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14. ABSTRACT

The insurgency in southern Thailand, guided by a radical Islamic ideology, is well funded and equipped and attracting greater numbers of recruits and will only increase in capability over time. Bangkok's virtual loss of control of the insurgency and the ethno-religious strife rising from the militias is not encouraging. While the insurgency is not currently aligned to the global jihad movement, over time U.S. concern and response should be a consideration of the potential the southern Thailand insurgency poses if left to take its own course. This paper argues that the U.S. has strategic interests in Southeast Asia that could be negatively affected by an expansion of the conflict, and further political or economic turmoil in Thailand. The paper analyzes the insurgency with a view toward determining its affiliation with international jihadist actors and offers recommendations for both Thailand and the U.S. Finally, the paper concludes that the United States should do all it can to help its ally come up with a strategy to resolve the conflict before significant U.S. forces are involved.

15. SUBJECT TERMS
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NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
Newport, R.I.



INSURGENCY IN THAILAND: TIME TO TAME THE ISLAMIST TIGER?

By

Nicholas P. Vavich

Major, U.S. Marines

A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The content of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

Signature: _____

10 May 2007

If we want to meet the guerrilla successfully and to defeat him within a reasonable period of time, we must study his methods, study our own methods and their potential, and draw from this study some general principles that will permit us to detect the guerrillas weak points and concentrate our main efforts on them¹.

Introduction

After two decades the latent insurgency in southern Thailand erupted again in January 2004 and has been gathering steam ever since, claiming some 2,200 lives² in the southernmost and largely Muslim Malay provinces of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat³.

Revolutionary war is not new to southern Thailand and has been a regular occurrence since the area was absorbed by Siam a century ago. What makes this particular insurgency stand out is not just the level and duration of the violence, but the prominence that Islam plays in it. **While the Islamic insurgency in Thailand is local in nature and not currently aligned with the larger global jihadist insurgency,⁴ it is driven by a radical Islamic ideology, has the potential to expand in the future and poses a threat to U.S. strategic interests in Southeast Asia.**

The Quadrennial Defense Review states that future warriors need to be as proficient in irregular operations as they are today in high-intensity combat.⁵ Thus, identifying areas of existing or potential irregular war that intersect with United States (U.S.) national strategic interests will help identify potential areas of future US military involvement. This paper will argue that the conflict in southern Thailand deserves greater attention from the U.S., will explain the U.S. interests at stake, provide historical and cultural context, analyze the insurgency, and lastly offer solutions to the conflict before U.S. troops become involved.

Fig. 1. Southeast Asia



What Is At Stake and Why Do We Care?

Located in Southeast Asia, Thailand holds a strategic geographic position in the world's most populous Muslim neighborhood. Sharing a common border with Malaysia and situated a short distance from Indonesia it has access to two of the world's most important waterways, the Straits of Malacca and the South China Sea. Thailand is also a key ally and partner of the U.S. and a strong supporter of the Global War on Terror and

regional United Nations (UN) Peacekeeping Operations⁶. With a large market-oriented economy,⁷ it is one of the most powerful nations in Southeast Asia, and is Western-leaning politically. Regionally, the Association for Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), of which Thailand is a member, is an important organization for economic, political and collective security. ASEAN is the fifth-largest U.S. export market, and private U.S. investment there is greater than that for China, India or Japan individually.⁸ Further, with the U.S. engaged in the southern Philippines and increased sectarian fighting in Indonesia, the Islamist-inspired violence spiraling out of control in southern Thailand has the potential to expand beyond Thailand's borders and destabilize the region and global commerce. For all of the above reasons, the situation in southern Thailand is of importance to the U.S. and demands greater U.S. attention.

Historical Setting and Cultural Context.

Buddhist Thailand came to the southern Malay Muslims and not the other way around.⁹ The king of Pattani Raya accepted Islam in 1457 and created an Islamic sultanate which dominated the surrounding area including northern Malaysia.¹⁰ Originally a major regional trading hub,¹¹ it was later recognized as a significant center for Islamic studies¹² and described as the “cradle of Islam” in Southeast Asia.¹³ Despite being brought under Siamese (Buddhist) influence in 1786 and the monarchy abolished,¹⁴ the Pattani Raya remained largely autonomous of Bangkok until the 20th century.

Formally annexed in 1902, the Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1909 gave Siam official control over Pattani and from 1921 through World War II Bangkok began a series of reforms to integrate Pattani Muslims into greater Thailand¹⁵. These early attempts to “integrate” the southern Muslims into greater Thailand became the cornerstone of several

separatist insurgencies in the 20th century and, to Malay-Muslims, remain historic evidence of Bangkok's attempt to destroy local religion, culture, and language.

Although Muslims comprise less than five percent of the total population of Thailand, seventy-six percent of southern Thais are Muslim and ethnically and linguistically Malay; yet that is an oversimplification. The Muslims of southern Thailand refer to themselves specifically as the Jawi and to their language as *baso Jawi* (the Jawi Language), a distinct dialect of Malay¹⁶.

