only with religion, but also with ethnicity and culture, has been a great concern for Malaysia (Funston: 2010). So Malaysia helped in the peace settlement process between NSC⁶² and BRN. It was publicly announced by both countries; Malaysia and Thailand. For the first time Thai insurgents were given recognition by the state as their negotiating partner (McCargo 2014). Their political demands were also heard by the government. This dialogue process was seen as Bangkok's most determined and public effort to peacefully resolve the conflict and it also clarified the actors (Wheeler: 2014). The outcome of this dialogue was Ramadan Peace Initiative; it was a voluntary and non binding initiative by Malaysia based on consensus in this region. It was about the reduction of violence on both sides in the month of Ramadan. It also failed as both sides, neither government nor militants were committed to this and because of its non binding nature. (McCargo: 2014) (McDermott 2013). After it dialogue process was not stopped in Aug. 2013, efforts were made to include other insurgent groups also such as PULO but nothing could come to a great success. As Wheeler (2014) rightly said, that proponents of dialogue had to contend with a skeptical military, hostile political opposition and dubious media.

Many changes in the structure of security and administration of this region were also done by this government. One year extension was approved by the government for ISA in the five districts. Rotation plan for army units was also implemented in 2012. Army units from other areas were also included in this rotation method. More use of paramilitary forces was seen during this time period, which was because of more locals being part of it who well understood the community. Under the new leadership of Thawee Sodsong, SBPAC also opted new ways to deal with the problem. Spending patterns of it were changed as more money was spent in the form of grants. Many Islamic schools, committees, etc. were the top beneficiaries of the spending. Earlier more functional use was preferred by this institution. For the time this policy was accepted by all beneficiaries, Thawee also got popularity, but it was a short minded

⁶² Lt. General Paradong and Police colonel Thawee Sodsrong led the delegation of Thai government who have close ties with Thaksin (Wheeler 2014).

policy. All these efforts were temporary in nature and could have changed with the coming of any new officer.

While analyzing broadly it seems that government of Yingluck Shinawatra tried to take the problem as a political one and many efforts were done in this line but somehow it could not get much success. This period also witnesses some deadliest attacks by insurgents. Along with many other bombing incidents, attack in Yala, which is the commercial hub for southern provinces and also not much prone to this conflict shocked everyone⁶³. Bombs were targeted over crowded commercial places. Many observers said that it was the outrage because of Thaksin's attempt to negotiate with insurgents by meeting some of the exiled militants in Malaysia⁶⁴.

The problem in South reemerged with more intensity in 2004 and till 2013 this area had suffered with violence. The state has continuously tried to control it whether it is by use of military or sometimes by setting up administrative agencies. But still the problem is simmering. After the analysis of different efforts, many common factors can be identified that affect the policy formation for this region such as, role of the military as an important agency, domestic national level politics, and the most important is the political instability in Thailand.

Military: Military has been the dominant power in the South after 2004. The military has been never in favor of the idea of any sort of autonomy to the region (McCargo 2008). It supports special security laws as an important tool to handle insurgency. Mainly three securities laws are there implemented in most of the parts of southern districts, the martial Law (1914), ISA (2005) and Emergency decree (2005). Governments in Thailand cannot ignore military as it has played an important role in shaping the politics of Thailand. After the downfall of absolute monarchy in 1932 military Thailand has seen 12 coups and every coup gives a right to intervene to the military. Military claims that it promotes and safeguards democratic system with the king as a head (Rodbamrung: 2011).

⁶³The Guardian, 2012, "Bomb blasts kill 11 in southern Thailand", URL: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/mar/31/thailand-bomb-blasts-yala>.

⁶⁴ Thaksin met exiled militants in Kuala Lumpur in Dec. 2012.(McCargo 2014).

Elite Politics: Politics at national level impacts the attitude of government towards the problem. Sometimes personalities have clashed and impact the policy pattern directly. It is a fact that military in Thailand works as savior of monarchy. Many people who favour monarchy have their influence through military. One important personality is Prem Tinsulonda who works as an adviser to the king. It is a fact that weak political parties have been subservient to his command (Pawacapan: 2015). It was considered that clash between Thaksin and Prem had an impact over national politics as well as policy making in Southern Thailand. Harish and Liow (2007) also claim that overthrow of Thaksin was due to national politics. They claim that Thaksin's attempt to strengthen and consolidate his power over security forces alienated a significant faction of the army that in turn gave their allegiance to the palace. During the period of PM Abhisit also red shirts kept on claiming that constitutional decision that removed the Samak government was the conspiracy by Prem from the palace against Thaksin and his supporters. These examples show how the elite politics have impacted the politics on the ground.

Political instability has been a major hindrance in implementation of policies many times. Political instability in Thailand shows a political divide in the country. Though this divide sometimes looks like a divide among classes, but Charoensin-o-Larn (2010) explains it as different views on the fundamental constitution of Thai democracy. He further explains that there are two versions of democracy in Thailand. One is elite-led democracy which is led by PAD under the label of democratic government with a king as head of state. The other view of democracy, according to him is of a mass based populist form of democracy which is led by UDD supporters of Thaksin (Dalpino 2012). This divides given birth to coups again and again. After the coup in 2006 governments that came to power have struggled for their existence. During the time of the Thaksin report of the NRC which was perhaps the single most political step taken, could not proceed due to the political crisis as coup happened in the same year. The government of Surayud also restructured the administration in an appropriate way. But before could work and implement proper elections came and with new government new policies were brought. Samak government was mostly involved in saving Thaksin and then its own

existence as there were protests at national level against it. It was this crisis again that the government had to rely on military to tackle the issue in the South.

Autonomy for Southern Thailand: A Possible Solution?

Autonomy as a solution has always been discussed for the region. Many analysts say that a certain level of decentralization is required to solve this issue. But it is considered against royal prestige in Thailand as all see it with deeply related to the pride of the nation. Mala Sathian (2009) has correctly said that national (Thai) identity has been the core of state policy. It is because the Thai constitution declares the state as a unitary and indivisible. To advocate autonomy could be considered a treasonous act of disrespect towards the monarchy (McCargo 2009). But few people like Parwase Wasi, Srisompob and Chavalit Yonghaiyudh have proposed different forms of autonomy for this region. Their proposals show three types of approaches towards autonomy. McCargo (2010) explains them as

- Regionalization
- Administrative reform
- Devolution.

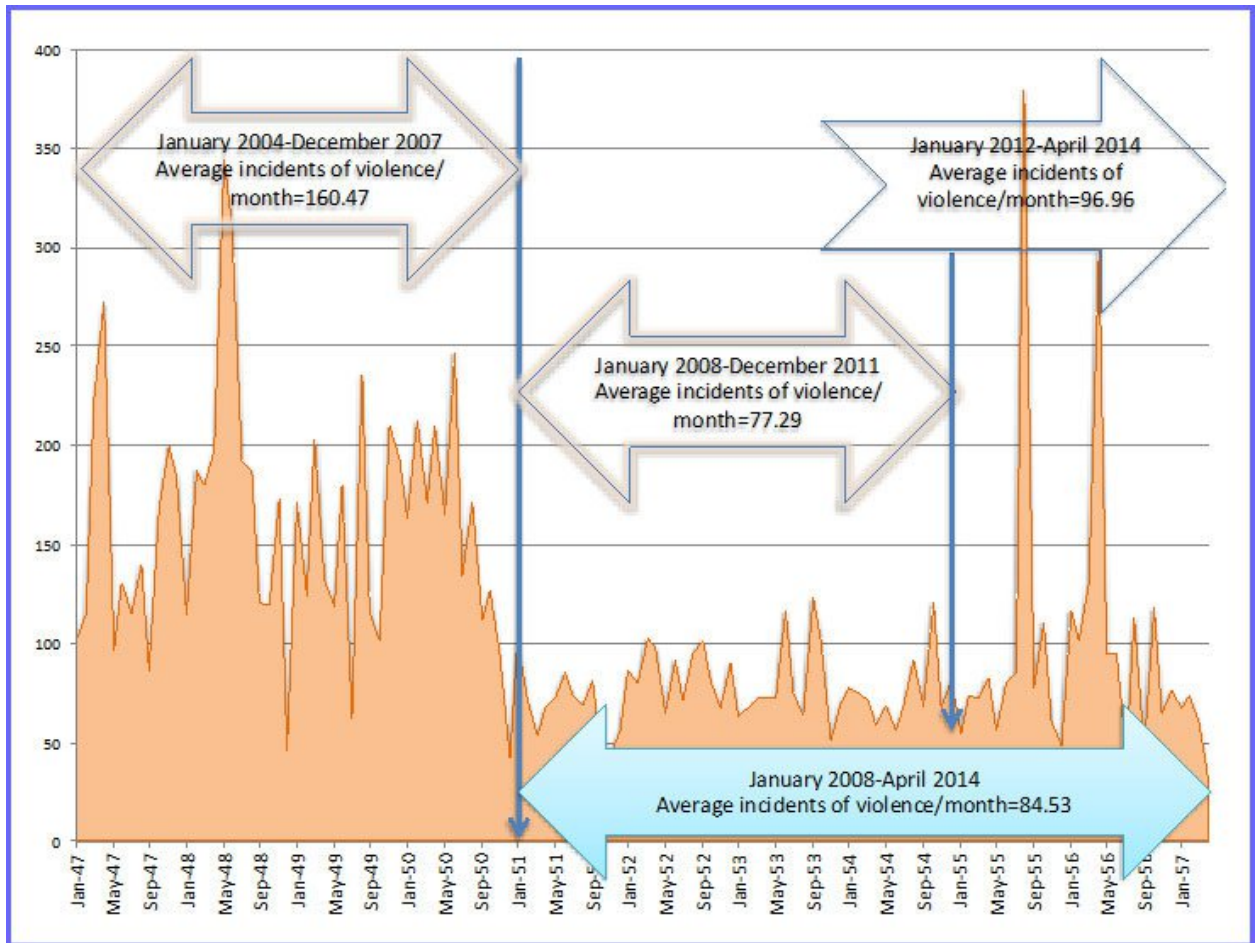
Regionalization advocates to many small regional units with autonomy, while devolution emphasizes on the level of representation that should be increased at both local or regional level. In general all these proposals suggest that restructure of the administration is required. But for Thai elite and royalists any kind of autonomy may threaten the security and unity of the country. McCargo (2010) points out many obstacles in the way of autonomy for the region such as; constitutional barriers, linguistic barriers, lack of political will, the disguised nature of militants and less concerned Thai attitude of Malay Muslims, etc. Though many scholars have agreed with the argument that this problem needs a political solution, but there are many hindrances to this as discussed above. It has been observed that during the election campaigns,

