

## GI SPECIAL 7D10:



[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in.]

## IRAQ WAR REPORTS

### Missouri Sgt. Killed In Mosul



25-year-old Sgt. Edward W. Forrest Jr. of St. Louis, Missouri was killed when the military vehicle he was in was hit by a vehicle-borne explosive in Mosul, Iraq April 10, 2009. (AP Photo/U.S. Army) (AP Photo/U.S. Army)

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## Iowa Soldier Killed In Mosul



U.S. Army Cpl. Jason Pautsch, 20, from Davenport, Iowa, in front of his MRAP vehicle Patrol Base Howell, in Iraq was killed by a truck bomb on April 10, 2009. (AP Photo/Family Photo January 2009)

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## Kentucky Staff Sgt. Killed In Mosul



24-year-old Staff Sgt. Gary L. Woods Jr., of Lebanon Junction, Ky. was killed when the military vehicle he was in was hit by a vehicle-borne explosive in Mosul, Iraq April 10, 2009. (AP Photo/U.S. Army)

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## California Staff Sgt. Killed In Mosul



32-year-old Staff Sgt. Bryan E. Hall, of Elk Grove, Calif. was killed when the military vehicle he was in was hit by a vehicle-borne explosive in Mosul, Iraq April 10, 2009. (AP Photo/U.S. Army) (AP Photo/U.S. Army)

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## Karbalah IED Kills U.S. Soldier

April 13, 2009 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE  
No. 200900413-01

BAGHDAD – A Coalition forces Soldier died of injuries sustained during an explosively formed projectile attack on a convoy five kilometers south of Karbalah, Iraq April 13 at approximately 7:40 a.m.

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## Big Surprise: U.S. Troops Could Stay In Mosul Past June Deadline

U.S. troops could remain in the Iraqi city of Mosul after a June deadline for withdrawal following a spate of high-profile attacks.

Army Colonel Gary Volesky, commander of U.S. forces in the Mosul area, said U.S. and Iraqi officials are now assessing security in the northern Iraqi city to determine whether his troops should leave by June 30, when U.S. combat forces are due to pull back from towns and cities across Iraq.

The deadline is part of a U.S.-Iraqi pact reached last year that also calls for all U.S. troops to depart Iraq by 2012.

"We are conducting an assessment right now with our Iraqi counterparts to determine what the way ahead is for security in Mosul. And based on that assessment, a decision will be made," Volesky told Pentagon reporters in a video link from Iraq.

"If the Iraqi government wants us to stay we will stay," added Volesky, who could not say when the assessment would be completed.

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## **ACTION REPORTS**

# **New York National Guard Outreach: Suburbia: "Most Of The Unit Is Pro War"**

From: Alan Stolzer, Military Project  
To: GI Special  
Sent: April 13, 2009

EB and I arrived at the armory at 6:15 pm. There are two entranceways. One a normal, stone walkway leading into the armory and the other, 100 yards or so up the road, is a driveway into the parking lot.

Since this is suburbia ALL troops arrive by car. We didn't see more than 20 guardsmen (no women soldiers sighted) as traffic seemed light or perhaps others arrived before we did.

I saw only two soldiers of color, the rest were white males. I handed out 4 packs and DVDS and EB 2. Most drivers didn't look my way and the ones that accepted the packages I'm sure had no idea what we were about. I had the impression one or two thought we were something like the Red Cross or some military assistance group promoting services for them.

About 7pm two guardsmen emerged from the armory and confronted us. One, a head shaven sergeant (identifying himself as "sergeant in charge of the armory") seemed to have a speech prepared and told us, although he respected our constitutional rights to be there, we weren't wanted by the "30 guys inside" who, he said, resented our presence. He pointed to a barely visible strip of dark stone he called a curb and said we

were to stand on the roadside of it and not to have ourselves or place any of our material inside of it. Also, if we were harassing the troops he would call the police and have us arrested.

I asked him if extending a handout constituted harassment and he turned away.

EB told him it was "just literature. Don't you read?" To which he replied he was well read.

He and his sidekick, another noncom, both had been in combat and "had seen men killed next to them," which, in his viewpoint, bolstered the resentment to our presence.

I would like to return with more of us and especially, as EB notes, an IVAW member or two.

Here is a comment from a member of the National Guard unit:

"At the present time most of the unit is pro war, they said thanks for the info, but i think this unit might be beating a dead horse, these are guys that want to deploy, (nuts) but you can still try sending more info on the next drill i would just say dont be surprised if you get a negative reaction from them thanks."