Like so many minority groups around the world¹⁷ the Jawi have resisted assimilation by the dominant (Thai-Buddhist) culture. They have clung to rituals, linguistics, and customs no longer in use by their ethnic Malay relatives across the border¹⁸ and in so doing have suspended in time a “golden age” and idea of a Malaysia which no longer exists and has moved forward without them. Thus, to be Jawi today is more of a cultural distinction than an ethnic one.¹⁹ Le Roux summarizes the situation in which the Jawi find themselves:

“The inhabitants of Patani, in the past Malay (in the political sense), are now inhabitants of Thailand by territorial absorption; they are not yet Thai because of their remaining Malay (in the cultural sense); they are Muslims and, finally, they are Austronesians by language...They belong to all of these worlds without fusing with any single one.”²⁰ (See Figure 1)

THE JAWI SITUATION IN RELATION TO THE LARGER CULTURAL
ENSEMBLE OF WHICH IT IS A PART

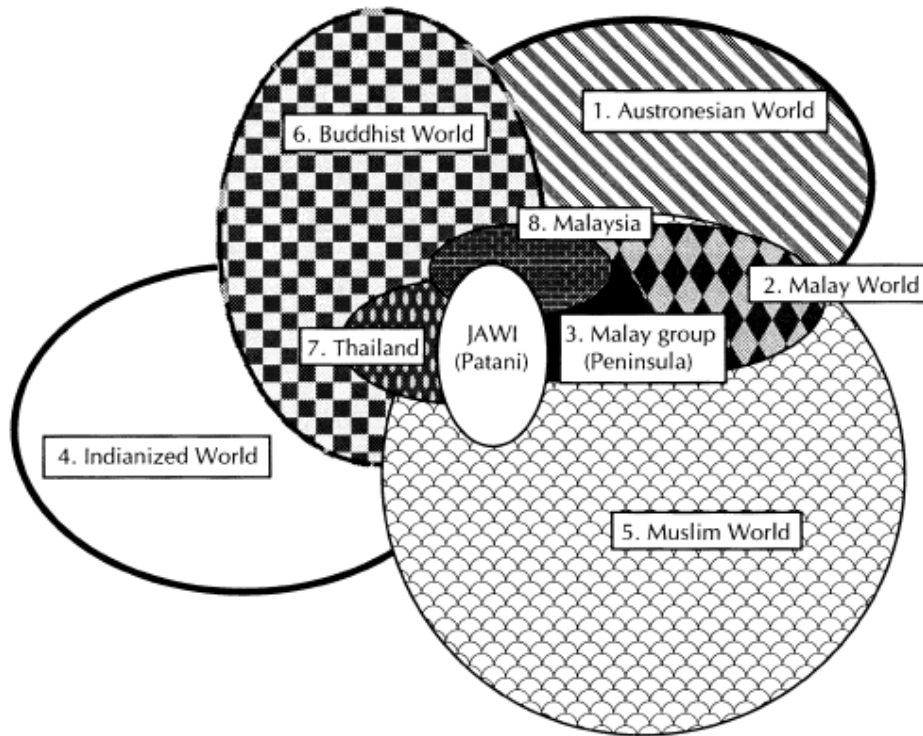


Fig. 2 The Jawi Worldview (Le Roux, 233)

The Insurgency Analyzed

In order to find effective solutions to the Islamic insurgency in southern Thailand, it is necessary to analyze it to uncover its root causes, determine the movement's goals and how it is attempting to achieve its aims. It is equally important to look the actions of the counterinsurgent (Thailand) to determine if his methods are a help or a hindrance to ending the conflict.

The roots of the insurgency stem from both real and perceived cultural, economic, religious and political repression and historical discrimination as well as Islamic revivalism. Bangkok's early attempts to eliminate the language,²¹ culture and religion of the southern Muslims and to impose a singular Thai (Buddhist) nationality²² have made

southern Muslims distrustful of the government's intentions. Central to the unrest has also been an Islamic awakening from the expanding influence of Salafist/Wahhabi teaching.²³ Economic deprivation plays a role as well as income gaps between north and south widening over the past decades²⁴ while the southern provinces remain three of the poorest and least developed in Thailand.²⁵ Mistrust and anger by local Muslims has also been fueled by the Krue Se-Mosque and Tak Bai²⁶ incidents as well as allegations of human rights violations by security forces.²⁷ Lastly, official corruption by the ruling Thai Buddhist elite and the perception they favor their co-religionists by providing unbalanced civic and development programs is a side, but contributing factor.

Capitalizing on the southern Malay population's heightened sense of Islamic identity, the Islamist insurgent leaders appear to be fusing this new religiosity with Jawi culture (the source of social identity) and historical aspirations of separatism as a means to package an Islamic-separatist insurgency to Malay-Muslims and foment discontent for use against Bangkok.²⁸

The motives and objectives of the insurgents remain obscure. No one has claimed responsibility for a single act of violence in southern Thailand, nor has anyone published a manifesto or list of demands. However, the leadership appears to be using a Foco strategy²⁹ with the immediate aim to destabilize the region to make it ungovernable³⁰ in order to achieve its long-term goal of creating an autonomous Malay Muslim state out of southern Thailand³¹ under a strict salafist interpretation of the *sharia*. While many analysts have claimed this is an insurgency and not jihad (war), it is both. Jihadi salafists³² would recognize this struggle as a near jihad: a war to expel infidels (Buddhists) from Muslim lands.³³

This makes the insurgent leadership ideologically related to and spiritual kin of al-Qaeda; they are family in a way, but they do not necessarily share the same aspirations or world view. All insurgent activities have remained in the southern provinces, indicating the local aspirations of the movements. Although al-Qaeda and affiliated groups are known to traverse, and utilize Thailand,³⁴ and with a shared ideology they might even wish to become involved in the conflict, there is no evidence of outside radical Islamic group involvement.³⁵ There may be a couple reasons for this: the southern insurgent's may wish to keep their distance for fear of becoming a target of the US terror war or also out of fear of losing control of local operations to outside groups and leadership.

The lack of a published manifesto is a calculated move and there are three reasons for not going public. First, authorities will have difficulty mounting an effective counterinsurgency campaign and destroying the movement if they don't grasp the full nature of the movement (so far this has held true). Second, doing so would alert the Muslim population to the radical Islamic aims of the insurgent leadership. People who may favor separatism but who have no desire to live under a Taliban-style regime might cut off support. Third, and related to point two, an admission of their radical Islamic goals might draw the attention of the U.S. with all its resources and intelligence capabilities who could aid the still ineffective Thais. Best to keep quiet and let the Thais grope in the dark.

