CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I. 1.   BACKGROUND

The conflict problem in three southern border provinces of Thailand is a long history since early of *Rattanakosin* era or after Pattani Kingdom colonized by Siam (Krongchai, 2009). The word of *Rattanakosin* was the last era of Siam, and then in 1939 the name of Siam was changed into Thailand by Luang Phibun Songkram (Prime minister). Thus, Siam is called Thailand in right now (Dinsor, 2015).

Thailand is a state of the majority Thai ethnic and minorities ethnic including Chinese 14%, Malay 3% (Muslim people in southern border region). Religiously there are Buddhist 95%, Islam 4%, Christian1%, and Hindu 0% (Krittiya, 2015). Some of these ethnic minorities are migrants and had been assimilated into Thai cultural structure while other (Malay people) has been living in this land for a long time and keeps their own culture intact during the so-called "Nation-Building Period" and brought under Thai control in the 20th Century (UNDP, 2005: 4), (Phayong, 2003) and (Thai reader project, 2015).

Normally, the general Thai people in the southern border provinces of Thailand include Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, Satul, and four district in part of Songkha Province, consist Thaepha, Ja'na', Sabayoi, and Nathawi district, (Uma, 2001: 04). These areas majorities of the population is Muslim, the issue of conflict in the four

southern border provinces discussed does not include Satul province, why? because the conflict has hardly taken place in Satul (UNDP, 2005). In addition, according to Ruttaya, (2001) the conflicts usually take place in Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat and occasionally in part of Songkhla Province, which are adjacent to Pattani and Yala provinces (Uma, 2001: 04).

The government was somewhat successful for some cultural groups, had a strong policy to assimilate all ethnic minorities into Thai culture, but was unsuccessful for Malay ethnic. It is obliterating identity, culture of Malay ethnic and obliterates the Pattani Kingdom History for the new generation cannot learn about history in the past (UNDP, 2005). In 1939, Luang Phibun Songkram era, he was effort and clamp down to Malay People use Malay language, be Malay dressed and does Friday praying, because those were inversed with Thai constitution. However those things are resisted by Muslims people and Religion Leaders and then were to protect the culture by Muslim society. This was a reason to be a conflict in three southern border provinces of Thailand (Kongto, 2015). In addition, the form of policy and operation of government officials was not understood by Thai Muslims and led to conflicts between the Thai government and Malay ethnic. They did injustice to Thai Muslims, corruption, and lack of Political Participation, those things made the Thai Muslims feel unsatisfied to Thai Government (Jitpheeromsri, 2009).

The conflicts between Pattani region and the government in Bangkok continued and were sometimes intensified after it was brought under direct Thai rule (UNDP, 2005: 5). In the early 1938 opposition was led by the ousted royal families

and charismatic Islamic leaders. The frequency and intensity of the conflict varied with the extent to which governments in Bangkok. Moreover, it was sought to impose Thai cultural norms and social policies of the state on the region. The ultra nationalistic policies of the first **Phibun Songkram** government (Prime Minister, 1938 to 1944) caused bitter clashes, and thousands fled to neighboring Malaysia (UNDP, 2005: 5).

In April 1947, the charismatic religious leader, by the name of Haji Sulong bin Abdul Kadir, issued his famous seven demands (the government at that time does not accept demand of Haji Sulong) urged the devolution of power to Malay-Muslims in the four southern provinces (UNDP, 2005: 6). The seven demands of Haji Sulong, which essentially were a request to re-establish an autonomous region for the Muslim in South, were: (Abdulmani, 2013).

First, the appointment of a person with powerful to govern the four provinces including Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, Satun and in part of Songkhla, consist Thaepha, Ja'na', Sabayoi, and Nathawi district. This person must have the power to suspend or replace all local civil servants. This person must be a native of one of the four provinces and must be elected by the inhabitants of the four provinces. *Second,* 80 percent of all civil servants in the four provinces must be Muslim. *Third,* the Malay language must be an official language alongside the Thai language. *Forth,* the teaching in primary schools must be done in Malay. *Fifth,* Muslim Laws must be recognized and implemented under the aegis of an Islamic court, separated from the civil court where the *qadhi* (Muslim judge) is seating as an assistant.

Sixth, all taxes and incomes collected in the four provinces must be used locally. *Seventh,* the establishment of a Muslim affairs bureau with full powers to manage Muslims affairs under the authority of the governor mentioned in the first point.

Haji Sulong was released in 1952, but disappeared while under police custody in August 1954 (Bebas Patani, 2012). The coup led by Sarit Thanarat (the name of Prime Minister) in 1957 offered no respite. Sarit continued with assimilations policies, trying particularly to assert state control over traditional Islamic learning institutions or *Pondoks.* In response, the Malay-Muslims organized in a number of covert separatist organizations with military units attached (UNDP, 2005: 6). Three major separatist groups were established namely: *First, Barisan Nasional Pembebasan Patani* (BNPP, 1959). Second, *Barisan Revolusi Nasional* (BRN, 1963) and *third,* Patani United Liberation Organization (PULO, 1968) or is called *Pertubuhan Pembebasan Patani Bersatu* those organizations looking forward all split and were re-organized (UNDP, 2005: 6). One section of the *Barisan Nasional Pembebasan Patani* (BNPP) formed the *Barisan Bersatu Mujahideen Patani* (BBMP) in 1985, and it is possible that this merged with *Gerakan Mujahideen Islam Patani* (GMIP). In the 1980 and 1990 in parallel with the expansion of democracy throughout Thailand and election of governments that showed greater sensitivity to Muslim cultural needs. As well as the appointment of some Muslim politicians from the region to the ministerial portfolios, conflicts in the region decreased considerably (UNDP, 2005: 6).

