

CHAPTER III

THE DYNAMIC OF EMERGING SOCIAL CONFLICT IN THREE PROVINCES SOUTHERN OF THAILAND AND THE POLICY OF THAI GOVERNMENT TO MANAGE THE CONFLICT

The three provinces southern of Thailand and some district of Songkhla include Pattani, Yala, Narathiwad provinces and Thepha, Jana, Saba Yoi, Natawee district become the part of social conflict area for insurgency again the Thai government. It has roots in earlier waves of Malay-Patani nationalist to Thai rule, instituted after Siam annexed the region in 1902 but has drawn most attention since 2004¹. In this chapter the writer would like to analysis the main cause of emerging social conflict in three provinces southern of Thailand and The policy of Thai government by Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra to solve the conflict problem in three provinces southern of Thailand.

A. The history of emerging social conflict in three provinces southern of Thailand.

After the sovereignty of the Malay rajahs of Patani was abolished through trickery by the Siamese kingdom in 1902, the country of Patani was gradually absorbed as a part of the territory of the country of Siam-Thai and its Patani

¹ "Thailand: The evolving conflict in the south" By Asia report, (Access on 17-11-16)

Malay subjects were changed to citizens of the state of Siam- Thai. Siamese officials who came from Bangkok region began to take up posts in Thai at that time were conducted through rule by the authority of the raja (autocracy). Thus the pattern of government in Patani stressed the advantages and benefits for these Siamese officials and their kingdom.

The Malays were made subject to and forced to pay maximum taxes as revenue to the kingdom. As far as possible all the wealth of Patani was to be collected and all the revenue thus to pay the salaries of the Siamese officials. It may be said that no one part of the revenue was used for the welfare of the Malays who had strained to pay the tax. The majority of the Siamese officials never seriously considered the welfare of the Malays. They first came to Patani with only their official rank. But when they retired they had obtained many broad estates and large compounds in Patani. Some of them, when they retired, returned to Bangkok taking possessions to make their lives luxurious. The officials of Siam-Thai never tried to understand the Malay people and the Islamic religion, because in the period of autocratic rule there was no such concern. They ruled with great ease, but were unconcerned with progress in these territories except for affairs concerning their own advantage. Service of health, education, and welfare did not exist, Siamese schools were established only in the city, for the benefit of children of Siamese officials. There were no Malay schools. When the government wanted roads to facilitate communications between one territory and another, they depended on local people to build them. They were mobilized to

work as laborers. Sometimes laborers were forced to come from their home miles away and were forced to bring their own supplies.²

The administration of judicial matters depended on the high commissioner, on the police, and finally on the judges. Sometimes people brought to court were forced to wait for months before their case came to trial. This state of affairs was caused by officials who wanted to find out how much money would be given to them by an accused person when their case came to trial. Such a system of administration made the Malays feel restless and dissatisfied.

In 1933 the Siam-Thai kingdom abolished all provinces (monton) in the country of Siam and retained only district (changwat), and all district including the district of Patani, Yala, and Bangenara were made directly subject to rule by the Ministry of the Interior in Bangkok. With this last change the country of Patani essentially had become an integral part of the country of Siam-Thai, and its condition became increasingly separated from the other Malay countries in the peninsula.

In the new constitutional arrangement, it was stated in the first sentence that “the country of Siam-Thai is one in all aspects and may not be divided.” The democratic form of government caused the Siamese to become increasingly, more than before. The Siamese interpreted the first sentence of constitution to

² “เหตุการณ์ไม่สงบในสามจังหวัดชายแดนภาคใต้ =The violence in three provinces southern Thailand”
<http://www.fpps.or.th/news.php?detail=n1149477695.news> (Access on 17-11-16)

mean that every person who is a Siam-Thai subject must be counted as a Siamese in everything, that all must use one language, set of customs, similar clothes, and one religion. They had forgotten that in the constitution there also was one sentence which guaranteed freedom of religion, custom, and way of life to all people who live in the country of Siam.