The reason insurgent leadership and groups remain unknown is equally simple: they are weak and vulnerable in relation to the government and remaining phantoms with unstated goals is their best way to survive.³⁶ Highlighting this point has been the government's arrest of some 1,700 people to date which has resulted in no actionable

intelligence and no insurgent leader arrests. Perhaps all were innocent, but more likely it indicates a cellular structure and high degree of compartmentalization to protect the leadership and the organization as a whole.³⁷ With nearly 40,000 security personnel in southern Thailand, the insurgents can't be too careful.

The movement also appears to be an amalgam of a new generation of “rank and file” insurgents loosely tied to a more experienced and older leadership base, all packaging themselves using the names of past separatist groups in order to garner local support.³⁸ Religious or ideologically inspired actors such as the Barisan Revolusi Nasional – Koordinasi (BRN-C - the best organized and largest)³⁹ and Gerakan Mujahidin Islamiya Pattani (GMIP)⁴⁰ are almost certainly involved along with other groups. A key difference between this insurgency and previous separatist movements is the high degree of cooperation and coordination of the actors which this time has denied Bangkok a fault line it could generally rely upon and exploit in the past.

The heavy Thai security presence prevents the insurgents massing and going toe to toe with the government. Thus, rarely operating in large units, they prefer hit-and-run operations calculated to take advantage of their mobility and speed while specifically aimed at a target audience: the population.

The insurgent's actions are ultimately geared to influence the population and the insurgent's use of sophisticated satirical cartoons as propaganda to get their messages out⁴¹ are effective in undercutting Bangkok's attempts to win control of the local population.

Direct attacks on the very group the insurgents wish to win over are not without logic and bring into focus the jihadi salafist ideological underpinnings of the insurgency. Ritual beheadings⁴² and attacks on women, children, and non-Muslim and Muslim

‘collaborators’⁴³ (including moderate imams), terrorize that portion of the population that is unsupportive of the insurgents or who act as informants.⁴⁴ Takfir (literally, excommunication), the killing of fellow Muslims, is extremely rare in mainstream Sunni Islam (but very common among jihadi salafists today – Algeria, Taliban, al-Qaeda as examples) and is not found in Shiaism. It serves two purposes: first, the Islamists are ridding themselves of moderate elements who could pose a challenge to their ideology and leadership down the road; and second, these brazen and brutal attacks, often conducted in public and broad daylight, are intended to make the citizens live under the constant threat of death and lose confidence in the government’s ability to provide security for them. The insurgent’s goal is create a loss of trust in Bangkok’s ability to protect the population while giving the appearance that the insurgents can fill this security void.

Arson, raids, bombings, ambushes and assassinations⁴⁵ are the insurgent’s most preferred tactics. The ferocity and frequency of the violence directed against the government further demonstrate to the population Bangkok’s inability to provide security while weakening troop morale and destroying symbols of government legitimacy. The killing or eviction of government workers and the establishment of parallel administration⁴⁶ in some cases forces people to rely on insurgent-supplied services.

Attacks on the local economy erode the economic base of the region. Auto dealerships, plantations, banks, and the ethnic Chinese who dominate the urban markets and rubber plantation workers are attacked regularly.⁴⁷ This highlights another relative disadvantage the government faces in countering the insurgency: it is expensive.

Nothing highlights the ideological basis of the insurgency and the long-term battle for the population more than the conflict over schooling, where control of education means control of the next generation. The roles of religious schools (*pondoks*) and religious education in the insurgency are inseparable.⁴⁸ Private *pondoks* provide recruitment, ideological training, and sanctuary for the insurgency and many teachers (mostly educated in the Middle East) are believed to be the insurgency's leadership. Not surprisingly, school teachers⁴⁹ and schools⁵⁰ have been among the most heavily targeted⁵¹ by the insurgency in an effort to force students to attend insurgent-controlled schools.

This isn't a "hearts and minds" campaign being waged by the insurgents but an attempt to impose its Islamist ideology on the population through intimidation and terror. So far the insurgency has been more effective than Bangkok. Aiding the insurgents were the repressive counter-insurgency measures employed by former Prime Minister Thaksin. These measures estranged the population, reinforced local mistrust,⁵² and pushed many moderate Muslims away from Bangkok which has made re-establishing government legitimacy and ending the violence difficult.

Further confusing issues on the ground has been the rise of government-armed Buddhist and Muslim militias.⁵³ As the insurgents have stepped up attacks on Buddhists, so too have "revenge" attacks on Muslims occurred.⁵⁴ Thus, Bangkok's arming of these groups to bolster local security makes it difficult to determine who is attacking whom, has taken the monopoly of legitimate violence away from security forces⁵⁵ and has started to fuel an ethno-religious conflict on top of the insurgency.

A failure to apply enough resources against the problem⁵⁶ has hampered government efforts since 2004 and, although 1,100 police are scheduled to deploy to the

south in late May 2007, a recent request for an additional 10,000 troops to the southern provinces is still pending approval in Bangkok.⁵⁷

A deep Army-Police rivalry which results in poor cooperation and intelligence gathering was exacerbated by the dissolution in early 2002 of a key security forces interagency headquarters and a civil-administration coordination center between Bangkok and the south.⁵⁸ Realizing the error, Bangkok established the Southern Border Provinces Peace-Building Command in 2004; however, the result has been a loss of public support and intelligence contacts which have not been easy to replace and have left the Thais groping in the dark for insurgents.