### **MORE:**

# **ACTION REPORTS WANTED: FROM YOU!**

**An effective way to encourage others to support members of the armed forces organizing to resist the Imperial war is to report what you do.**

**If you've carried out organized contact with troops on active duty, at base gates, airports, or anywhere else, send a report in to GI Special for the Action Reports section.**

**Same for contact with National Guard and/or Reserve components.**

**They don't have to be long. Just clear, and direct action reports about what work was done and how.**

**If there were favorable responses, say so. If there were unfavorable responses or problems, don't leave them out.**

### **NOTE WELL:**

**Do not make public any information that could compromise the work.**

**Whether you are serving in the armed forces or not, do not in any way identify members of the armed forces organizing to stop the wars.**

If accidentally included, that information will not be published.

The sole exception: occasions when a member of the armed services explicitly directs his or her name be listed as reporting on the action.

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## **AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**

### **Canadian Soldier Killed, Four Wounded By Roadside Bomb At Shah Wali Kowt**

April 14, 2009 Matthew Fisher, Canwest News Service

KABUL, Afghanistan -- The second Canadian female soldier to be killed in Afghanistan died Monday when the light armoured vehicle she was patrolling in struck an improvised explosive device.

Trooper Karine Blais, who had arrived just days ago from Canada with the 12th Armoured Regiment based in Val Cartier, Que., was killed in action when her vehicle was hit by a homemade bomb.

Trooper Blais, 21, was the 117th Canadian to be killed in Afghanistan since the start of the conflict in 2002.

Four other Canadian soldiers were injured in the attack, which happened about one hour before dusk in Shah Wali Kowt, a district about 40 kilometres northwest of Kandahar City that is known to be a centre of Taliban activity.

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### **Great Moments In U.S. Military History; Slaughter In Watapour**

4.13.09 (AFP)

Afghan officials and victims blamed NATO air strikes Monday for killing six civilians and wounding 14 in Afghanistan, but the military said up to eight "enemy fighters" were killed.

**The NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) said in a statement that "four to eight enemy fighters were killed" during an operation in Kunar province.**

**But Watapour district governor, Zalmay Yousufzai, and district police chief Mirza Mohammad insisted that civilian homes were struck about 15 kilometres (nine miles) northwest of provincial capital Asadabad.**

"Among the six dead were two children, a woman and three men," Yousufzai said. Seven children, a woman and six men were wounded, all of them civilians, the district governor added. The district police chief gave the same details.

Mounting civilian deaths during military operations targeting Taliban and other Islamist insurgents is one of the main sources of tension between Afghan authorities and US and NATO-led forces in Afghanistan.

**An AFP reporter saw a wounded 25-year-old woman, a 14-year-old boy and two men in hospital in Asadabad.**

**"We were asleep and all of a sudden the roof collapsed," said 14-year-old Zakirullah, who gave only one name.**

**"I don't remember anything. I got to know here that my father, my mother, my brother and my younger sister have all been killed and I am wounded."**

The woman, named Shahida, said: "We were asleep and heard a strange noise and then the roof and walls collapsed.

"The people took me out of the rubble and there are many still there. I was told nine people from my family were killed and wounded. I don't know who is dead, who is wounded and who is alive in my family."

**Troops Invited:**

**Comments, arguments, articles, and letters from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or send email [contact@militaryproject.org](mailto:contact@militaryproject.org): Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe. Phone: 917.677.8057**

**OCCUPATION RECRUITING DRIVE  
IN HIGH GEAR;  
RECRUITING FOR THE ARMED  
RESISTANCE THAT IS**



Foreign occupation soldiers from Recce Platoon 3rd battalion of the Royal Canadian regiment battle group stop Afghan citizens at gunpoint, force them to get out of their car, and search the car and their bodies in the Arghandab district in Kandahar province, southern Afghanistan, March 30, 2009. REUTERS/Stefano Rellandini

**[Fair is fair. Let's bring 50,000 Afghan troops over here to the USA. They can kill people at checkpoints, bust into their houses with force and violence, butcher their families, overthrow the government, put a new one in office they like better and call it "sovereign," and "detain" anybody who doesn't like it in some prison without any charges being filed against them, or any trial.]**

**[Those Afghans are sure a bunch of backward primitives. They actually resent this help, have the absurd notion that it's bad their country is occupied by a foreign military dictatorship, and consider it their patriotic duty to fight and kill the soldiers sent to grab their country. What a bunch of silly people.]**

**[How fortunate they are to live under a military dictatorship run by Barrack Obama. Why, how could anybody not love that? You'd want that in your home town, right?]**

**OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION  
ALL TROOPS HOME NOW!**

**IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE  
END THE OCCUPATION**



# **THIS ENVIRONMENT IS HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH; ALL HOME, NOW**



U.S. soldiers inspect the site of an explosion in Chaparhar district of eastern Nangarhar province, east of Kabul, Afghanistan, March 21, 2009. (AP Photo/Rahmat Gul)

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## **SOMALIA WAR REPORTS**

### **Fighting Inside Of Somalia Continuing Between The Al-Shabab Resistance Fighters And Foreign Occupation Troops**

Apr 13, 2009 By Abayomi Azikiwe, Editor, Pan-African News Wire [Excerpts]

[F]ighting inside of Somalia is continuing between the Al-Shabab resistance fighters and the AMISOM [African Union Mission to Somalia] forces, which are working in conjunction with the troops loyal to the new coalition government in Mogadishu.

On April 13, Garowe Radio reported that three people had been killed over a two-day period resulting from mortar fire in the capital of Mogadishu. "Suspected insurgents launched at least ten mortars at the main port in the Somali capital Mogadishu on April 11."

The report noted: "Islamist rebels [translation: Somali nationalists] vowed war against the Horn of Africa country's interim government. Witnesses and workers at Mogadishu's main seaport said AMISOM peacekeepers [translation: foreign occupation troops] closed off roads near the port and entered nearby neighborhoods as a ship docked."

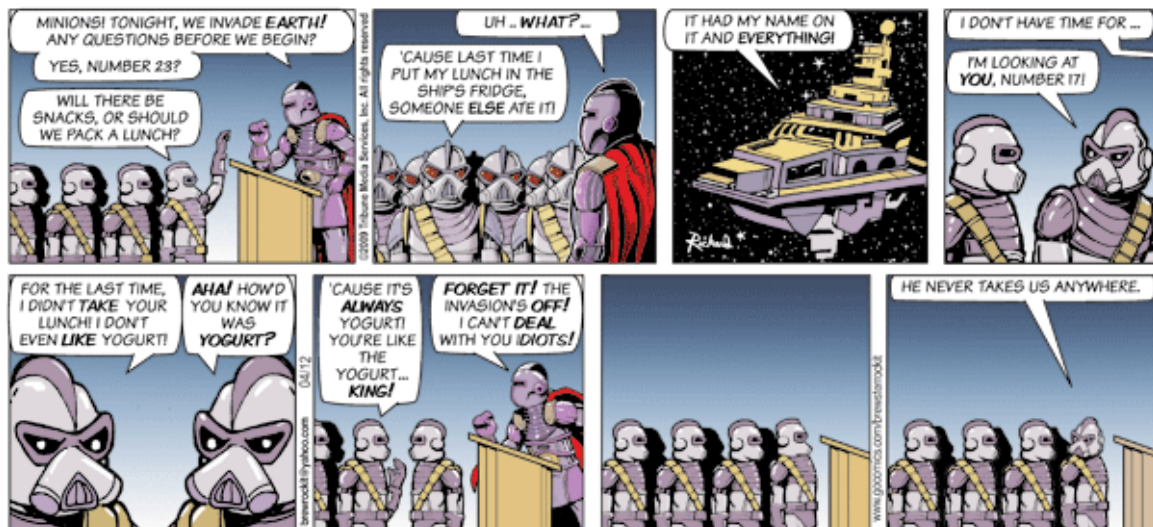
The report continued: "There were many AMISOM soldiers in our area ...on top of buildings and they refused to allow us to leave our homes, a witness said. Port workers said the ship unloaded military hardware, including vehicles, which were transported to AMISOM bases in Mogadishu."

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## TROOP NEWS

**BREWSTER ROCKIT: SPACE GUY!**

**BY TIM RICKARD**



[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in.]

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## **“A Soldier Who Had Told His Family He Did Not Want To Return To Iraq Apparently Killed Himself”**

April 13, 2009 By Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — A soldier who had told his family he did not want to return to Iraq apparently killed himself in a Puerto Rican motel days before he was to join his unit and head back to the war zone, police in the U.S. territory said Monday.

Army Spc. Nokware Rosado Munoz, 28, had been arguing with his pregnant wife about his upcoming redeployment before hanging himself Sunday, said Lt. Edilberto Rivera Santiago, director of the police homicide division in the San Juan suburb of Bayamon.

"They were having problems because he had been activated again," Rivera said.

Rosado was scheduled to rejoin his unit at Fort Bliss, Texas, this week, before moving on to Iraq.