many leaders have talked about certain autonomy, but after coming in power this issue is forgotten.

The responses of state in this long period (2001-13) had been revolving around a few strategies. Military security is the first one, whether it is just after the attacks or in less violent conditions military has been dominant in the region. It cannot be denied that to control the insurgency this strategy is required, but this cannot be the permanent solution. Besides this government also opted a conciliatory approach which also can be seen in the form of establishing institutions like SBPAC but this institution also had been politicized many times which diverts it from the whole purpose that is developed. The third pillar of State's policy in Thailand had been dialogue process with insurgents, but it is the most failed one. One reason for this failure is the secret nature of insurgent group which makes it very tough for the government to work with. The problem requires a comprehensive political solution which should include both short term and long term efforts.

CHAPTER 3: IMPACT OF THE INSURGENCY

Insurgency in Southern Thailand reemerged in 2004 with a more violent nature and since then these areas are facing a series of attacks time to time. Violence in the South has affected every aspect of the Malay Muslims. Many lives have gone in several attacks sometimes it is bombing and sometimes arson attacks (Sarosi and Sombatpoonsiri 2011). This long protracted insurgency affects the routine everyday life of people. Many people have lost their lives while those who are alive live in an environment of fear and insecurity (Askew 2009). To look at the overall effects of the violence, it is important to analyze its nature or intensity. Violence after 2004 can be categorized under three periods to analyze the intensity of the loss (Srisompob 2012). Phase one is 2004- 2007 when severe cases of death and injuries occurred almost every month, though with some fluctuations, sometimes less or more. This phase witnessed political conflict at national level too, that resulted in politicization of all policies in the South. Phase two from mid 2007 was with lesser incidents, but as DSW in its report explains it as a phase of 'qualitative violence'. Srisompob (2012) interprets this term that though the number of incidents decreased, but each attack caused higher deaths and injuries. Third phase, which is over 2009 again showing increasing attacks.



Source: Deep South Watch,

2014

Victims of this violence have been security forces, government officials, Buddhists and Malay Muslims (the majority of whom are those who supported government officials). According to Jitpiromsri (2012) in between 2004 to 2011, 4846 people had lost their lives out of them 49.9 % are civilians. These militants always continue to maintain the environment of fear and violence in Southern districts especially in villages. According to DSW 12.2% of all deaths till 2011 were sub district chiefs, village chief and other village defense volunteers. Many civilians who were killed and often are targeted by militants are categorized into four groups by Human Rights Watch Report (2010). Firstly, there are Buddhist Thai civilians who become targets as they work in cooperation of government. They are also considered as part of the Thai government policy of spreading Thai culture and effort to change demographic condition of these regions. Secondly, ordinary Thai Buddhists, Buddhist monks also come under this category. Thirdly, there are Malay

Muslims⁶⁵ who cooperate with Thai officials and fourthly, that Malay Muslim who try not to cooperate with militants. From Jan. 2004 to 2012 total 12333 violent incidents occurred causing resulting in 14,890 casualties (5,377 dead and 9,513 injured)⁶⁶.

But this is not the only loss that the public had tolerated; they face exploitation from state security also. This situation of insurgency in the South is responded by different martial and security laws time to time. Mainly three securities laws are there implemented in most of the parts of southern districts, the martial Law (1914), ISA (2005) and Emergency decree (2005). Under these laws, security officials get special powers. Treatment by security officials towards public have often been questioned by human rights activists as it is considered that under suspicion many innocent people are tortured. Few incidents like Tak Bai and Krue Se Mosque are direct examples of these atrocities. Both incidents witnessed torture and even death of many innocent people by acts of security. It was in the case of Tak Bai when many protesters were taken to army camps by trucks. During this journey till army camp 78 people died out of suffocation in army trucks (Harish and Liow 2007). According to AHRC report (2012)⁶⁷, ‘torture by state security exists both during the time of formal conflict and as a part of routine law enforcement, especially after the declaration of martial law in the region. Report of AHRC claims that though the government has the lack of political will to solve the issue. Thailand has become a state party of the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT⁶⁸) but Thailand had not passed any national law regarding this treaty. In its absence state’s responsibility is rarely proved that results into more impunity in the region. One example is the cases of

⁶⁵ It is observed that Muslims are less targeted, but they are more often victims of assassination, whereas Buddhists are targeted by bomb attacks which are of less discriminatory nature. (International Crisis Group: 2012).

⁶⁶ DSW (2012), 9 MONTHS INTO THE 9TH YEAR: Amidst the enigmatic violence, the Pa(t)ani Peace Process still keeps on moving, URL:<http://www.deepsouthwatch.org/node/3803>.

⁶⁷ Asian Human Rights Commission,(2012), “The State of Human Rights in Ten Asian Nations- 2011”.

⁶⁸The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (the “Torture Convention”) was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 10 December 1984. It promotes universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms. <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CAT.aspx>.

enforced disappearances. According to the report of Human Rights Watch (2007)⁶⁹ around 22 people or more were disappeared. This disappearance is a practice in security officials for those who are under suspicion of being militants or support them or provide information (JPF report 2012⁷⁰). Enforced disappearance is promoted by many government policies. The report found that foremost policy that promoted this tool is the militarized way to handle an insurgency, especially in the South by all consecutive governments. Most of the cases are related to the period of Thaksin during 2004-05 and 2007. Secondly, government policy that contributed in enforced disappearances was a war on narcotics, started in 2003 (Mutebi 2004). This report finds that there are some specific categories of people who are most vulnerable of enforced disappearance. People who are in contact with security officials, police, etc., secondly, activists related to human rights and anti corruption, thirdly, people who are eye witnesses of human rights violations and fourth category is of migrants who are vulnerable for this disappearance. The cases of complainants of extra judicial killings or disappearance are few. As per the findings of AHRC (2012) this less number does not mean that happening of such incidences are low, but because it is not very easy to complain and fight against the state. People who complain had to go under many threats and money offering. This practice of disappearance not only violates fundamental human rights like the right to live, but also it gives suffering of the family members of the victims. Besides this also many cases of torture, arbitrary arrests and extra judicial killings have been noticed in these regions. According to International Deep South Watch (2010) military uses tactics of surrounding villages and searching, in response to this tactics militants target ordinary villagers, this environment of fear that is created for militants has worked for short term only. A Report by HRW (2007)⁷¹ says it's a broad campaign of violence and fear. In this way people in Southern Thailand has been affected from both sides. This long sustaining violence has impacted society in a complex manner. Every aspect whether it is economic, social or political everywhere directly or indirectly insurgency has affected lives of common man.