In 1939 Thai nationalism had begun to spread in the country of Siam, spurred by Luang Phibungsongkhram, who at that time had become prime minister. Among the chief men of Siam, Luang Phibungsongkhram was famous as a strong politician who made much use of nationalism. He had many plans to develop nationalism throughout all the provinces of Indochina. He also intended to suppress minority groups in his country.³

In 1940 a Siamese Cultural Institute was established in Bangkok and saw known by the name “Sapha Wattanatham,” the goal of which was the advancement of nationalism and the expansion of Siamese culture throughout the country. This Cultural Institute gradually issued directive in the form of compulsory rules of the public. One of the first directive which was issued compelled all people of Siam to wear Western-style clothing, including hats for both men and women. At meals it was necessary to use spoons and forks and to sit on chairs at a table. Malays in the district of Patani, Yala, Narathiwat, and Setul felt this directive was aimed directly at them because they were forbidden to wear

³ “Nationalism by Luang Phibunsongkram”
<http://2bangkok.com/06-nationalism.html>, (Access on 17-11-16)

Malay clothing, use Malay names, speak the Malay language, and embrace the Islamic religion. Among a few requirements of the rules advancing Siamese culture, it was forbidden to speak Malay in any government office. Government officers who know Malay were strictly forbidden to speak Malay with local inhabitants. Malays who came to settle a matter in an office of the kingdom were forced to use the Siamese language. If they did not speak Siamese they were forced to hire someone who knew speak Siamese to be their interpret, whether the affair was important or not. Among the requirements advancing Thai culture, it also was stated that Buddhism was the official religion, that Islam must be opposed, and that every effort which would advance Islam must be inhabited. Even worse, some Malay people in the district of Saiburi (Teluban) were forced to pray to an idol of Buddha. Thus Buddhist idols were installed in Siamese schools and the pupils, a majority of whom were Malays who held offices in the kingdom were forced to change their names to Siamese and it was forbidden for Malays to hold high offices. People who were Muslims were forbidden to attend military schools and hold higher offices.

In 1942 the cultural regulations were gradually implemented in the Malay district, forcing Malays to wear Western clothes: coat, trousers, and hats for men, and tight blouses and short skirts for women. Anyone refusing to follow regulations was arrested and fined, and sometimes kicked and beaten by the Siamese police. In this year the Malays in those districts became restless, especially the religious teachers. They too were forced to wear Western clothing and often the robes and turbans of the Hajis were snatched off by the Siamese

police and trampled under their feet. Similarly women, while buying and selling in Malay markets, were kicked and jabbed with gun butts by the Siamese police because they wore long loose dresses and shawls. Thus, because of the proposals of Luang Phibunsongkhram, the Siamese officials in Malay districts were able to terrorize unchecked everywhere, supported by the cultural regulations. They became more and more zealous in desecrating the honor of the Islamic religion and Malay custom, and their nationalism caused them to feel scorn and contempt for the Malays.

In the year 1944, Phibunsongkhram abolished the office of religious magistrate in the districts of Patani, Yala, Narathiwat, and Setul, and revoked Islamic laws concerning marriage, divorce, and inheritance which had been recognized by the kingdom of Siam for decades. Subsequently all cases pertaining to Islamic affairs were forced to follow the civil laws of the kingdom and were settled by Siamese courts. In this year the situation of the Malays and the honor of the Islamic religion became increasingly endangered. In the same year, theologians led by Haji Sulung bin Abdul Kadir established an Islamic organization in Patani with the object of encouraging cooperation among Islamic leaders responsible for resisting the movement of the kingdom of Siam to Siamize the Malays and to violate the Islamic religion.