The soldier's mother-in-law, Migdalia Estrada, was quoted by newspaper El Nuevo Dia as saying that Rosado was receiving psychiatric treatment stemming from a previous Iraq deployment.

"He had said to my daughter that he didn't want to go back to Iraq," Estrada said. "I don't understand how they can order him back if he was having problems."

An Army official in San Juan, Felix Santiago, said the military was cooperating with Puerto Rican authorities in an investigation. Officials in Fort Bliss had no immediate comment.

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## **FORWARD OBSERVATIONS**



**“At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation’s ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke.**

**“For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder.**

**“We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake.”**

**Frederick Douglass, 1852**

**“Hope for change doesn't cut it when you're still losing buddies.”**

**-- J.D. Englehart Iraq Veterans Against The War**

**Firearms are second only to the Constitution in importance; they are the peoples' liberty's teeth.**

**-- George Washington**

## **Here's My Take On The Vietnam War**



From: Mike Hastie

To: GI Special

Sent: April 12, 2009

Subject: Here's My Take On The Vietnam War

## Here's My Take On The Vietnam War

Peace finally descended on the Vietnamese people,  
when every last American soldier was shown the door.  
That included my All- American brainwashed self.  
When I went back to Vietnam in 1994,  
Vietnam was at peace.

Why?

Because I was finally there for the right reason.  
I was a tourist, and not blowing up things.  
My intelligence has grown a lot over the years,  
because I finally got it.

Mike Hastie  
U.S. Army Medic  
Vietnam 1970-71  
April 12, 2009

Photo and caption from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact at: [hastiemike@earthlink.net](mailto:hastiemike@earthlink.net)) T)

# *April 14, 1988: Very Happy Anniversary*

## Next To Last Government To Invade Afghanistan Withdraws In Defeat



Happy Russian soldiers going home.

April 14, 1988: The Soviet Union signed an agreement to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan after ten years of humiliating defeats at the hands of Afghan resistance forces.

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## DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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## CLASS WAR REPORTS



[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in. She writes: There really is a class war.]

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**Thailand:**  
**“There Will Be Civil War Because  
People See That Injustice Has  
Become An Acceptable Thing”**  
**“These Are People Against The Coup  
Who Are Targeting An Unelected  
Bureaucratic Elite”**



Soldiers and Thai demonstrators fighting corrupt Thai government put in power by Generals together on an Army armored personnel carrier near the Foreign Ministry Sunday, April 12, 2009, in Bangkok, Thailand. Foto by Carla Lee

April 14, 2009 By THOMAS FULLER, NY Times & Bangkok Post [Excerpts]

Red-shirts core leader Veera Musikhapong announced an end to the current anti-government protest in Bangkok on Tuesday morning as hundreds of soldiers surrounded the Government House camp where the remaining demonstrators had gathered.

Mr Veera said the leaders of the United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship (UDD) agreed to end the rally because they were worried about the safety of the protesters.

"We have stopped the protest but we haven't stopped the fight for democracy. We will continue the movement," said another core leader Nattawut Saikua.

Although the protests ended peacefully Tuesday, the grass-roots resentment and anger are likely to linger.

"Whoever wins or loses this round, the stalemate and tension will remain," said Thongchai Winichakul, a professor of Southeast Asian history at the University of Wisconsin.

The "red shirts," as the protesters are known, draw their strength from the north and northeastern parts of Thailand. Many of them are farmers and small businessmen, and they portray themselves as battling an unelected but influential elite, notably the judiciary, the military and the powerful advisers of King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

A central lament of the red shirts is that the will of the electorate has been repeatedly thwarted: three prime ministers since 2006 have been forced from office — one in the military coup of 2006 and two removed by the courts in highly political trials.

"They chased out governments that were elected," said Thongdee Wongsamart, a middle-aged protester who recently lost her job as a cleaner in a tour company. "I'm angry."

Many of the red shirts are followers of Thaksin Shinawatra, the former prime minister ousted in the 2006 coup. But they are often quick to point out that their grievances about the state of Thai democracy are more important than their support for Mr. Thaksin, a former telecommunications tycoon.

"This is not only about Thaksin and his money," said Mr. Thongchai, of the University of Wisconsin. "These are people against the coup who are targeting an unelected bureaucratic elite."

Many red shirts say they do not trust the Thai media, which they accuse of siding with the government. Those from the provinces say they resent being looked down on as people who speak funny dialects.