⁶⁹ HRC(2007), "Enforced Disappearances in Thailand's Southern Border Provinces", URL: <http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/thailand0307webwcover.pdf>.

⁷⁰ Justice for Peace Foundation, (2012), "Enforced disappearances in Thailand", URL: http://justiceforpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Enforced_Disappearances_in_Thailand_03.pdf.

⁷¹Human Rights Watch, (2007), "Enforced Disappearances in Thailand's Southern Border Provinces", 19, 5(c), URL: <http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/thailand0307webwcover.pdf>.

On the other hand, this insurgency has also affected Thai politics and the nature of democracy, that in Thailand has seen many ups and downs. In this process Southern insurgency has many times impacted the course of democracy (Chambers 2010). Further, not only at the domestic level, but this insurgency has been a major component in Thailand's relations with other countries.

IMPACT OF INSURGENCY ON SOCIETY

Education and Insurgency

Education system in Southern Thailand is diversified. It had a different pattern than the rest of Thailand. People still want to provide their children Islamic education. Many of the students in the South go abroad to study mainly in Indonesia, Malaysia, Arab countries and Egypt and Pakistan (Liow 2009). In Southern Thailand presently there are mainly three types of institutions⁷². These categories are based on their curriculum. Firstly, there are government schools which are economically supported by government; these schools follow the same curriculum as the rest of Thailand follows. Religious curriculum is there, but only two hours are spent on that where students have the option to choose Buddhism or Muslim. Due to the economic support from the government these schools have good infrastructure. But many parents think that two hours of religious studies are not enough. According to the report of Deep South Watch only 30 % students go to these schools. The second type of schools has very old history, these are called *Pondoks*. Pondoks are highly reputed among Malay Muslims as they not only have a glorious history, but they are also core religious schools (Liow 2009). In this way they were associated with Malay Muslim identity as well as they worked like repositories for the Malay language history and culture (Che Man 1990). Parents who want to give their children a religious education send their children to these schools only, but students cannot go for higher studies in Thailand as elsewhere these Pondoks have no similarity with the curriculum elsewhere. The third type of schools is a private Islamic school,

⁷²UNISEF East Asia and Pacific Regional office, (2014), "Thailand Case Study in Education, Conflict and Social Cohesion", http://learningforpeace.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/PBEA_Thailand-Case-Study.pdf.

though these schools are certified by the government but they have poor infrastructure. Their curriculum is mixture of earlier two. In one shift, they teach Thai curriculum while in other religious teaching. This mixed curriculum takes more time than other schools. 80% of secondary students go to these private schools. This diversified nature provides parents a choice to send their children with the type of school they wish to. But this is not a full story, education standards are deteriorating in this region (HRW Report 2010⁷³). The reasons behind this situation are both economic and situational. Education does not give a guarantee for job as there is a high unemployment rate in these areas.

On the other hand, education and insurgency have links in this region that's why both impact each other. Education has a different meaning or purpose for security officials and insurgents. For insurgents these schools are the symbol of Thai state oppression. Educational institutions are often seemed as a tool to impose Thai culture in the South⁷⁴. Schools have directly been attacked by insurgents. Many teachers have been targeted, many have been killed, and many times schools were ablaze. Parents are also pressurized not to send their kids to school. All the attacks create fear among parents as well. From January 2004 to August 2010 insurgents have made 327 attacks on government schools in three provinces. According to Human Rights Watch report (2007)⁷⁵ 70 teachers were murdered, and more than 100 were injured. To secure these schools many times security officials have set up military or paramilitary camps in school, which exacerbates the situation as these being state symbols becomes more prone to attacks by militants. These camps are not temporary; they work as an accommodation and long term stay for security personnels. Students had to study along with army around them, which is again a hindrance as many people do not feel safe to send their children to such schools.

Condition in Islamic schools, which are of two types; private Islamic schools and traditional Islamic schools known as Pondoks, is also not very safe. These schools are

⁷³Human Rights Watch, (2010), "Targets of Both Sides, Violence against Students, Teachers, and Schools in Thailand's Southern Border Provinces", URL: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2010/09/20/targets-both-sides/violence-against-students-teachers-and-schools-thailands>.

⁷⁴Ibid, Pg. 15.

⁷⁵Human Rights Watch, (2007), "No One Is Safe, Insurgent Attacks on Civilians in Thailand's Southern Border Provinces", 19, 13(c), URL: <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2007/thailand0807/thailand0807web.pdf>.

victims of State's abuse. For security officials these schools help in spreading militant's ideology (Lawrence 2007). These are considered as hiding place or shelter for insurgents. This suspicion results in sudden raids by security officials that involve arbitrary arrests of students⁷⁶. The situation had been worse when direct linkages with these schools and insurgents were proved in some cases. During the attack of 28 April 2004 three Ustadhs (Pondok teachers) were involved in the attack. Two of them were killed in the Krue Se Mosque incident⁷⁷. Schools have been targeted from both sides. All these attacks affect the quality education in students. For militants it is merely a way to demonstrate their power as well as a way to discredit the Thai authority, but it impacts civilians in long term loss of human capital. Schools are often closed after attacks. Fearful parents send their children to other schools.

Changing Social Structure: Complex Identities

In Southern Thailand society is not homogenous, Thai Buddhists also have settled here and they are living with each other for a long time. Satha Anand (2006) explains this coexistence as horizontal relationship which has been marked by a degree of cultural sensitivity between Muslims and non Muslims. Satha Anand even claims that the existing cultural ties that unite people with differences in a political community are the tools of peace and security in the region. But this insurgency has escalated the strife among the Malay Muslim (region,s minority) and Thai Buddhists (resident's minority) who had lived with peaceful coexistence (Aschew: 2009). The impact of this insurgency on this social structure is not simple to understand, many scholars on the basis of different surveys and their personal experiences have reached to a different conclusion. Mark Aschew (2009) tries to explain the impacts of insurgency on social relations. He says that it is true that this insurgency has created a feeling of fear and suspicion but the affiliations, customary practices between these two along with negotiations and leadership has mitigated the influence of violence. In Southern Thailand there are many Buddhist monks and their activities are around their Wat (Buddhist temple). These Wats

⁷⁶Human Rights Watch, (2010), "Targets of Both Sides, Violence against Students, Teachers, and Schools in Thailand's Southern Border Provinces", URL: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2010/09/20/targets-both-sides/violence-against-students-teachers-and-schools-thailands>, Pg. 84.

⁷⁷Ibid, Pg. 80.

used to be a place of multiple activities both religious and secular in a way, place for communal gatherings. These monasteries worked as a focal point to negotiate the shared identity and space (Emanuel: 1991). For religious community this is the place to perform rituals and other religious ceremonies while Malay Muslims also used to go Wat for many purposes, sometimes to buy medicines, to watch Silat (martial art performance) or to join the birthday celebration of Queen⁷⁸. Besides all these activities as being a secular place Wats also allowed other communities to access their volleyball ground, basketball courts, meeting areas and schools (Jerryson: 2009). But since 2004 as these Wats had been targets of militants attack, these centres of harmony had been converted to the accommodation of security officials. This militarization of Buddhist space stopped Malay Muslim to become a part of Wat. Not only Malay Muslims, but this militarization has questioned the purity of the place. As McCargo (2009) observed that many monks are unhappy with the military presence in Wat. But the reality is that these inter society relations in the South have not much been destroyed by the insurgency⁷⁹. Maintenance of this peaceful existence is result of efforts by many people, mainly it is village headman. Mark Aschew (2009) explains the role of village headman as mediator between state and villagers, but besides this he plays multiple roles in the area. Administration in southern Thailand is under Ministry of Interior which further gives responsibility to provincial and district administration. District administration maintains voluntary defense workers and informal networks. It is this work role of village headmen that becomes very important as he deals with the administration at village level in this chain. Village headmen are usually targeted by the militants to play this role of coordinator of the state. Village headmen very smartly save the social fabric of society from both state and militants. On the other side Buddhists in this region also have shown empathy for the Malay Muslims. The Thai Buddhist Network for the Southern Border Provinces Peace Process has been organizing many workshops and discussions about peace processes in the region⁸⁰. It cannot be denied that there are some aggressive groups on both sides, Muslims and Buddhists, but their radical propaganda had not been successful to divide the society (Aschew: 2009).

⁷⁸Prachaitai, (2012), " At the Kingdom's Edge", <http://www.prachatai.com/english/node/3294>.

⁷⁹BBC News, (2009), "Thailand's shadowy southern insurgency", <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/8344334.stm>.

⁸⁰DSW 2013, <http://www.deepsouthwatch.org/en/node/5090>.