On the 14th day of January 1944, which coincides with the Siamese year 2487, a request was sent to the Prime Minister Phibunsongkhram by Tungku Abdul Jalal bin Tungku Abdul Talib, a leader of the Malays in southern Siam who

was motivated by genuine loyalty to his people and was the Malay representative in the Siamese parliament at that time. This request concerned enforcement of the Siamese cultural regulations with regard to the culture of the Malay people in southern Siam and the desecration of the religion of Islam, which was being carried out by the governor of Patani (Siam-Thai). An official reply was finally received on the 29th of April 1944, coinciding with the Siamese year 2487. This reply came from the Office of the Secretary of the Prime Minister Phibunsongkhram and expressed approval of the behavior of the governor of Patani and the manner in which he carried out the tyrannical Siamese cultural regulations, which were so crude and forceful. The letter read.

In the month of August 1945, Nai Khuana Aphaiwong was selected to become prime minister of Siam and a new cabinet of ministers was formed. "Government of Nai Kuang abolished all of the culture laws made by Phibunsongkhram and the movement to Siamize the Malays stopped. even so, the cruelty and violations of Siamese officials against the Malays did not cease. The sensibilities of the Siamese officials were ruined so that laws of justice and humanity were discarded. At this time there was a sort of contagious disease among the Siamese officials which led to disregard of directives and the taking of bribes. This occurred from the highest officials to the lowest peons. A matter that was very important could not succeed if bribes to the officials were not first prepared. With the police, a criminal who was caught could with ease be safe and free if he gave them a bribe. Repeatedly, when Malay was accused of friendship with bad elements, he was immediately arrested by the Siamese police, taken to a

lonely place, and beaten before he was taken to the place of detention. This also happened to Malays accused of taking part in political movements critical of the government. They were always threatened and slandered in various ways by the Siamese police, arrested, or simply beaten without bothering to take the matter to court.

On the 24th of August the investigatory commission held a general meeting with the Malays of Patani which provided an opportunity for questions and answers. In this meeting Haji Sulung bin Abdul Kadir, the head of the Islamic Council, and Wan othman Ahmad, head of the *Persekutuan Semangat Patani* (Alliance of the Spirit of Patani), represented the populace of Patani, and submitted to the commission seven demands to be presented to the government. The contents of the demands were:

1. The government of Siam should have a person of high rank possessing full power to govern the four provinces of Patani, Yala, Narathiwat, and Setul, and this person should be a Muslim born within one of the provinces and elected by the populace this person in this position should be retained without being replaced.
2. All of the taxes obtained within the four provinces should be spent only within the provinces.
3. The government should support education in the Malay medium up to the fourth grade in parish schools within the four provinces.
4. Eighty percent of the government officials within the four provinces

should be Muslims born within the provinces.

5. The government should use the Malay language within government offices alongside the Siamese language.
6. The government should allow the Islamic Council to establish laws pertaining to the customs and ceremonies of Islam with the agreement of the (above noted) high official.
7. The government should separate the religious court from the civil court in the four provinces and permit (the former) full authority to conduct cases.

At the same time it was reported that the Malays in the province of Narathiwat also had proposed similar demands to the same investigating team. Their demands were made by 55 local Malay leaders. The Siamese government investigating team heard all of the demands of the Patani Malays and it was agreed that the demands would be forwarded to the government in Bangkok. Finally all of the demands of the Malay people were delivered to the Siamese government in Bangkok, but did not result in any changes from the Siamese government. Rather, Siamese officials were of the opinion that these demands were quite contrary to the national Constitution and need not be considered some members of the Siamese government interpreted the demands as a political movement against the constitutional laws, and thought that it was necessary to take strong action against the Malays. By order of the Siamese commissioner of Patani,