**They draw the contrast between the light touch used by security forces last year against royalist protesters and the thousands of troops who forcibly dislodged the red shirts from Bangkok's streets this week.**

**The royalists crippled the country late last year by blockading Bangkok's two commercial airports for a week, stranding hundreds of thousands of foreign visitors. They surrounded Parliament and trapped legislators inside, receiving moral support from the king's wife, Queen Sirikit.**

"This country has a double standard, has no justice and will never be peaceful," read a comment on pantip.com, an Internet chat site that has a popular political section.



“There will be civil war because people see that injustice has become an acceptable thing.”

The royalists are seen as having an invisible hand protecting them.

“I don’t understand why the army did nothing when the PAD seized the airports,” said a user on pantip.com, referring to the royalist People’s Alliance for Democracy. The leaders of the royalist protests were eventually arrested but then quickly released on bail.

The case against the group “has not proceeded very far and it appears that its leaders may eventually be indicted with lesser charges, if at all,” David Streckfuss, an expert in Thai politics, wrote in The Bangkok Post on Tuesday.

**The government has closed down several Internet sites linked to the red shirts as well as a satellite television station that carried live broadcasts of the protests. By contrast ASTV, a satellite station run by a royalist, Sondhi Limthongkul, was never shut down.**

While he was still in power, Mr. Thaksin sought to keep Mr. Sondhi off the airwaves. The red shirts gloss over this side of the former prime minister.

But he often mixed his personal business interests with those of the government. He intimidated journalists. And his crackdown on drugs may have come at the cost of what human rights groups say were hundreds of extrajudicial killings.

**“Thaksin is a minor point in my opinion, and the major point is democracy,” said Somchai Luangtant, 49, who sells graduation gowns in Bangkok.**

**“People should know that the Thai people want real democracy, not like what we have right now.”**

**MORE:**

## **Parasites With Crowns Matter More Than The People**

[Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

Apr 4, 2009 Shawn W Crispin, Asia Times

Signs posted at the UDD protest site's first aid station provocatively state: "We're not a serf, we're a citizen," "We are in the 21st century, not medieval" and "All Thais are equal under the same law."

Beyond vague signage, UDD leaders have sent mixed messages about their intentions towards monarchical institutions beyond the Privy Council.

**That's raising fears among some royalists who spoke with Asia Times Online that the protest movement has a wider unspoken agenda to challenge the monarchy's future role in Thai society.**

Army commander General Anupong Paochinda has warned UDD protestors against criticizing Privy Councilors and has positioned troops to fortify police guarding the barbed wire surrounded Government House.

Behind-the-scenes coup-maker and former spy chief Squadron Leader Prasong Soonsiri advised the government to take the UDD movement seriously and recommended it block Thaksin's future video call-ins.

The UDD's new gambit indicates to some royalists that Thaksin and his top lieutenants plan to challenge the Privy Council's power and legitimacy in the post-Bhumibol era.

That, some fear, could complicate the delicate royal succession. Under the Thai constitution, the Privy Council is empowered with submitting the name of the next monarch to the National Assembly if the throne is left vacant upon the 81-year-old Bhumibol's eventual passing.

Under that law both Crown Prince Vajiralongkorn and Crown Princess Sirindhorn are eligible to take the throne.

**One palace insider who spoke with Asia Times Online said there is also the possibility the Privy Council could move to establish a Regency, initially led by Queen Sirikit and later by Princess Sirindhorn, while grooming Vajiralongkorn's three-year-old son, Prince Dipangkorn Rasmijoti, for the throne.**

**MORE:**

**“The Civil War Which Is Developing In Thailand Is A Class War Between The Rich And The Poor”**

**“A Grassroots Movement Of The Poor Is Emerging To Challenge The Hold Of The Elites, The Military And The Monarchy”**

**“It Is Necessary To Abolish The Monarchy  
Too For It Has Now Become An Obstacle To  
Freedom And Human Dignity”**



Thai demonstrators fighting corrupt Thai government April 12, 2009, in Bangkok, Thailand. Foto by Carla Lee

March 21, 2009 By Giles Ji Ungpakorn, Economic and Political Weekly

Giles Ji Ungpakorn worked in the faculty of political science, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand. He was forced to leave Thailand after being charged under Thailand's anti-democratic les majeste laws. He is an activist with the socialist Turn Left Thailand group.

Visit <http://www.pcpthai.org/> and <http://wpress.blog.co.uk/>.

This article first appeared in the March 21, 2009, edition of the India-based Economic and Political Weekly. It has been posted at Links International Journal of Socialist Renewal with the author's permission.