But this is not accepted by all, it is believed that social harmony is fading away from the South. Many analysts argue that this insurgency has been divisive. It is believed that suspicion between communities is one reason of the prevailing insecurity⁸¹.

Satha Anand (2006) expresses his fear that how nature of violent incidents is destroying the environment of horizontal relationship or harmony among people in the South. Chaiwat (2006) explains it with incident of 28 April when militants entered in the mosque of Krue Se Mosque and were shot by the military. This incident seems to be a simple militant's activity, but while looking deep into it gives different aspects. These militants had an option to run away after gaining weapons from government posts, but they intentionally entered into a mosque and waited to be shot. Another fact was that the bodies of militants were treated as a *Shahid*. Most importantly date of 28 Dec. was important in itself as it was the date of 'Duson Nyor' uprising (Aphoransuwan 2007). Chaiwat claims that with this symbolic incident started to destroy peace in the region. These complexities about social relations are growing day by day as people in South themselves are divided over this issue many try to maintain this social fabric as it very deeply rooted in their everyday life while others feel suspicious about Buddhists as they see them as a reason/cause for this violence. Under all these circumstances issue of identity has also been very contentious in the Deep South after the outbreak of insurgency in 2004. According to Anusorn Unno (2012)⁸² overlapped loyalties to state can be seen in this region. They have different loyalties for different agencies of the state. The only agency that is highly respected in the Deep South is of Monarchy. This respect or loyalty is because they see monarchy above state. Efforts from Monarchy's also strengthen this belief by its charity work and condemnation of other state agencies in the case of the Deep South. Unno (2012) describes in his thesis that without compromising their loyalty with the religion they use their loyalty to King as leverage while dealing with other state agents such as security officials.

⁸¹This notion of suspicion has given birth to many social projects such as "People College", started by social workers and academicians. It provides training courses about "**Leadership for Peace**" for youth, students, staffs, employee in private organization and community leaders. These trained people are expected to promote peace in communities. (<http://www.deepsouthwatch.org/node/3327>.)

⁸²Prachatai, (2012) At the kingdom's edge: Exploring Thailand's forgotten conflict, <http://www.prachatai.com/english/node/3294>

Besides this loyalty and their affiliation with Thai state one more identity issue is about the term Thai Muslim. It is rarely used in Southern provinces to describe their identity. Thai Muslims refer to those who live in the northern areas of Thailand.

This insurgency has impacted the society in a different manner, many social stigmas have broken through this indirectly. Many people in the Deep South have joined as paramilitary groups. These groups work in collaboration with other security officials in search operations and arrests. These paramilitary forces are important because they are aware of local situations and language. They are provided with few months training. Many young girls⁸³ are also part of this paramilitary force⁸⁴. It has changed their life, they are not armed, but when there is a situation where to handle women and children they are the front forces to deal them. These women are mainly tasked for official or supporting works, but it empowers them⁸⁵. Society is still not ready to accept this form of empowerment for girls for this reason they still hide their identity as paramilitary persons and sometimes because of security reasons also. There have been cases of murder of female paramilitants by insurgents as they see them as spies of the state. Since the violence in the South has taken many lives, it is a fact that many men had died in families. Women had to come out to earn for their family. According to Anagkhana Neelapajit (2012) many men in the Southern provinces do not go out to work in times of conflict as they are afraid of being targeted, in this case women of the family work as a breadwinner. It is also stated that the violence in Southern Thailand seeps into families in the form of domestic violence and sexual abuse⁸⁶. It can be claimed that the insurgency has shaken the social norms and stigmas of society in different manners.

⁸³Eligibility for joining paramilitary is that a girl should be single between the age of 18-30 with grade 10 education.(Prachatai 2014).

⁸⁴Prachatai, 2014, Iron flowers of the Deep South: The story of female paramilitaries and identity conflict, URL:

<http://www.prachatai.com/english/node/4313>

⁸⁵ Ibid

⁸⁶ Asia Foundation, (2010), Access to Justice in Troubled South, URL: <http://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/THATJ2010YahAlee.pdf>.

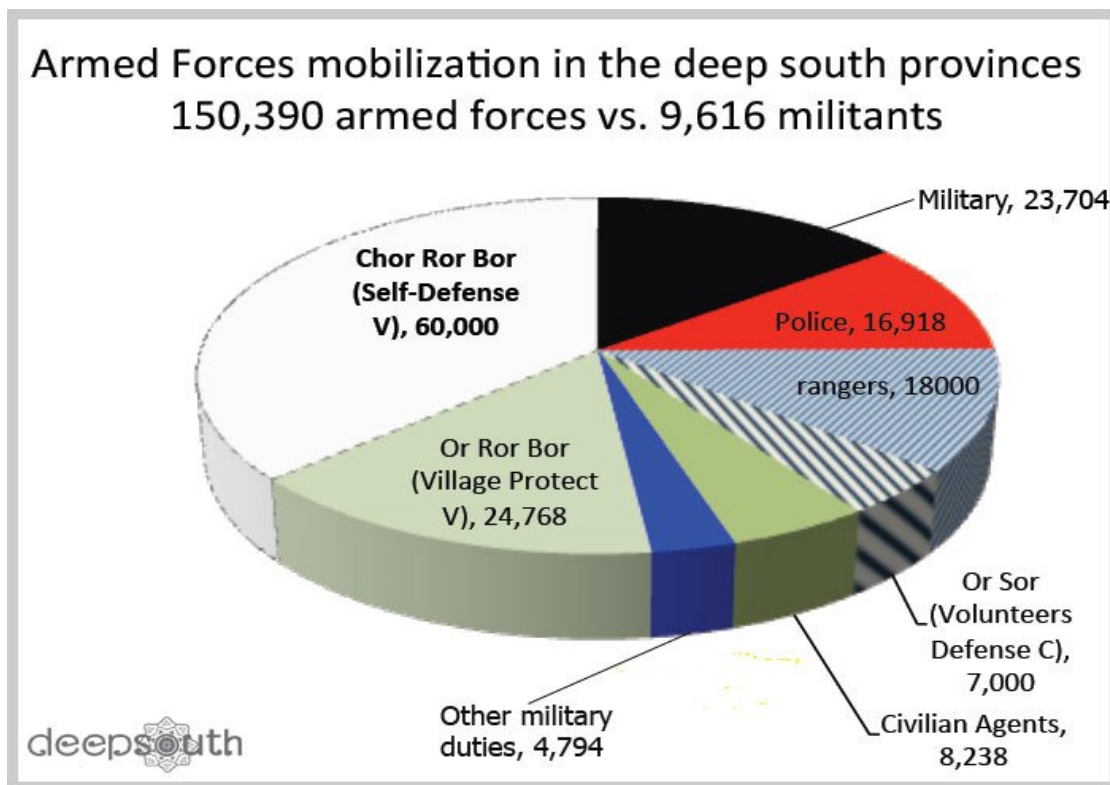
Children: Victims Of Insurgency

Most vulnerable sections of society are children. This insurgency had impacted the lives of children in many ways, sometimes directly and mostly indirectly. Since 2004 many children have been victims of violence⁸⁷. Their schools are attacked and teachers are killed that creates a fearful environment for innocent children. It is also witnessed that many children are becoming part of armed groups. This is widely researched by Child Soldiers International and the Cross Cultural Foundation (CrCF). According to their report Southern Thailand: Ongoing Recruitment and use of Children by Armed Group (2014) it is found that children as young as 14 years old have been recruited in BRN. The report explains the condition of even 2013 when in BRN many children under 18 were present in different ranks posted in BRN. Many interviews taken for this report with this group show that many rank holders who are working in BRN, were recruited when they were children (CrCF 2014) report. This process of recruitment is motivated by historical grievances, injustice and religious motivation to fight against the Thai state. These children also go through indoctrination and training process. Their indoctrination starts at primary level. Many times students take extra classes besides school to learn about Pattani history and Islam. During these courses, many students come under trap of this indoctrination process that includes showing videos and songs about Patani independence (Hogg: 2010). After this indoctrination⁸⁸, basically they start their work like spraying graffiti on public walls and destroying telephone booths, etc. Later they perform the duty of informers who collect information against state officials. Report of CrCF (2014) mentions that few of them are also involved in handling firearms, besides this role as an. Though the report does not support that these were forcefully recruited but it is a kind of social and religious pressure that works behind this. This is not all about the militants only, many scholars have proved that the government also uses many children mainly adolescents to their own work. They work as a third force where they are equipped with shotguns and radio. These adolescent does many jobs for the state such as patrolling the village and securing the schools which are often targeted by militants (Hogg: 2010).

⁸⁷ Sometimes militants directly target children which is even against the law of war. HRW, 2013, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/05/14/thailand-rebels-target-children-southern-conflict>

⁸⁸ Nature of this indoctrination is very secretive that even the families of Children are unaware about this all. (Hogg: 2010).