After representative of Patani published and presented seven demands to the government, on 16th of January 1948, in the morning a troop of armed Siamese police arrested Haji Sulung at his house and two days later arrested Wan othman Ahmad, Haji Wan Hussein, and Wan Mahmud Ami. The Malay leaders who had voted the demands of the Malay people were arrested and accused of treason against the kingdom. One month later Haji Sulung and his colleagues were taken to Nakhon Sri Thammarat, and the Siamese court there concluded their deliberations by imposing jail sentences of four years and eight month they were taken to Bangkok and detained in the large prison "Bang Kwang." After these arrests, many Malays of Patani who also were accused of involvement in the movement fled to seek refuge in Malaya. The Islamic Council of Patani was outlawed by the government. During this year all activities of the Patani Malays were constantly watched by the Siamese government, and many special undercover agents were sent from Bangkok to Patani, Yala, and Narathiwat to investigate the activities of those Malays who were considered to be political and opposed to the government, or who demanded freedom.

Since the fall of Patani in the eighteenth century it is clear that the government of Siam has misgoverned during this whole period of time. No progress has been made in Patani to provide well-being for the Malays. In matters of health, education, association, and economy, Patani has lagged far behind the progress of its neighbors in Malaya. The actions of the Siamese government which allow the Malays to live in backwardness, definitely gives a large profit to them, but this has grieved the hearts of the Malays. The Malays of Patani were

forced to pawn their country to the government of Siam with the hope that they would be given good leadership toward general progress, or at the very least be allowed equality with the leadership given to the Siamese people. Patani is not poor, and has natural wealth in the land. Among the provinces of southern Siam, Patani should be counted as rich, with no need to depend on the wealth of the Siamese from other provinces to pay for the welfare of the Malays.⁴

During Luang Phibunsongkhram government era in the past Malays-Patani people are the most ill-fated because Siam-Thai democracy is limited for people in that area, Even though the Malay people of Patani long have lived in the democratic world, the fate of the Malay-Patani people is like a climbing vine unable to grow up the trellis in that time.

B. The policy of Thai government to manage the conflict in three provinces southern Thailand.

After the Plaek Phibunsongkhram government era the time change the ideas of Thai government also change the government took more attention to the issue in southern of Thailand. Thai government effort to improve relation between government and people to understand each other in conflict area. In this part the writer need to mention the policy of Thai government to manage the conflict in three provinces southern Thailand in era of Prem Tinsulanonda, Surayud Julanon and Yingluck shinawatra government.

⁴ "The history of the Malay kingdom of Patani" By Ibrahim Syukri (Access on 15-11-2016)

General Prem Tinsulanonda Thailand's 16th Prime Minister in (1980-1988)⁵. Prem Tinsulanonda government is the one government that tried to emerge the peace process policy in three provinces southern of Thailand. Prem government 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. Therefore, there are three special security laws that had been done by Thai Government under counter-insurgency in the Southern provinces. 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. Thus, in conclude in the past Thai Government was effort to resolve the conflict problem.⁶

General Surayud Chulanont Thailand's 24th Prime Minister who was appointed, rather than elected the head of Thailand's Interim Government between 2006 and 2008⁷. Surayud government made policy to resolving the social conflict in three provinces southern of Thailand a priority, and took a number of important steps toward that end in the wake of the coup. Surayud adopted a more conciliatory tone than his predecessor, and promised to establish a constructive

⁵ "General Prem profile" http://www.th4u.com/prem_tinsulanonda.htm (Access on 4-11-2016)

⁶ "Prem establish Sbpac" by Asia Times online
http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/SEA-02-140813.html (Access on 05-11-2016)

⁷ "Surayud Julanon Profile" web - http://www.th4u.com/surayud_chulanont.htm (Access on 05-11-2016)

dialogue with “all concerned parties.” The prime minister said he would use the recommendations made by the NRC as “guideposts,” patch up relations with Malaysia, and even consider the partial implementation of Sharia law in three province southern Thailand. Surayud also recognized the importance of improving governance, socio-economic development, and educational standards in southern Thailand. On his first visit to southern Thailand, Surayud took the symbolically important step of apologizing for the excesses of the previous government, including the Tak Bai Incident. Soon afterwards, the government dropped all remaining charges against the Tak Bai protestors⁸. Surayud also promised to make Thai officials more accountable for their actions, and investigate past abuses.