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**The current dispensation in Thailand is based on a political reaction to stem and reverse some of the populist measures of the deposed prime minister, Thaksin Shinawatra, who himself was a neoliberal with a few pro-poor schemes.**

**Even this was unacceptable to the elites who used the courts, the military and the monarchy to depose him and institute an anti-democratic constitution which protects their privileges.**

But now that Thaksin is gone, a grassroots movement of the poor is emerging to challenge the hold of the elites, the military and the monarchy over Thailand.

Today, the Thai government, and its elite supporters, are once again using the language of the Cold War and the era of military dictatorships in order to throttle free speech and democracy.

Everything in Thailand is not as it seems.

**The so-called Democrat Party is in government, but not because of support from the majority of the electorate. In fact, the Democrat Party has never won anything approaching a majority and this is why the party welcomed the military coup in 2006.**

**The Peoples' Alliance for Democracy (PAD), those yellow-shirted royalists who seized the two international airports last year, are neither an alliance of the people nor are they for democracy.**

Its membership base is among the extremist middle classes who believe that the Thaksin Shinawatra government spent "too much" money on welfare and populist policies for the poor.

**The PAD believes that only is it true guardian of the monarchy and that the majority of the Thai electorate, who are poor, should not have the right to vote.**

The PAD has an armed "guard" and has used violent tactics on the streets of Bangkok to destabilise elected governments.

It proposes a "New Order" in Thai politics where only 30% of the parliament is elected.

It wants members of parliament to be elected by "professional groups" rather than through a one-person one-vote system.

This would ensure that doctors and professionals have much more voting power than poor agriculturalists or factory workers.

Tragically, most so-called “liberal” academics supported the 2006 coup and the PAD. Amazingly, so did half the Thai non-governmental organisation (NGO) movement.

**The PAD works hand in glove with the army and it has received endorsement from the queen.**

### **The assault on democracy**

Five years ago, under the elected Thaksin government, Thailand had a thriving and developing democracy with freedom of expression, a relatively free press and an active civil society where social movements campaigned to protect the interests of the poor.

**This was not, however, the work of the Thaksin administration, since there were serious problems of human rights abuses.**

**Thaksin's government used murderous repression in the predominantly Muslim southern provinces of Malay and killed more than 3000 people in the so-called “war on drugs”.**

The situation, though, has become much worse since the 2006 coup which overthrew his government. Today, the country is creeping towards totalitarianism.

**“The Present Government, Led By The Democrat Party, Is Only In Power Because Of The Military Which Staged A Coup In 2006”**

**The present government, led by the Democrat Party, is only in power because of the military which staged a coup in 2006. Despite the grave economic crisis, its priority is just to crack down on free speech and dissent, claiming the need to protect “national security”.**

The Thai political crisis started with mass demonstrations led by the PAD in early 2005. The PAD began as an “alliance from hell” between disgruntled royalist media tycoon Sonti Limtongkul and a handful of NGO and social movement leaders.

**They attacked Thaksin's Thai Rak Thai government for corruption.**

**Interestingly, they never showed any interest in criticising his human rights abuses.**

Thaksin responded to the growing crisis by dissolving parliament and calling fresh elections. The opposition boycotted these elections and “liberal” academics “explained” that calling fresh elections was “undemocratic”. The courts then annulled the election.

The anti-democratic forces knew that Thaksin's Thai Rak Thai party was immensely popular and would win any vote.

**Rather than accepting that the electoral support for Thaksin was because of the government's first-ever universal healthcare scheme and many other pro-poor measures, they claimed that the poor did not understand democracy and were just “bought” by Thaksin.**

**The Democrat Party spent most of its time attacking these pro-poor policies as being a waste of money and against “fiscal discipline”.**

**Little wonder then that ordinary Thais would not want to vote for them!**

The NGO and social movement leaders of the PAD moved sharply to the right, becoming fanatical royalists and calling on the monarch to sack Thaksin's elected government.

**This the king refused to do, but the PAD's demands were seen as a green light for a military coup and the military obliged in September 2006.**

PAD leaders and military junta leaders were seen celebrating their victory at a New Year's party in 2007. At that time, the Democrat Party also welcomed the coup.

**“The Military Constitution Allowed For Half The Senate To Be Appointed By The Military, Rather Than Elected”**

**The army ripped up the best constitution Thailand has ever had and replaced it with one of its own.**

**A referendum was held to approve the military constitution.**

**Many provinces were under martial law, campaigning for a “no” vote in the referendum was deemed illegal and full-page advertisements in the press urged people to vote “yes”.**

The referendum result was extremely close, a small majority being in favour. Half the NGOs, the PAD, most academics, the mainstream media and the Democrat Party all supported the new constitution.