Hogg claims that government uses children in village armed defense force called as Chor Ror Bor under the Ministry of Interior, these children (under 18) have been the targets of militants due to their this job. It was established in 2002 and now it has become a large force because it is a very cheap, fast and secure way to protect government buildings, schools and



Source: Deep South Watch, 2012.

Villages. But the Thai government does not officially recognize this recruitment even though security officials at ground level are aware of this situation. This unrecognition of the children's involvement further creates more problem as children will never be provided their rights and right direction. Children suffer in both ways; by being a part of insurgency from both sides and as being victims of attacks. They are deprived of their basic rights under all these circumstances, where unemployment is high and insurgency is spreading for long.

Impact of Insurgency on Economy of Southern Thailand

Militants try to abolish public facilities are those provided by the government. Failure of developmental strategy is often proved by these attacks. Askew (2010) explains it as opportunistic violence as they always try to take advantage of the weakened state. Infrastructure that is often attacked includes telephone lines, power lines, mobile networks, public institutions, etc. On Jan. 18, 2006, 92 mobile stations in four southern districts were burned down simultaneously. Power stations and electricity grids were also bombed. Many times railways were attacked for example, on June, 4, 2007 railway tracks were destroyed in Yala and Narathiwat, one train was derailed injuring 14 people⁸⁹. After these attacks many times trains are suspended for almost 4-5 days. It not only impacts common people who are dependent on these public transport services, but also the economy of the region which is already very weak. In many incidents militants burned down the public health centers and volunteers. It makes life more miserable where already there are insufficient health facilities. Numbers of doctors and nurses per capita are lowest in Thailand⁹⁰. According to the report of Human Rights Watch (2007) since 2004, 60 public health volunteers and staff have been killed or injured. These attacks impact the working of health institutions in many ways, public health centres are usually closed with the sunset or before it gets dark in fear of attack⁹¹. For the same fear Doctors avoid seeing patients outside the hospital that gives space to paramedical. In Patani three public health centres were destroyed in 2006.

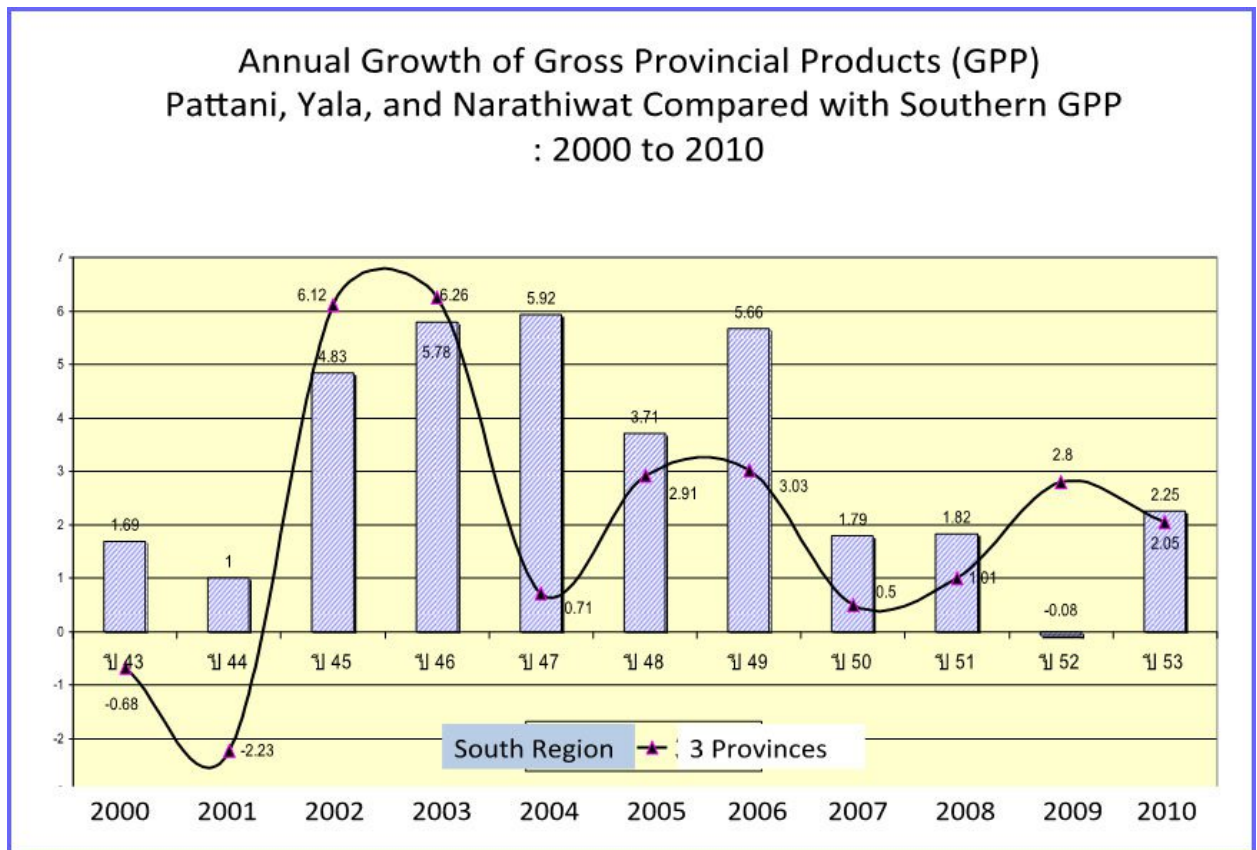
Patani region used to be a centre of trade and commerce due to its geographical location on trade routes (Welch and Mc Neill (1989), but this region is now counted as one of the poorest regions in Thailand (though the least developed or poorest region is northeastern Thailand). Rates of unemployment are quite high which later creates other

⁸⁹.Human Rights Watch, (2007), No One is Safe, Insurgent Attacks on Civilians in Thailand's Southern Border Provinces, URL: <https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/thailand0807.pdf>, Pg. 83.

⁹⁰Ibid, Pg. 70.

⁹¹Ibid, Pg. 71.

socioeconomic problems. In terms of unemployment, report of UNDP (HAI index)⁹² says that these four provinces composite lower halves of the national average.



Source: Deep South Watch, 2014.

The most worrisome situation is about income inequality in the South. All these four southern provinces are below the average line. Yala is the most inequitable province in Thailand. This situation is a result of this ongoing insurgency and counterinsurgency program of the state. Though it cannot be denied that the government did not initiate any development projects, development has a strategy⁹³ of government but as secondary one. Some of these projects were 4500 Baht Employment Program, Graduate Volunteer Program etc. but these have not been successful in reduction of poverty or the distribution

⁹² Human Achievement Index (HAI) is used in Thailand to assess progress in human development at the provincial level. These eight key areas of human development include: health, education, employment, income, housing and living environment, family and community life, transport and communication and participation. UNDP, Thailand, 2014, URL: <http://www.th.undp.org/content/thailand/en/home/presscenter/articles/2014.html>.

⁹³ Many a time these development works by state are seen as a component of structural adjustment policy to enhance the operations of military (Jitpriomsori 2014).

of income (Srisompob 2014). But the problem comes with the implementation of these programmes. The first thing is that most of the funds and their distribution are under control of security institutions, SBPAC deals with a few projects that are related to education and reconciliation (Abuza 2011). High rates of corruption also help in the misappropriation of the fund. Most importantly, this unequal distribution is validated by putting the method as a tool of counter insurgency. During the period of Thaksin most affected districts were declared as “Red Zone” which were deprived of getting any economic assistance from the centre⁹⁴. This perception is still there as less affected areas which are considered to be a helper or supporter of government are provided more economic funds. At the individual basis also this becomes an informal way of distribution (Abuza 2011). The problem of leakage as a result of corruption is there, according to one NGO leader 20% of total development fund of 2009 was vanished (Abuja 2011). Increasing violence in the South has affected the tourism industry in Thailand, especially in Southern Thailand. Violence and tourism are interrelated as tourists avoid places which are vulnerable to violence like Phuket which is a popular tourist place has faced militant’s attacks. The number of foreign visitors dropped 7% in 2009. According to Jamestown Foundation (2010)⁹⁵ fear of increasing violence has been manifested in decline of foreign tourism. After few car bomb attacks in 2011, 10 Foreign countries officially warned their citizens against travelling in Southern Thailand. Though it was a short term decision, but it is an example how violence harmfully affects tourism industry. The situation becomes worse when already this area is facing high unemployment rates. Thailand stands in “extreme” category when it comes to Terrorism Risk Index⁹⁶ and it results in decline of tourism industry.