The sophistication and frequency of attacks have increased over the past three years. The initial assaults of 2004 were carried out by men armed primarily only with machetes and swords while today pistols, assault rifles and shotguns are the norm. Average daily killings, 1.6 in 2006, have risen to nearly four a day for 2007.⁵⁹ No suicide bombings have occurred, but explosives capabilities now range from fertilizer to Power Gel and military-grade C-4,⁶⁰ and Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) have increased in frequency and have grown in size from an average 2kg in 2004 to 15 kg in 2007. Detonation devices have also evolved and become more sophisticated; they include command detonation, cell phones, digital watches and timing devices. Insurgents recently transitioned to remote car key detonators due to Thai security forces effectively blocking use of cell phone signals,⁶¹ and are also experimenting with infrared detonators.⁶² These capabilities combined with frequent, coordinated and increasingly lethal attacks illuminate an insurgency that is not only well funded and supplied, but one that is also taking in more recruits.

Source: Janes. As of 9 May 2007.

Thus, reports that the insurgents receive the bulk of their arms and equipment from attacks on security forces⁶³ do not appear valid any longer. However, they do rely heavily on sympathetic Muslims familiar with the area for intelligence,⁶⁴ safe havens, and logistics support. Financial assistance comes through contacts in the Middle East (largely from Saudi Arabia)⁶⁵, but precisely how much is unknown. Bangkok's previous claims of official Malay involvement and support are almost certainly untrue;⁶⁶ however, Malaysian territory has historically been used by Thai insurgent groups as sanctuary and the illegal flow of personnel, weapons and equipment there is likely.

In summary, the insurgency in southern Thailand, guided by a radical Islamic ideology, is well funded and equipped and attracting greater numbers of recruits and will only increase in capability over time. Bangkok's virtual loss of control of the insurgency and the ethno-religious strife rising from the militias is not encouraging, not least because of its near complete lack of intelligence in the southern provinces. While the insurgency is not currently aligned to the global jihad movement, radical Islamist groups such as the GSPC in North Africa⁶⁷ underline how small-scale local insurgents can become international ones over time. U.S. concern and response should be a consideration of the potential the southern Thailand insurgency poses if left to take its own course.

Solutions and Recommendations

Thailand

Recent talk of a potential amnesty for insurgents,⁶⁸ the courting of the world's largest Muslim organization⁶⁹ and claims of an exchange of ideas with prominent Muslim countries such as Egypt and Indonesia⁷⁰ on how to end hostilities are not serious answers

to the problem, but mere distractions which fail to address the root causes of the insurgency. The amnesty card is ill-timed and appears to be a cookie-cutter approach based on past success but will ultimately fail because it is being offered from a position of weakness. Egypt and Indonesia have much to boast about in effectively defeating Islamic insurgencies; however, the U.S. should be wary of further human rights abuses if similar methods are applied in southern Thailand. And while some level of international strategic Muslim political cover to legitimize Thailand's actions may occur, these will not impact events on the ground. Real changes in governance will have to take place to resolve the insurgency.

Bangkok should approach a strategy to end the insurgency in southern Thailand with a commitment to human rights, a return to democracy, and a focus on the root causes of the conflict: Jawi fear of loss of language, culture and religion through assimilation.

The removal of blanket immunity for corrupt officials and security personnel operating in southern Thailand and the prosecution of previous crimes committed there would go a long way in showing Bangkok's seriousness regarding all its citizens as equal in the eyes of the law and addressing human rights violations. Further, government-organized militias in the south should be disbanded in order to regain the monopoly on legitimate violence in the south and to diffuse the ethno-religious conflict that is ready to ignite.

Before any settlement in the south can be reached, however, Thailand must return to full democracy with a duly-elected and legitimate government as the first and most important step in resolving the insurgency in southern Thailand. Prime Minister Surayud

Chulanont has promised elections in December 2007, as well as drafting a new constitution for the country. Only a democratically-elected government with a full mandate from the people can effectively negotiate and make delivery on the necessary compromises to end the bloodshed.

In drafting the new constitution, the framers should ensure that all rights guaranteed under the 1997 “People’s Constitution” remain in effect. A constitution that guarantees the preservation of language and religion and thus, culture for all Thais, would be a big step in the right direction. Admittedly there is already much opposition from the powerful Buddhist monk lobby over much milder wording,⁷¹ but this guarantee would be an official recognition of the great diversity within Thai society and an indirect acknowledgement of past discrimination while offering a fresh start.

With education at the heart of the current conflict, the authorities should consider applying more resources to protecting schools and teachers from attack. This will cut off a source of insurgent recruitment, partially deny transmission of their ideology and demonstrate government strength and resolve. Concurrently, the *baso Jawi* language should be officially recognized as equal to Thai. Further, the standard Malay language should be dropped from the curricula⁷² which will remove one of the causes of unrest.

Bangkok must not only reinforce the 30,000 troops currently in the south with the 10,000 requested but it should focus on security of the population as its priority, then control of key infrastructure, and insurgent hunting as its last priority. Running combined Buddhist-Muslim patrols throughout the region may be difficult, but it would add legitimacy, reduce human rights violations, and give the population the sense of protection it needs from the government.

While Bangkok is doing all of the above, it must simultaneously sell its citizens on the virtue of remaining a part of Thailand through an active information campaign whose message is tied directly into specific actions. Part of this campaign should be an active counter to the Islamist ideology (CIST)⁷³ by supporting moderate imams and leaders, and through education.

United States:

Diplomatically, The U.S. must continue to champion fundamental human rights and push for a return to full democracy in Thailand as soon as possible. The U.S. must emphasize that, while the insurgency may be an internal conflict, Bangkok's mishandling of it could have regional impacts to economic, political and security interests for many countries in an attempt to gain consensus on how to effectively defeat the insurgency.