The military constitution allowed for half the senate to be appointed by the military, rather than elected.

**It decreased the role of political parties and installed a crony system where members of the elite appointed themselves to the senate, the judiciary and to so-called “independent bodies”.**

The constitution laid down that neoliberal free market policies must be used in the interests of fiscal discipline, but also imposed a huge increase in the military budget.

The final clause in the constitution, which previously gave citizens the right to oppose military coups, was changed to legitimise the 2006 coup and any future seizures of power.

**The courts in Thailand have never been truly independent or just. The military used the courts to dissolve the Thai Rak Thai party and then held the elections. Despite this, Thaksin's party won a majority.**

**So the courts were used for a second time to dissolve the new party which had evolved from Thai Rak Thai. It is clear that the aim was to cripple the most popular party and not allow it to form a stable government.**

At the same time the PAD launched its deliberate “campaign of chaos” in order to achieve its “New Order”.

It used violence to take over Government House, wrecking the interior. It staged violent actions to try and prevent the elected parliament from convening and subsequently it seized the two international airports in 2008 with the support of the military and the Democrat Party. The PAD cared little about the damage to the country's economy and jobs, on the assumption that it, as the elites, would not be hurt and the poor could just suffer. No one from the PAD has been punished for these violent actions.

After the 2006 coup, the PAD descended into a fascist-type of organisation. It took on ultra-royalist and ultra-nationalist politics. Its supporters wore royal yellow shirts. It nearly caused a war with Cambodia over an ancient hilltop ruin. It built up its own armed guard which openly carried and used weapons on the streets of Bangkok. The present Thai foreign minister is a PAD supporter who took part in the illegal occupation of the airports.

The PAD's media outlet, Manager Group, have started witch-hunts against academics and social activists who question the deterioration of democracy and question the use of the lese majeste law.

It encourages people to commit acts of violence against those who think differently or oppose them.

Finally, at the end of 2008, the army bullied and bribed some of the most corrupt elements in Thaksin's party to change sides and support the Democrat Party. So Eaton- and Oxford-educated Abhisit is now the prime minister.

His name sums it all up. It means “privilege”.

It is the privileged of Thai society that united against the modernising policies of Thaksin's Thai Rak Thai party. For the first time in decades, a party was gaining mass support from the poor because it believed that the poor were not a burden. They argued that the poor should be “stakeholders” rather than serfs.

The Thai Rak Thai was no socialist party, but a party of big business committed to free-market policies at a macro and global level and Keynesian policies at the village level.

**“Anyone Who Criticises The Government Or The Army Is Deemed To Have ‘Insulted The King’”**

The present government appears vicious and paranoid. Its priority seems to be to stifle dissent by using the lese majeste law.

Anyone who criticises the government or the army is deemed to have “insulted the king”.

They are censoring the electronic media and community radio stations and encouraging citizens to inform on each other.

**People are being arrested for posting comments on the internet by tracing their computer IP numbers and they are thrown in jail, even before a trial. Recently, the manager of Prachatai, a respected independent online newspaper, was arrested.**

The mainstream TV and print media are already working hand in glove with the military.

**The courts have been used as an instrument of dictatorship. Judges protect themselves by threatening anyone who dares to criticise them with a jail sentence for “contempt of court”. They claim that anyone who criticises the courts is criticising the monarch.**

**Lèse majeste trials are given little publicity and people cannot find out what actions are deemed to have insulted the monarch.**

**There is no transparency and accountability, no justice, no freedom of speech and no academic freedom.**

One worrying question is why most academics support the military and the PAD. Equally worrying is the question why decent NGO activists and some trade unionists did so too.

As far as the academics are concerned, even those claiming to be “liberal” were always elitist. Most believed that the problem of Thai democracy was that the poor lacked education. But the education system that these academics have promoted is one where students learn everything by rote. The idea that an essay in politics might discuss arguments, rather than be merely descriptive, is met with surprise.

The NGO movement has a different problem. It is a movement which turned its back on politics and concentrated on single issues and on lobbying governments of any shade and colour. It swung from admiration of the Thaksin government to supporting the military coup. In a nutshell then, the old groups in civil society have helped to create the monster of the “New Order” that is now strangling Thai democracy.

In early 2007, I published a book called *A Coup for the Rich*. [1] This short academic book was written as a protest against the shrinking democratic space in Thailand. I tried to analyse what exactly was happening to Thai democracy. I criticised the gross human rights abuses of the democratically elected Thaksin government. But I also argued that a military coup was not the answer to this.