The harsh reaction from the Central Government has been stubborn view, still used militants power to solve it. The violent attacks were undertaken by the Malay-Muslim violence groups they were *Barisan Revolusi Nasional* **(BRN)** and Pattani United Liberation Organization **(PULO)**. The harsh action in turn led to more conflicts and violence (Chalk, 2008:05-07). In 2004, at *Krue Se* Mosque, Pattani Province, it was attacks between insurgence groups and Thai Militant, at that time there are 34 persons of insurgence group and 2 Thai Militant die (Issara, 2014). Therefore, interesting to note here, when the conflicts flared up it was assumed that the responsibility to deal with the problem laid entirely in the hands of the Central Government. Other social institutions (both public and private) do not seem to recognize that conflict problem in the south is the problem of the Thai society (UNDP, 2005).

Prem Tinsulanonda (prime minister) who was established Southern border Provinces Administrative Center (SBPAC) in 1981 to provide better communication between the restive minority region and the central government, and to improve intelligence gathering and coordination among security agencies (Johnson, 2013). Therefore, there are three special security laws that had been done by Thai Government under counter-insurgency in the Deep South (Asia Report, 2012). *First,* in 1914 Martial Law Act, *second,* in 2005 Executive Decree on Government Administration in States of Emergency (or emergency decree) *and third,* in 2008 Internal Security Act (ISA), those are enforce in all or parts of the conflict zone (Asia Report, 2012). Thus, in conclude in the past Thai Government was effort to resolve

the conflict problem, but the method that was used violence and military power and is not the point of conflict resolution.

In 2012, the Thai Government has been determined the particular policies under the ministry of justice to solve the problem in southern border provinces of Thailand (Phuangphet, 2013). *First*, to remedial who got the impact from the violence situation such as the bombing, the clash between Thai military and separatist group at Krue Se Mosque, the case arrested protesters at Tak Bai district, Naratiwat provinces. *Second,* supported using peaceful is a way to resolve the violence situation in southern border provinces. *Third,* Support and develop education system in southern and improved the infrastructure such as communication in southern border provinces (Phuangphet, 2013).

In the past it was clear that, the failure to resolve the southern border provinces as the result of the government's policies was not as clear and continuous (Thep Phirom, 2005). The solution that had many responsible agencies, it caused confusion to solve the problem and the operations of each agency was not in the same direction, there is no consistency and relevance.

Thus, conflict problem in three southern border provinces is conflict between political related with history, cultures, economic and social development. There was exploitation from influential person and form of policy still inappropriate with lifestyle of Malay-Muslims. In conclude, the religion and Malay Identity are not the main root of conflict but it was just used excused of some violence group only. Thus, the peaceful concept is main resolution to be a peace in southern border provinces of

Thailand. Means that the resolution do not use violence but use intellectual, reason, analysis situation by carefully without partiality, to get the point and factual of problem and then bring to create strategy in term of policy and practice to get efficiency and effectiveness.

However, as described above the writer would like to explain and study a case about the conflict in three southern border provinces of Thailand including the root - causes and the resolution of conflict. The last is the reason of the Thai government not to take active and serious step to help and solve the conflict in the southern region.

Picture1:   Map of Three Southern border Provinces of Thailand

Source: (Burke, 2013).

In brief, the picture 1 is three southern border provinces of Thailand map, at the areas of green color is three southern border provinces including, Pattani, Yala Narathiwat and in part of Songkhla Province.

I.2.   RESEACH QUESTION

Based on the background of the problem mentioned above, the formulation of the research problem can be put forward as follows:

1.   What are the root- causes of conflict in three southern border provinces of Thailand?

2.   What is the conflict resolution of Thai Government to solve the problem in three southern border provinces of Thailand?

I.3.   RESEARCH PURPOSE

This research purpose is expected to understand the root – causes and the solution of the conflict problem in three southern border provinces of Thailand and the reason why government did not take seriously to solve the problem.

I.4.   RESEARCH BENEFITS

The research benefits there are theoretical benefit and practical benefit, it will describe as follows:

I.4.1.   Theoretical Benefits

The expected theoretical usefulness in this study can be useful in the development of knowledge and skill in analysis social and political science. It is related to the root – causes and solution of the conflict problem in three southern border provinces of Thailand. It can also be useful for those who are interested or want to learn and study this conflict problem and bring to more development in the future.

I.4.2. Practical Benefit

The practical usefulness of this study is providing advice to the Thai government, academician, and local philosophy to conduct and implement the solution to the problem or be use for policy implementation by central and local government to solve this problem in southern border regions.