⁹⁴ BBC News, Thaksin puts pressure on South, 2005, URL: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/4272893.stm>.

⁹⁵ The Jamestown Foundation, (2010), Signs of Growing Islamist Insurgency Create Apprehension in Thailand, URL: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=36110&no_cache=1#.VWn7TVJGY_s](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=36110&no_cache=1#.VWn7TVJGY_s).

⁹⁶ According to a report published by a British-based firm specialising in risk management and terrorism insurance, Thailand ranks as 9th world most exposed country to terrorism. <http://www.thailand-business-news.com/news/headline/45913-rebels-target-children-in-southern-conflict.html#48EFwTk8ADvBcGKg.99>.

Environment of fear and terror has become a major hindrance to the growth of the economy. It is the major cause that despite being rich in natural resources these districts cannot attract investment from outside. Daily activities of local business are also adjusted according to the situation. Shops get closed early during night time, often with sunset. Both Thai Buddhists and Muslim businessmen are victims of this unfavoured situation for business. They even started closing businesses and stopped working on Friday every week after insurgents asked them to do so as Friday is a day for prayer⁹⁷. In an insecure environment investment and growth cannot happen.

Crime rates have increased in the South. It has direct linkage with the ongoing violence. Characteristic of these militants as being very secretive, many people call them ghosts (Askew 2010), helped in creating an environment where any criminals can benefit themselves. Violence under the name of secret militants has been very common in these areas such as violence at rubber plantations, and during land issues. According to McDermott (2013) many soldiers believe that people take advantage of state of violence to settle their old rivalries and to get rid of competition over land. Illegal border transportation has been a worrisome issue for the officials, that includes drug trafficking, human trafficking. In this cross border transaction, it is suspected that insurgents cooperate with drug dealers. This issue has raised questions about the integrity of officials (Abraham and Nakaya 2007). It is widely believed that this transportation or the black economy is result of coalition among corrupt officers, local mafia and military sometimes.

These worsen economic situations have given rise to many other social problems and one among them is drug addiction in youth. Many researchers have come to a conclusion that the problem of drug abuse has correlation with unemployment and poor economic standards. Many locals blame Thai government for its tendency of ignorance and this gap is filled by corrupt officials⁹⁸. Jitpiromsri (DSW 2014) has explained it as an

⁹⁷HRW, (2012),Thailand: Separatists Target Teachers in Renewed Violence, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/10/10/thailand-separatists-target-teachers-renewed-violence>

⁹⁸ Ibid.

indicator of social problems and failure of socio- economic problems. The issue of drug addiction has been many times politicized by government officials as claiming it the reason behind the violence, but as Jitpiornsri has claimed that there are no proofs to prove it. There have been surveys in rehabilitation programs that show that less than 5% have supported the insurgents⁹⁹. Use of drugs in the region, especially among those who are involved in spreading violence has been a very common thing that everyone accepts it, but real evidences to prove it was still hard to find as there have not been real surveys (McCargo 2014). But this belief creates suspicion in public as well as it gives a way to differently interpret the situation to military. Among Malay Muslims there is a common notion that state officials use substance abusing youth to carry out bombing and attacks to maintain the records which are used to get a high budgetary share¹⁰⁰. While they also believe that many substance abusing youth also work for militants. On the other hand, many detectives from police claim that many low level militants use 4 x 100, methamphetamines and marijuana¹⁰¹. These types of suspicion are result of overlapping of insurgent attacks and other criminal activities in the region. It is sometimes found that militants are funded by drug syndicates while the militants are hired for criminal activities related to drug smuggling (DSW 2011). All these intricate relations among different groups exacerbate the situation which makes environment of suspicion and fear.

Though the government of Thailand has taken few steps¹⁰² to control the drug addiction in South but many youth is still suffering from a variety of addictions which show lack of economic and social development in this area. Multidimensional comprehensive policy is required to deal with the problem is highly required, but lack of political will to recognize even the actual intensity of the problem is still a major hindrance.

⁹⁹ Deep South Watch, 2014, An Inconvenient Truth about the Deep South Violent Conflict: A Decade of Chaotic, Constrained Realities and Uncertain Resolution, URL: <http://www.deepsouthwatch.org/node/5904>.

¹⁰⁰ Asia Times, (2010), Drugs and disaffection in southern Thailand, http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/LB18Ae03.html.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² One of the step among them was “Youth Idols from Southern Thailand”. This group represents those who have been successful on their life and work without getting involved in narcotic drugs. Youth orchestra of Yala province is among one of these group which performs and motivates youth.

Insurgency and Thai Nation

Impact on Foreign Relations

Thailand has been an important active member of ASEAN, it was founding member of it¹⁰³. It has significant geostrategic locations in Asia and Southeast Asia. For major powers like the US, China, India and Japan, Thailand serves as a gateway for further economic and political engagement with Indochina (Chingchit 2014). It is one of the reasons that many countries have engaged themselves in economic and security ties with it. But the growing violence in its southern provinces influences its relation with other countries mainly the neighbours.

Due to the location of these affected Southern provinces of the international boundary (506 km land boundary with Malaysia) has really impacted its relations with Malaysia and other neighbouring countries. Malaysia though, has declared its policy as ‘non intervention’ which is as per the common agreement among ASEAN nations¹⁰⁴, but an environment of suspicion has always been there between these two nations. This suspicion is because of ethnic, religious and historical linkage between northern Malaysia and Southern Thailand.

It was the first prime minister of Malaysia ‘Tunku Abdul Rahman’ who explicitly declared its policy towards Southern Thailand. He said that the Malaysian government will neither be sympathetic nor supportive for the separatist movements of Southern Thailand. But according to Liow (2010) two incidents helped in growing suspicion between the two; one was the association of Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak with the separatist movement (these accusations were never proved and accepted) and second, was a survey report conducted in 1977. The results of this survey showed that many Malaysians favour, active role or policy intervention by Malaysia in support of Southern Thailand. Malaysians have a cultural affinity with Thai Malay Muslims (Funston 2010). Kelantan and Patani kingdom have been very close neighbours in the past and both royal

¹⁰³ Thailand and ASEAN, URL: <http://www.mfa.go.th/asean/contents/files/other-20121207-114514-431514.pdf>.

¹⁰⁴ ASEAN, <http://www.asean.org/resources/2012-02-10-08-47-56/speeches-statements-of-the-former-secretaries-general-of-asean/item/sovereignty-intervention-and-the-asean-way-3-july-2000>.

families share many common interests. Kelantan is still known to be a harbor and host for the separation of Southern Thailand (Liow: 2010). Besides these historical linkages, government in Kelantan has been dominated by PMIP (Pan Malay Islamic Party) and PAS (Parti Islam-se Malaysia). Both these parties have shown themselves as sole caretaker and representative of Muslim profits and one of their demands to prove this 'representation' is to give voice for oppression in Southern Thailand (Marican 1997). This link has complicated the relations between these two countries. On the other hand, some elements of the Malaysian communist party had been found in Thailand. During the cold war in this condition Malaysians had always been in suspicion that the Thailand government did not want to work against communism, that's why to ignore or sideline the issue, it (Thailand) kept on emphasizing in Malay Muslim separatist issue. This is also one reason why the Malaysian government did not want to get involved in this issue. If it (Malaysia) had done so, it would have only strengthened the Communists, as communists and separatists had some common issues. Under all these circumstances Malaysian government has again and again clarified its standby different measures. Later on, these relations were dominated by bilateral development agendas during the time of Mahatir. Liow (2010) argues that it was Thailand that forced Malaysia during this time to take the security concerns of Thailand in south seriously otherwise the Malaysia-Thailand -Indonesia growth triangle would be jeopardized. All these growing bilateral links both at security and economic levels resulted in arrests of Many Malay Muslim separatist leaders from the land of Malaysia (Funston 2010). Malaysia also helped in surrender and rehabilitation program of Thai government.

Malaysia's policy of non interference seems to take a different turn as it accepted the role of facilitator for peace process. The recent peace initiative was held at Kuala Lumpur, between militants and the Thai government. Malaysian Prime Minister Abdul Rajjak publicly signed General consensus document in 2013 with Thai counterpart Yingluck Shinawatra. This position as a broker is the result of Malaysia's own concerns. McCargo (2014) has discussed certain issues. One of the them is that many Malay Muslims illegally have dual nationality. It is also a fact that many current and former

leaders live in Malaysia¹⁰⁵ that is why they are able to assemble negotiators from the militant side (Wheeler 2014). Many Democrat Party politicians in Thailand think this initiative by Malaysia as it is a supporter of insurgents and their demand of independence so that it can create southern Thailand as a buffer state (Chingchit 2014)¹⁰⁶.