The U.S. should also work closely with and through ASEAN to help resolve the conflict before it has the chance to impact member nations. While ASEAN's charter specifically prohibits intervention in member nation internal issues,⁷⁴ this organization may be the best mechanism for exerting influence on Bangkok. Malaysia will be most impacted if the insurgency spreads and Indonesia, with its current turmoil, will not want to see a widening of Islamist unrest in the region. The Philippines, too, will not want to see expanding Islamist influence and unrest in the region and will likely help where it can.

Economically, the U.S. could extend aid packages to help bolster the weakening Thai economy. Tying U.S. grants to improved democratic reform, human rights and directly into projects to stimulate growth and jobs in the south would demonstrate U.S. resolve to aid Bangkok's "peaceful" approach to stabilizing the Muslim south.

In the realm of information, the U.S. now has considerable expertise and experience in countering the Islamist ideology which is necessary for success in southern Thailand. The U.S. might also provide training and support to help track the financing of these groups from foreign sources.

Militarily we should offer strategic, operational and tactical intelligence in the form of imagery, technical collection, unmanned aerial vehicles, and ground sensors to fill critical gaps in Thai capabilities. Also, offering to provide sophisticated software to conduct link-analysis and other analytic functions through automated systems may help the Thais sift through a very confusing intelligence picture.

Despite the recent rebuff by the Thai Army,⁷⁵ the U.S. should again offer Special Forces troops. Not only are they premier in fighting insurgencies, but as advisors they could help to reduce the human rights abuses and increase Bangkok's legitimacy. Further, use of the Special Forces troops as conduits for the sharing of certain U.S. intelligence might provide the carrot needed to get the Thais to agree to this deployment.

Exercises need to be maintained and expanded. Cobra Gold is an important joint and combined multi-national exercise hosted annually by Thailand to promote regional peace and security. Next year's exercise should be expanded to include Malaysia to increase Thai-Malay interoperability and cooperation, which may be important in helping solve the southern insurgency. Humanitarian/civic action projects, designed to improve quality of life and local infrastructure for the host Thai people include the Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat provinces. This may initially raise concerns of U.S. War on Terror involvement to local Muslims, but these could be mitigated by Muslim nation involvement. The payoffs of showing coalition and Thai support to Malay-Muslims

would be worth the effort. Lastly, U.S. Coast Guard expertise and involvement in the exercise focusing on counter-narcotics, littoral security, and human smuggling are relevant to defeating the insurgency. Coast Guard law enforcement capabilities would allow it to exercise with foreign police units to strengthen their capacity as well.

Conclusion.

The Islamic insurgency in southern Thailand is getting bloodier as the weeks go by and the Thai government has not only been ineffective, but appears largely apathetic to the violence. The conflict remains localized, and while not tied to al-Qaeda or affiliates, given time it has the potential to expand to Thailand's neighbors and create regional economic and security instability. The United States has strategic interests in Thailand and the greater Southeast Asia region that could be negatively affected by an expansion of the conflict, and further political or economic turmoil in Thailand. Finally, the longer the violence continues, and with the ever-increasing ethnic strife, the closer Thailand comes to reaching the point of no return where legitimacy is completely lost and local animosity prevents reconciliation. Bangkok has not a moment to lose and the United States should do all it can to help its ally come up with a strategy to resolve the conflict.

¹ Roger Trinquier. "Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency". Praeger Security International, West Port, 2006. p. 51.

² Jane's Information Group. "Pre-vote jitters - Unease during run-up to Thai elections" At http://www8.janes.com/Search/documentView.do?docId=/content1/janesdata/mags/jir/history/jir2007/jir10161.htm@current&pageSelected=allJanes&keyword=southern%20thailand%20insurgency&backPath=http://search.janes.com/Search&Prod_Name=JIR&. Accessed 22 April 2007.

³ International Crisis Group. "Southern Thailand: The Impact of the Coup". 15 March 2007. p. 6. Found at http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/asia/south_east_asia/129_southern_thailand_the_impact_of_the_coup_web.pdf. Accessed 16 March 2007.

⁴ As defined by David Kilcullen in "Countering Global Insurgency", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 28 No. 4, August 2005.

⁵ United States Department of Defense. Quadrennial Defense Review, Washington, D.C., Feb, 2006

⁶ Jane's Information Group. At http://www8.janes.com/Search/documentView.do?docId=/content1/janesdata/binder/jwar/jwara249.htm@current&pageSelected=allJanes&keyword=thailand%20insurgency&backPath=http://search.janes.com/Search&Prod_Name=JWAR&

In October 1999 Thailand provided 1,500 soldiers, including a major general as deputy commander, to the International Force (INTERFET) in East Timor. A Thai battalion remained in INTERFET under the successor United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UMISET). By the beginning of 2004, Thailand kept 51 troops, six military observers and eight civilian police within East Timor and Thailand's contribution ended in June 2004. Thailand also sent 130 soldiers to Afghanistan who returned home in September 2003, and sent a contingent of 21 troops to Iraq also in September 2003, eventually increasing to 447, before being withdrawn in late August 2004. In October 2006, Thailand had 177 troops and three military observers with ONUB (Burundi) and 15 military observers with UNMIS (Sudan).

⁷The Economist. "Pocket World in Figures". Profile Books, London, UK, 2007. p. 225.

The US is Thailand's largest export market. It was the devaluation of the Thai Baht that acted as the catalyst for the 1997 Asian Economic Crisis which had global impacts and demonstrates global economic interdependence where economic, political and security stability are key elements to overall regional stability.

⁸ Lohman, Walter. "Guidelines for U.S. Policy in Southeast Asia" The Heritage Foundation, Backgrounder No. 2017, 20 March 2007. p.1. At <http://www.heritage.org/Research/AsiaandthePacific/bg2017.cfm> Accessed 27 March 2007.