In terms of economic development, Surayud government has tried to start the economy by designating the three southern provinces (include Satun and Songkla) as a special economic zone, with tax incentives for those willing to invest in the area. The government also announced plans to revive the 1993 Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle which covers all five provinces. In a bid to improve educational standards, the Surayud government plans to increase the number of scholarships available for Malay-Muslims to attend university.

Since the coup the new government has made significant progress in mending ties with neighboring countries, especially Malaysia. Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi has praised Surayud’s “more diplomatic” approach to

⁸ “PM apologizes to the south” *Bangkok Post*, (Access on 05-11-2016)

the restive southern Thailand⁹. On the sidelines of the ASEAN Summit in January 2007 the two leaders agreed to reconvene annual talks and to push forward with the Joint Development Strategy, which is designed to foster economic integration between Thailand's southern provinces and Malaysia's northern states.¹⁰

Yingluck Shinawatra Thailand's 28th Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra became first female prime minister from the Pheu Thai party¹¹ Yingluck government came into power in the middle of 2011 one of her campaign is running peace process to solve the social conflict in three provinces southern of Thailand and some district of Songkla. After Yingluck become the prime minister of Thailand the government trying to solve the problem by using peaceful way. Peace negotiation process between Thai government and insurgent side is the part of Yingluck policy that would make the peaceful and try to solve the conflict in three provinces southern of Thailand

Since early in 2013, the Malaysian government has been brokering a new dialogue process which has gained support from the Thai government, and was publicly endorsed by the prime ministers of both Malaysia and Thailand. Thai prime minister Yingluck Shinawatra and her Malaysian counterpart Najib Razak took part in a public signing ceremony for a general consensus document, As the

⁹ "Malay PM says Surayud on right track in south" *Bangkok Post*, http://wbns.oas.psu.ac.th/shownews.php?news_id=46015 (Access on 05-11-2016).

¹⁰ "Ethnic separatism in southern Thailand kingdom fraying at the edge" by Lan Storey (Access on 05-11-2016)

¹¹ "Yingluck Shinawatra profile" web <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-13723451> (Access on 5-12-2016)

first stage a negotiation process was made between both actors producing on 28 February 2013.

A large negotiating team from the Thai side was established. On the insurgent side is a group of representatives who claim to be from BRN, and were brought to the table by the Malaysian security services. The talks faced a serious challenge in June 2013 when the BRN side made a set of five wide-ranging demands that the Thai side struggled to address. A Ramadan ceasefire in July led initially to a decline in levels of violence, but was violated by some insurgents and ultimately sabotaged by the Thai Army. In September 2013, the insurgents sought to clarify their position by presenting the Thais with a document which aimed to convince them that the five demands were a negotiating position, not a pre-determined set of preconditions.¹² In the table of negotiation two issues were raised for discussion at the meeting the next stage for the peace talks process and de-escalation of violence in the restive region. On the first issue, it was agreed by both sides that there would be at most 15 delegates for each party and Malaysia would be the facilitator. On the second issue, both sides said they wanted to see peace in the region with the BRN demanding the government to ensure justice for all while the government had asked the BRN to instruct the separatists to scale down their violent incidents.

From peace negotiation process in Kuala Lumpur between Thai government and insurgent group we can analyst that the Yingluck government tries to make the condition of social conflict in three provinces southern Thailand

¹² "Southern Thailand: From conflict to negotiation" web 23-11-16
<https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/southern-thailand-conflict-negotiations>

become peace even the implementation of peace negotiation process between Thai government and insurgent group had deadlock. Therefore, the negotiation on Yingluck government administration failed but this policy from the government can prove that the government needs to negotiation for solve and manage the conflict in three provinces southern of Thailand. As the person who grows up in the social conflict area I strongly believe peace process is better than no peace process.