The insurgency has not only impacted relations with neighbour Malaysia only, but also with the United States. Thailand has been always a good partner of the US whether in term of military ally or in fields of trade and economy. Thailand has supported and helped in US military operations, both in Afganistan and Iraq, in its Global War on Terrorism. United States interest in this region is growing as the changing international scenario is giving Southeast Asian nations a great importance. It seems to be a field where both America and China is competing to increase their influence through different manners like economic aid, trade partnerships, multilateral institutions, etc. In this case Thailand's strategic location near many trade routes and it's been an old ally is of great concern for US if it is the home of any violent insurgency. Insurgency in Southern Thailand though spread at the local level only becomes a threat to US strategic interest in Southeast Asia (Vavich and Marines 2007).

Insurgency and Democracy in Thailand

Democracy and insurgency have many links in between. Many scholars have studied these links. It is found that there is not a single universal conclusion about this relationship. Insurgencies or terrorist activities exist in many countries, irrespective of their nature of governance. Croissant (2007) while explaining this relation in his article makes two points. He says democracies are more vulnerable to terrorism as people have more freedom and space to present their demands. Secondly, when it comes to combat the issue, it is usually found that democracies are more efficient in handling these issues. Croissant proves it with the example of Japan and Europe. He says that liberal consolidated democracies are impressively successful in containing political extremism

¹⁰⁵With Malaysia these militants have relation of love and hate, love because it has been a safe haven for them and hate because they are always under close monitoring and control of Malaysian government (McCargo 2014).

¹⁰⁶ The Diplomat,(2014), Bangkok Turmoil and Thailand's Deep South, URL: <http://thediplomat.com/2014/03/bangkok-turmoil-and-thailands-deep-south/>.

with little political damage. In less consolidated countries, both security and integration are under threat. The path of democracy in Thailand has been a complicated one. Democracy has historically and gradually developing in Thailand in an uninterrupted but unique manner (Baker and Phonpaichit 2008). Uninterrupted means it neither experienced the colonial rulings nor any civil war like its neighbours (2008). As a result, many basic institutions have been stable in a country like monarchy (Wood: 2004), especially after Thaksin rule elected governments are followed by military rule. Even the elected governments are sometimes authoritarian or semi democratic in nature. In this case military found it easy to strong hold its position in handling the insurgency (Chambers 2010). Insurgents also take this gap as an opportunity to publicize their cause of fight that Southern Thailand is treated partially. According to Croissant this military based counterinsurgency strategy has become a menace to democracy in Thailand.

Though it is a fact that the insurgency in the South has not impacted the stability of Thai government directly, the elections of 2005 are the direct example of it. In these elections TRT got just a two seats in the south out of 54 but it won by a majority at the national level (Pongsudhirak 2006). Democratic Party had always dominated in the Southern provinces¹⁰⁷. Thailand has faced many coups, but the reasons behind these coups or people's aggression are generally charged of corruption against political leaders or the internal party conflicts, insurgencies always bore the brunt of these coups rather than being strong cause. But not being a majority to influence the elections does not mean that it did not impact the democracy (Aurel 2007). Democracy is not only about the government it is more than that. It reflects through the institutions, the state of human rights, and many other social pillars. And all these pillars decide the exact nature of it. When it comes to Thai democracy, many political scientists have claimed that its nature is more inclined towards autocracy especially during the time of Thaksin. Chaiwat (2006) explains that how violence and counter violence can turn out the democratic society into authoritarian democracy. As argued above it is true that Southern Thailand indirectly affects the nature of democracy and it is through it being a place of violence. Effects of

¹⁰⁷Mark Aschew explains two factors behind this hegemony of Democratic Party in southern areas. One is organizational pattern which is very strong as they have set up informal groups named as Phuak. Secondly, Aschew explains that this party has politicized the 'Southern Thai Culture'.

violence on democracy have some common feature in many countries. First is that violence affects countries which are largely governed by democratically elected governments, Second, these countries often face threats to security from internal or external. Third the responses from the state's side are dominated by the use of violence only, and lastly, there is always a kind of public approval for the use of violence (Chaiwat: 2006). Thailand's situation fits into these components. Counterinsurgency measures using violence as a tool to control the situation has portrayed the whole situation as a "Pure War" and this projection attracts the media as well as public support for violence. During this process truth is usually monopolized by the state. Chaiwat argues that this risk usually compromises the minimum conditions through which a society remains democratic. The growing space between democracy and society is covered by military. The influence of the military has always been there, that in a way threatens democratization and political stability in the country (Chambers 2010). The strong position of the military has many reasons behind it like the polarization of the parties, but one of them is insurgency in the South. Since the outbreak of insurgency during Thaksin military is responsible to handle the situation, it is also a fact that still militant activities are not fully ended. This ongoing violence validates presence of it there and from all over Thailand it gains confidence of the Thai public. This influence of military hampers the development of democracy as its missions prioritize loyalty to the king (Chambers 2010). On the other hand it is a fact that the growing influence of military and diminishing powers of elected representatives goes simultaneously. It can be well proved by the fact that every coup is followed by the interim government dominated by military members in it. With coup army is benefitted with power, prestige and resources for the short term (Aschew 2014).

Insurgency: A Security Threat

Thailand's threat perception has always been 'inward looking' when we see it in context of Cold War status, communism in neighbourhood countries and Vietnam's invasion in Cambodia (Pongsudhirak 2010). External threats for Thailand have not been as tough as for its surrounding countries. To its maximum level it (Thailand) has dealt with external threats with only immediate neighbourhood such as conflicts with Burma¹⁰⁸, border tensions with Cambodia¹⁰⁹ etc. It is also a result of the nature of military in Thailand as its role¹¹⁰ has been historically very inward looking (Bergmann 2013). But when it comes to non-traditional security Thailand is struggling with many issues such as trafficking of drugs, arms and humans, natural disasters, corruption, energy security etc (Pongsudhirak 2010). But the major threats to Thai security are internal ones among them is protracting insurgency in Southern Thailand. Though its linkages with international terrorist groups are not yet found while many facts also prove this. Till now this insurgency is very much confined to the southern regions only, insurgents do not present their demands explicitly and their means and methods of violence also do not prove the connection (Chalk 2008). But it should not be a fact to be a relief, these areas can be a ground where terrorism may find some space to grow if problems are continuing as it is. The prevailing sense of alienation and injustice can exacerbate the situation to reach at another level of insurgency (Bradford 2012). Target groups of insurgents are wide as both Muslims and Buddhists civilians along with an army and police personnel are targeted it shows it's ethno political nature. But the violence has taken around 4800 lives which is a serious concern for the government. Pongsudhrikat (2010) rightly said that this threat does not fall into conventional threat perceptions, but it has far reaching consequences for the security of the nation.

¹⁰⁸Cross border migration, human and drug trafficking, and energy issues have been crucial in their relationship.

¹⁰⁹ Border issue with Cambodia is about a small piece of land but of historical significance, Preah Vihear Temple. It is 4.6 sq. km. complex which according to ICJ (1962) comes under Cambodian sovereignty but Thai government did not recognize it. But during Abhisit government Thailand accepted it as a World Heritage site of Cambodia.

¹¹⁰ Military has taken control of government around 17 times, as a result country has 17 different constitutions.

This insurgency has a vast impact not only in southern districts, but on the nature of the Thai state itself. For many decades, people of the South are struggling with violent attacks and tight security that interferes into their daily life and social patterns. It also had a huge impact on democracy, foreign relations and security of Thailand.

CONCLUSION

The protracted violence in Southern Thailand reemerged in 2004 with more intensity. Since then, the four districts of South are facing attacks by insurgents till now. It is difficult to identify the exact single reason behind the insurgency as insurgents never come out with open demands. Historical roots only explain the real motivations. This region was a part of Patani kingdom which was famous for its trade and commerce as well as a leader in this region. Soon after the kings of Patani accepted Islam it became a famous learning centre of Islamic religious education. But this glorious period could not prevail for long. Politically, it became weak as the nearby Siam kingdom, started expanding its empire. In this expansion process Patani kingdom became tributary under Siam. There was political stability under this power relation as Patani as being a tributary always enjoyed a certain freedom in all social, cultural matters, even politically also it was autonomous. This relation was quite natural also, as Patani was geographically very far from Ayutthaya and any competitors in trade were also absent. But soon changes in political and economic situations in Southeast Asia and inside Ayutthaya also impacted this relation of Siam and Patani. In 20th century arrival of Europeans became an important event that changed all the earlier power relations. Europeans who came mainly for economic gains established their bases in all these countries. Under these circumstances geo strategic location of Patani became suddenly very important for Ayutthaya. Further, as being a buffer state due to rivalry between the French in Indo China and British in Malay, kings of Ayutthaya became very keen about their boundaries. This insecurity about the boundary region resulted in the assimilation of Patani into Ayutthaya. This assimilation was further legalized by the treaty between Ayutthaya and British in 1902. Control of British over Malay (Singapore also) and its intention to keep Thailand as a buffer state resulted in the division of Malay people by this treaty. Areas of Patani kingdom, Yala, Pattani, Narathiwat and parts of western Sonkhala permanently became a part of Siam. This division was not as per the ethnic parameters, it was motivated by political purposes. The people of this area which is 'Southern Thailand' today, are ethnically Malay, they speak Yawi language, the majority of them are Muslims while in Siam people are Thai Buddhist. Though this assimilation gave birth to many revolts by

the Patani elite class which were easily controlled by that time, but when the protest reached at ground level among the public and turned into violent insurgency that had become one of the longest insurgency in the world.