⁹ Forbes, Andrew D. "Thailand's Muslim Minorities: Assimilation, Secession, or Coexistence?" In *Asian Survey*, Vol. 22, No. 11, November 1982, pp. 1058.

¹⁰ Le Roux, Pierre. "To Be or Not to Be...: The Cultural Identity of the Jawi (Thailand)" *Asian Folklore Studies*, Vol. 57, No. 2, 1998, p. 224.

¹¹ Liow, Joseph Chinyong. "Muslim Resistance in Southern Thailand and Southern Philippines: Religion, Ideology, and Politics". *Policy Studies* 24, East-West Center, Washington D.C., 2006. p. 25. At <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/stored/pdfs/PS024.pdf> Accessed 2 April 2007.

¹² Rohan Gunaratna, Arabinda Acharya, and Sabrina Chua. Conflict and Terrorism in Southern Thailand, Marshall Cavendish, Singapore, 2005, p. 2.

¹³ Bonura, Carlo Jr. "Location and the Dilemmas of Muslim Political Community in Southern Thailand" available at [http://mis-pattani.pn.psu.ac.th/registra/grade/temp/speech/Bonura/Bonura's%20paper%20\(panel%2016\).html](http://mis-pattani.pn.psu.ac.th/registra/grade/temp/speech/Bonura/Bonura's%20paper%20(panel%2016).html) accessed on 16 April 2007.

¹⁴ Islam, Syed Serajul. "The Islamic Independence Movements in Patani of Thailand and Mindanao of the Philippines" In *Asian Survey*, Vol. 38, No. 5, May 1998, p.443.

Further, according to Le Roux, that although closely linked by a common border, politics, language and culture, the sultanate of Pattani historically ruled the sultanate of Kelantan (Malaysia). Today, Kelantan is considered an integral and important province of Malaysia and for this reason the southern Muslims believe "the Thai nationality (with a Buddhist connotation) is not sufficiently fit to represent them vis-à-vis the inhabitants of Kelantan or the other Malay states".

Bangkok's recognition of this historic regional pecking order may be one key to ultimately resolving the insurgency.

¹⁵ Ibid, p.443.

The reforms included: (i) replacing local *Sharia* and *adat laws* with Siamese ones; (ii) requiring all children to attend Siamese schools using the Thai language which forced local *pondoks* (Islamic schools) to close and undermined the local imam's political power while having the effect of eroding Maylay culture, language and religion; (iii) the Koran was taught in the Thai language – an affront to Islam; (iv) consolidation of the then seven Pattani provinces into four and installing Thai Buddhist administrators which resulted in a further loss of local political power to the ethnic Maylay elite; and lastly (v) the wearing of traditional sarongs and the use of the Maylay language and Muslim names was banned, angering locals.

¹⁶ Le Roux, p. 244.

Most have also studied Thai, standard Maylay and some English as well.

¹⁷ Hoffer, Eric. "The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements". Harper and Row Publishers, New York, NY, 1989. pp. 50-51..

¹⁸ Le Roux. p. 232

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 238.

For example, while performing the Hajj in Mecca, the term Jawi refers specifically to those Muslims of southern Thailand (Pattani). A source of offense to the Jawi is the Thai's use of a pejorative originally used to describe Indians, *khon khaek*, to denote Maylays.

²⁰ Ibid, p. 232.

²¹ Ibrahim, Anwar. "Radical Islam in Southeast Asia". Far Eastern Economic Review, Vol 169, no. 9, November 2006. p.39.

²² Liow, Joseph Chinyong. "Muslim Resistance in Southern Thailand and Southern Philippines: Religion, Ideology, and Politics". Policy Studies 24, East-West Center, Washington D.C., 2006. p. 25. At <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/stored/pdfs/PS024.pdf> Accessed 2 April 2007.

²³ International Crisis Group. "Southern Thailand: Insurgency, not Jihad". Crisis Group Asia Report No 98, 18 May 2005, p.32. At <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=3436&l=1> Accessed 10 March 2007.

²⁴ Croissant, Aurel. "Muslim Insurgency, Political Violence, and Democracy in Thailand" In Terrorism and Political Violence, Vol. 19, March 2007, p. 6.

Yet, economics can't solely account for it as several non-southern provinces lag further behind and are not in revolt.

²⁵ UNDP. "Thailand Human Development Report 2007". At <http://www.undp.or.th/NHDR2007/index.html>. Accessed 13 April 2007.

²⁶ Ibid, p.22 and p. 27.

The battle of Krue Se Mosque occurred on 27 April 2004 and resulted in Special Forces troops storming the Mosque in which 31 insurgents were killed, aged between 17 and 63. The Tak Bai protest occurred on 25 October 2004 in front of a police station in Narathiwat ostensibly to protest the arrest of six village defense volunteers. Some 1,500 people took part and many arrests made. By the end of the day, up to 85 southern Muslims died in police custody from suffocation or crushing wounds, likely from mistreatment or poor handling. No Thai officers have been punished for the events, and security forces still retain blanket immunity from prosecution.

²⁷ Human Rights Watch. "Thailand: Security Forces Responsible for 'Disappearances'". 20 March 2007. At <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2007/03/20/thaila15499.htm> Accessed 3 April 2007.

In the form of disappearances, frequent searches of private homes and *pondoks*, and arrests of local teachers.

²⁸ Liow. p. 4.

²⁹ O'Neill, Bard E. "Insurgency and Terrorism: From Revolution to Apocalypse". Potomac Books, Inc. Washington, D.C., 2005. p57.