**Because my book opposed the military coup “solution”, I was charged with Lèse-majesté or insulting the monarch.**

How can there be academic freedom when my own university, Chulalongkorn University, gave my book to the police? How can there be academic standards if political scientists like myself are not allowed to discuss what the monarch, the army and the elites do? And through all this, most Thai academics remained silent, some supporting the destruction of democracy, others censoring themselves because of fear.



## **Class War For Democracy**

**The civil war which is developing in Thailand is a class war between the rich and the poor. But it expresses itself in a very distorted and complicated manner.**

Those yellow shirts who backed the coup and the subsequent undemocratic measures hate the fact that Thaksin's Thai Rak Thai government won huge support for providing universal healthcare and public projects to lift people out of poverty.

**Since the overthrow of the Thaksin government and as a result of the prolonged crisis, a grassroots "red shirt" movement has developed.**

**It is being built up by ordinary citizens who want democracy and freedom. They are moving beyond Thaksin.**

**What is also amazing is that this is becoming a republican movement because of the dragging of the monarchy into politics by the military and the PAD.**

The monarch has never once spoken out against the destruction of democratic rights and allows people to crawl on the ground in front of him. **[This is not a figure of speech. In the presence of the King or Queen, Thai servants must crawl on their hands and knees.]**

Traffic is stopped in the streets of Bangkok for the royal family to pass, yet emergency ambulances never get the same treatment.

The conservative elites want us to believe that the monarch loves and cares for the people and that they love him back.

But the Thai population are quite capable of looking after themselves.

All that is beautiful and honourable about Thai society has been created by its working people.

The current monarch grew in stature under the corrupt military dictators: Sarit Dhanarajata, Tanom and Prapass.

He allowed executions of people who were accused of killing his elder brother, when there were strong reasons to doubt the truth of these accusations. **[In Thailand, between 1955-56, it was common to hear it said, very privately, very carefully, to only those trusted implicitly, that this rat had conspired with Generals involved in the opium trade, like General Phao, to kill his brother, then the King, so he could take the throne. Robert [XXXX], a CIA contract employee, operating under cover as an academic, believed that to be true. How's that for some lese majeste? T]**

**He supported the bloodbath at Thammasart University on October 6, 1976, where scores of students were tortured and killed, because he felt that Thailand had "too much democracy".**

At the time he was also the patron of the violent gang that was collectively called the “village scouts”.

The monarch allowed the army to stage a coup in September 2006. Furthermore he allowed his name to be used by the army, the PAD protesters and the Democrat Party, in the destruction of democracy.

He has been an advocate of economic views which reveal his opposition to state-sponsored social welfare for the poor and to income redistribution.

**But what is worse, as one of the richest men in the world, the king has the arrogance to lecture the poor to be sufficient in their poverty through the notion of “sufficiency economy”.**

This is nothing more than a reactionary ideology which argues that the poor must know their place.

Finally, this king allows his supporters to proclaim that he is “the father of the nation”, and yet his own son is not respected by anyone in Thai society! For the millions of Thais who know all this to be true, it is only fear and intimidation that prevents speaking this truth about the monarchy.

The anti-democracy elites in Thailand, who claim legitimacy from the monarch, only do so because they have no other legitimacy.

The monarch is weak, but these powerful elites create an illusion of his power to frighten people. The army, the conservative elites and the Democrat Party are scared that this royal legitimacy is rapidly evaporating, specially at a time when the monarch is getting very old.

His son is held in contempt by the population because he is known as a thug who parades his wife naked for video snap shots. Most Thais have seen these videos and photographs and it does nothing for their respect for the institution of monarchy.

**A new civil society is emerging from the “red shirt” movement.**

**Many will feel uncomfortable that this is a movement of ordinary citizens and not the educated middle class. But this is what is surely required to build a democratic society based on social justice.**

**The need is to cut down the military's influence in society, reform the judiciary and the police and to expand freedom and democracy through this grassroots movement.**

**And it is necessary to abolish the monarchy too for it has now become an obstacle to freedom and human dignity.**

**Thais need to create a culture of citizenship rather than being merely “royal subjects”.**

Note

1 Giles Ji Ungpakorn (2007), *A Coup for the Rich* (London: WD Press). This book can be downloaded free at: <http://wdpress.blog.co.uk/>



Thai demonstrators fighting corrupt Thai government April 12, 2009, in Bangkok, Thailand. Foto by Carla Lee

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