Initially aggression in people of Southern Thailand was the result of many state initiatives taken by Siam (Modern Thailand) under the name of security and nationalism. This assimilation turned into 'forced assimilation' by Thai state authorities. It started from the period of Chulalongkorn (Rama V) that turned the nation into modern Thailand. This transformation was needed as per the colonial conditions. Thailand was a buffer state and to maintain its sovereignty modern administration was required as the ideological basis of the European powers was that they were a modern nation, and by ruling they will turn all colonies into modern ones. So the concept of modernity was a requirement of the that time. But this modernity was at social and educational levels also that triggered protests among Malay Muslims for whom education was related to religion. Further, during the period of Phibun Songkhram very explicitly policy of forced assimilation started under the slogan of 'One Nation (Thailand), One Religion (Buddhism), and One King (Chakri dynasty)'. Under the slogan for a long time under different rulers, whether democratic or military Malay Muslims were forced to adopt Thai culture through different ways, and migration of Buddhist was promoted to change the demography of this region. During the second world war, the people of these areas tried to be independent with the help of British but could not succeed. This attempt resulted in the tougher approach from the Thai state that exacerbated the situation in the South. Now many organizations such as GAMPAR, BRN, PULO, GMIP, BNPP etc. that caused more intense violence in the South. During this period government could not recognize the real problem, its strategy was to fight the terrorist groups only. But during the last decades of 20th century under the leadership of Prem Tinsulond a more comprehensive soft approach was adopted and violence was controlled for few years. But due to many internal and external circumstances in 2004 once again, it reemerged with with more intensity.

This study mainly focused on the policies of the State during the period of 2001 till 2013. Under this period, many variations during different governments have been

observed, but there are a few common factors that play an important role in the development of an approach and policy for southern Thailand. Variations in policy range between hard military approach to soft conciliatory ones. It was the period of Thaksin which was a long one also, when it reemerged, but with the use of military it was kept under control. But incidents of violence did not stop. So the state opted for a hard military approach instead of searching for some political solutions.

After the downfall of Thaksin the next interim government under Surayud followed a soft approach, Surayud himself apologized for earlier atrocities. But due to its short period as being an interim government and military influence it could not implement a comprehensive solution for this region. Samak was weak in itself. Firstly, it was a coalition government, secondly leaders were of the same party of Thaksin, those remaining ones who were not banned by the constitutional court. So in a way it was a puppet government. These weaknesses gave the military an opportunity to stronghold its position in the South. The government also due to its own political engagements relied on military to handle insurgency. Military controlled the violence for the time being but it did not achieve a long term solution. But the government of Abhisit opted for 'political before the military approach'. Many initiatives were taken for the economic development of this region such as SEZ, IMG GT etc. SBPAC was strengthened by giving many powers to win the hearts and minds of people there. Through its advisory council, local participation in administrative decision making was increased. But the role of the military was not ended. A feeling of justice and development was generated during this period, but soon this development was interrupted as again Thailand faced political crisis. The government changed so were the policies. Under the leadership of Yingluck Shinawatra many promises were made and peace dialogues were started, but these peace processes also failed. All promises regarding development were also not fulfilled.

All these policies during different governments have always been influenced by military at national level. Military in Thailand plays a role of savior of both monarchy and democracy. Thailand has a long history of coups and with every coup military handles the government until the next government takes place. Many coups are also led by military leaders only. So military becomes an important pressure group for each and

every government. In this way insurgency affected areas are usually under control of the military that never supports autonomy for these regions as that may lead to a threat to Thai state. History of Thai nationalism also helps in understanding the nature of policies for these areas. As being a buffer, independent state Thailand has always been very insecure about its boundaries, many times it had to sacrifice some of the areas to France to maintain this position of “sovereign independent state”. Till now autonomy to any region is never accepted in Thailand, it is rather seen as a threat to the unity and integrity of the state. Successive Thai constitutions also include the provision of the indivisible unitary Thai kingdom. In the constitution of 1997 and 2007 certain level of decentralization was included, but with the condition that it should be compatible with the unitary nature of the state. This is the reason that many governments such as those of Surayud, Abhisit and Shinawatra all accepted that political solution is required to solve this issue but it could never be implemented. Conciliatory approaches are opted but to a certain level. Many times peace processes failed as autonomy is not even an option from the government’s side during dialogues with insurgents.

Personalities also indirectly affected the approaches of state towards insurgents. Clashes between Thaksin and Prem Tinsulonda have not only influenced national politics, but also policies at ground especially in Southern Thailand. During the period of Prem main focal point was SBPAC. It was an institution that increased confidence of people in government for justice and development by more participation of Malay Muslims in SBPAC. It was also an agency to implement the policies of government and worked as an authority for public grievances also. It was one among many other steps taken by the government to Prem Tinsulonda to address this insurgency. It became successful, situations were very much pacified during this time. It helped in making the government and its party to make popular in the South. Meanwhile, supporters of Thaksin were mainly north and northeast areas, during elections Thaksin won with the majority but in Southern Thailand won only one seat out of 54 while 52 seats were won by democratic government (Pongsudhirak 2006). Soon after taking charge this SBPAC was dissolved even though it was popular and successful, due to political reasons.

The short span of governments has also impacted the implementation of many effective policies. After the government of Thaksin none of the government transferred powers normally to the next. Almost all governments are followed by a coup or illegitimacy proven by constitutional courts. This political instability resulted in policy paralysis. Only political initiatives taken by Thaksin government “National Reconciliation Council report could not implement as the same year this government was thrown out. It happened with every government and consequently this region is still awaiting for some comprehensive political and developmental plan. This long insurgency and inefficient state’s policy have made the lives difficult at every step in Southern Thailand. Besides the human loss that is increasing with more intense attacks, social relations among different communities are adversely affected. These regions are one among the poor regions of Thailand (though few of them like Yala etc. have a progressive growth rate.) Children are the ones who bore the brunt, many of them are forced to join insurgent groups. Education system suffers from both sides, for security agencies, schools are the places where children are prepared mentally against the state, so forces usually surround schools, while for insurgents these are the main targets as being the bases of these agencies. Many school teachers are targeted for being the helper of state agencies. From both sides security agencies and insurgents, people suffer from atrocities. Human rights groups in Southern Thailand and many other NGOs have focused on the atrocities by military and police. Cases of enforced disappearances, incidents like Krue Se Mosque and Tak Bai, etc. are the examples of it. All these impacts have also affected the politics of Thailand at national and international level also. This insurgency has been a crucial factor for Thailand Malaysia relations. As being Malay ethnic Muslims, people of southern Thailand have gained the sympathy of Malay people in Malaysia. Many insurgents cross the borders for shelter that has created suspicion between both these nations. In peace dialogues, role of Malaysia cannot be ignored, it plays the role of broker for peace talks. US- Thai relations, especially during the Global War against Terrorism were affected by Malay Muslims. As they saw Thai support to US as their support against Muslims or Islam. Internal security is always questioned with the growing violence in southern Thailand. Even after so many years government failed to control the insurgency. For many years real nature was not perceived due to political reasons, even during the period

of Thaksin government and military ignored the reality. Though soon after due to escalated violence successive governments recognized the problem but could address it properly. This problem of Southern Thailand can be solved by political solutions alongwith comprehensive development strategy.

While dealing with the questions put up during the starting of this study hypothesis is proved that the historical experiences of the Thailand have been very unique in Southeast Asia as it was never a colony, while all the neighbouring countries were colonized. This independence resulted in nationalism to secure its unity. That is why autonomy for any region is considered against the royal prestige and national unity of the country. Second hypothesis also proved that it is mainly national and elite politics in Thailand that impacts directly and indirectly on the policy formation and implementation for Southern Thailand.

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