The Foco strategy was espoused by Ernesto "Che" Guevara and broke from conventional revolutionary war theory by claiming that an insurrection itself can create the conditions necessary for revolution – i.e. that it is not necessary to wait until all conditions exist to begin.

³⁰ Abuza, Zachary. "Wake Up Call: 6 Months After the Thai Coup, Islamist Insurgency is Raging". 20 March 2007. At http://counterterrorismblog.org/2007/03/print/wake_up_call_6_months_after_th.php Accessed 3 May 2007.

³¹ Janes Terrorism and Security Monitor. "Thai assassins fuel communal conflict". May 11, 2007. Posted 24 April 2007. http://www8.janes.com/JDIC/JTIC/documentView.do?docId=/content1/janesdata/mags/jtism/history/jtism2007/jtism5068.htm@current&backPath=http://jtjc.janes.com/JDIC/JTIC&Prod_Name=JTSM&iFrame=true&type=analysis Accessed 30 April 2007.

³² There are many salafists: Da'wa, Fundamental, Deobandi. Jihadi salafist differ from the others in that they believe 1) that change can only come about by violent political action; 2) do not believe in the Prophet Mohammed ever stated there are a lesser and greater jihad; thus 3) jihad is only about war; 4) jihad is the sixth pillar of Islam; 5) takfir, killing fellow (but apostate) muslims is integral to their beliefs; 6) Muslims have a right and obligation to revolt. Notes from Ahmed Hashim, Counterinsurgency in the Middle East, 2 May 2007. Naval War College.

³³ Unlike mainstream Islam which regards jihad on two different planes: greater and lesser (war) jihad.

³⁴ Rohan Gunaratna, Arabinda Acharya, and Sabrina Chua. Conflict and Terrorism in Southern Thailand, Marshall Cavendish, Singapore, 2005, pp.61-63.

³⁵ United States Department of State. "Country Reports on Terrorism 2006". Washington, D.C., April 2007. p. 46. At <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2006/> Accessed 3 May 2007. One would expect Bali-style bombings on Thailand's lucrative tourist industry or Madrid/London-style attacks Bangkok itself and economic centers if these groups were tied to the insurgency.

³⁶ Bangkok's defeat of several previous separatist movements bear this fact out.

³⁷ Abuza. At http://counterterrorismblog.org/2007/03/print/wake_up_call_6_months_after_th.php Accessed 3 May 2007.

³⁸ Liow, p. 36.

³⁹ Janes Terrorism and Security Monitor. "Thai assassins fuel communal conflict". May 11, 2007. Posted 24 April 2007. At http://www8.janes.com/JDIC/JTIC/documentView.do?docId=/content1/janesdata/mags/jtism/history/jtism2007/jtism5068.htm@current&backPath=http://jtjc.janes.com/JDIC/JTIC&Prod_Name=JTSM&iFrame=true&type=analysis Accessed 30 April 2007.

⁴⁰ GMIP was formed in the mid-1990s from veterans of the Afghan jihad against the Soviets. It had up to 200 veterans at that time, but its current size is unknown.

⁴¹ International Crisis Group "The Impact of the Coup". p. 9.

The messages include: Malay nationalism, separatist and Islamist ideologies and more specific ones such as blaming government for certain killings, threatening "collaborators", demanding businesses close on Fridays. "One leaflet depicted Surayud announcing the end of blacklists and the acquittal of Tak Bai detainees while thinking, 'I give you this first and do away with you later!'. The same cartoon showed a religious leader giving a speech with a soldier's bayonet at his back". Of note, however, the insurgents have not used mass media directed at Bangkok/Thai Buddhists or directed globally to internationalize their cause and bring outside pressure to bear

against Bangkok. This may highlight their lack of resources, as Bangkok is the only one that can give them what they ultimately want - independence.

⁴² Many news articles reference al-Qaeda-style beheadings, but I could find no direct linkage. However, ten percent of the forty beheadings have occurred in 2007 alone.

⁴³ Mostly teachers, imams, and Muslim officials who refused to support the insurgents.

⁴⁴ Analysis derived from “Events” tab found on Janes At <http://jtic.janes.com/JDIC/JTIC/viewCountryStatistics.do?country=Thailand&mapTo=countryStatistics> Accessed last on 1 May 2007.

⁴⁵ Janes Terrorism and Security Monitor. “Thai assassins fuel communal conflict”. May 11, 2007. Posted 24 April 2007. At http://www8.janes.com/JDIC/JTIC/documentView.do?docId=/content1/janesdata/mags/jtism/history/jtism2007/jtism5068.htm@current&backPath=http://jtic.janes.com/JDIC/JTIC&Prod_Name=JTSM&iFrame=true&type=analysis Accessed 30 April 2007.

⁴⁶ Abuza, Zachary. “Wake Up Call: 6 Months After the Thai Coup, Islamist Insurgency is Raging”. 20 March 2007. At http://counterterrorismblog.org/2007/03/print/wake_up_call_6_months_after_th.php Accessed 3 May 2007.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Gunaratna, et al. p.54.

Private *pondoks* provide a poor education which prevent graduates from being competitive for admission to Thai universities. This forces students to study abroad (mainly in the Middle East) where they can be exposed to more radical Islamic ideology and where upon return to Thailand their degrees are not accorded the same weight as one acquired locally or in the west, leaving these students with low-paying or no job prospects. Some 2,000 to 10,000 Pattani Muslims study abroad annually.

⁴⁹ Public and those from *pondoks* receiving state support and integrating secular curricula,

⁵⁰ 71 teachers have been killed and 166 schools destroyed ABC Radio Australia.

<http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/news/stories/s1912804.htm>

⁵¹ Abuza. Islamist Insurgency is raging. http://counterterrorismblog.org/2007/03/print/wake_up_call_6_months_after_th.php Accessed 3 May 2007.

⁵² International Crisis Group. “The Impact of the Coup”. p. 13.

Blacklisting, human rights abuses including torture, disappearances and “extra-judicial” killings have created resentment and mistrust by the population.

⁵³ Human Rights Watch. “Thailand: Government-backed Militias Inflammate Violence” 18 April 2007. At <http://www.hrw.org/english/docs/2007/04/18/thaila15729.htm> Accessed 25 April 2007.

⁵⁴ Abuza, Zachary. “Wake Up Call: 6 Months After the Thai Coup, Islamist Insurgency is Raging”. Counterterrorism Blog. 20 March 2007. At http://counterterrorismblog.org/2007/03/print/wake_up_call_6_months_after_th.php Accessed 3 May 2007. More than fifty percent of all victims are Muslim

⁵⁵ This makes it appear the Thais favor Buddhists, and has increased the inter-ethnic violence to the point that if the authorities do not get a handle on the situation soon, they may find it impossible to stop a ethno-religious civil war in the not too distant future.

⁵⁶ Janes Terrorism and Insurgency Center. At <http://jtic.janes.com/JDIC/JTIC/viewCountryStatistics.do?country=Thailand&mapTo=countryStatistics> Accessed 28 April 2007.

On 26 April 10,000 additional troops were requested by the southern military commander to reinforce some 30,000 Thai troops already in the region, but these forces have not been approved. On 2 May 2007, Bangkok announced that an additional 1,100 police officers will be deployed to the south in late May to protect schools and teachers.

⁵⁷ Reuters. "World Muslim Body Backs Thai Policy on South". 30 April 2007. At <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/BKK132673.htm> Accessed 30 April 2007.

⁵⁸ First, was the interface between local provincial administrators and Bangkok; second, was the civilian-police-military border security office.

⁵⁹ Abuza. At http://counterterrorismblog.org/2007/03/print/wake_up_call_6_months_after_th.php Accessed 3 May 2007.

⁶⁰ Rohan Gunaratna, Arabinda Acharya, and Sabrina Chua. *Conflict and Terrorism in Southern Thailand*, Marshall Cavendish, Singapore, 2005, pp.80-83.

⁶¹ Jane's Terrorism and Insurgency Centre. "Southern Thai militants adopt new detonation Methods". 20 April 2007 at <http://www8.janes.com/JDIC/JTIC/documentView.do?docId=/content1/janesdata/mags/jtic/history/jtic2007/jticd2016.htm@current&pageSelected=janesReference&backPath=http://jtic.janes.com/JDIC/JTIC&ProdName=&iFrame=true&type=events&country=Thailand> Accessed 22 April 2007.

⁶² Abuza. At http://counterterrorismblog.org/2007/03/print/wake_up_call_6_months_after_th.php Accessed 3 May 2007.

⁶³ However, the extent and ever-increasing frequency and lethality suggest a much stronger support base outside Thailand for funding and procurement of armaments.

⁶⁴ Janes Terrorism and Security Monitor. "Thai assassins fuel communal conflict". Accessed 30 April 2007.

⁶⁵ Halloran, Richard. "Uneven Success against Islamists". The Washington Times, 4 May 2007. At <http://washingtontimes.com/world/20070503-104135-7502r.htm> Accessed 7 May 2007.

⁶⁶ Storey, Ian. "Malaysia's Role in Thailand's Southern Insurgency". In *Global Terrorism Analysis*, 15 March 2007. At <http://jamestown.org/terrorism/news/article.php?articleid=2370279> Accessed 6 May 2007.

⁶⁷ GSPC – Salafist Groups for Preaching and Combat was an offshoot of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) from the Algerian civil war in the 1990s. Originally, GSPC's goals were the revolutionary overthrow of the Algerian government. As of Feb. 2007 they became the al-Qaeda Organization in the Islamic Maghreb, with transnational ambitions.

⁶⁸ Bangkoknews. "Army Backing for Limited Amnesty" 03 May 2007 At http://www.bangkokpost.com/News/03May2007_news01.php Accessed 3 May 2007.

In the case of the amnesty, Bangkok is playing a wildcard. It is a great way to show the world the lengths Bangkok is willing to go to "peacefully" resolve the violence. The Thais may indeed get many to accept, but the majority likely will not – Bangkok would be negotiating from a position of weakness, not strength, and the consequences of non-compliance would be nil. Further, amnesty can be a powerful tool when you are actually winning the counterinsurgency campaign and want to demonstrate mercy and goodwill and weed out the least committed insurgents so you can then concentrate on the most committed, but exercising this technique now will marginalize its usefulness at more appropriate times in the future.

⁶⁹ Secretary-General Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)

⁷⁰ MCOT News. "Thailand 'on right track' in facing insurgency: OIC". 1 May 2007. At <http://etna.mcot.net/querly.php?nid=29191> Accessed 2 May 2007.

⁷¹ The Economist. "Monks on the March". 5 May 2007. p. 56.

⁷² International Crisis Group. "Southern Thailand: The Impact of the Coup". p. ii.

⁷³ Counter Ideological Support to Terrorism (CIST).

⁷⁴ ASEAN webpage. <http://www.aseansec.org/64.htm> Accessed 15 April 2007.

⁷⁵ Janes Terrorism and Insurgency Centre. 20 Apr. 2007 THAILAND'S army chief, General Sonthi Boonyaratglin, rejected an offer of US help to quell the insurgency in the south, saying his forces can cope with the situation, the AP reported on 20 April. He said Thailand would nonetheless appreciate access to US intelligence. US special operations commander for the Pacific, Major General David Fridovich, said on 18 April that US troops could help train Thai forces if Thai authorities asked for assistance.

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