FRAMING THE VIOLENCE IN SOUTHERN THAILAND:
THREE WAVES OF MALAY-MUSLIM SEPARATISM

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Abstract

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FRAMING THE VIOLENCE IN SOUTHERN THAILAND: THREE WAVES OF MALAY-MUSLIM SEPARATISM (130 pp.)

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This thesis examines how the Thai newspaper, *The Nation* (an English-language daily), portrays the violence in the Malay-Muslim South through the use of agenda-setting concepts and framing analyses in articles published about four events in 2004. Two of the events are examples of state aggression against southern insurgents whereas the other two are instances in which southern insurgents were the primary aggressors against the state and/or citizens. The history of the Malay-Muslim dominant provinces is reviewed, showing how the separatist movement has evolved into three distinct waves. The original secessionist movements focused on ethnic Malay identity; over time elements of Islamist ideology were introduced such that the current movement is not recognizably a separatist or Islamist movement. This thesis also includes a short analysis of articles published in *Matichon sutsapdā*, a Thai-language weekly, and shows how Malay-Muslim Thais in the South demand justice. This thesis argues that representations of the conflict in the media frame it in terms of Thai/Malay ethnicity or Buddhist/Islamist identity which obscure the need for political reforms and justice.

Approved:

Elizabeth Fuller Collins

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Figure 1. Map of Thailand
Reproduced by permission from the United Nations Cartographic Section.
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Chapter One: Setting the Agenda: Viewing the Violence in the South

Thailand’s 23rd Prime Minister, Thaksin Shinawatra, began his first term in February 2001 and was re-elected in February 2005. In those four years, the amount of violence and number of deaths in southern Thailand skyrocketed. The violence in the South continues to grow today; however this analysis will be limited to Thaksin’s first term as prime minister as it is complete and uninterrupted, while his second term was brought to a halt by the 2006 Coup initiated by General Sonthi Boonyaratglin on 19 September. When violence in the South increased during Thaksin’s first term as prime minister, the amount of media attention given to the South increased as well. In 2001 The Nation, a respected English-language daily newspaper in Thailand, published less than 25 articles reporting on the violence in the South. The first article was not published until April following bombings in Songkhla and Yala provinces. In 2002 and 2003, the number of related articles published by The Nation was less than 60 for each year. In 2004, the number of articles jumped to over 450—three times the number of articles published during 2001-2003 combined. Over 450 articles in one year averages to 1.2 articles per day on violence in the South alone in just one English language daily.

A recent survey study conducted by Srisompob Jitpiromsri and Panyasak Sobhonvasu found that 2,593 politically related violent incidents occurred between 1993 and 2004 in the Deep South (i.e., Pattani, Narathiwat, and Yala provinces). “Of these, only 750, or 29 percent, occurred between 1993 and 2003, while a remarkable 71 percent, or 1,843, took place in 2004 (including January of 2005). . . . 82 percent of incidents took

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1 In Thailand, it is customary to refer to a person by their first name instead of their last name.
place from 2001 to 2004 (including January 2005). According to this survey, the increase in political violence in the Malay-Muslim dominant South occurred after Thaksin’s inauguration. While many scholars have posited theories about the relation of this increase in violence with the rule of Thaksin, the crux of this study will not hinge upon these theories; however it cannot ignore some of the more obvious correlations.

As the violence increased, domestic news media increased their coverage of the events in the South. International news coverage also increased—particularly after the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, the 12 October 2002 bombings in Bali, and charges against Thaksin for human rights abuses following the extra-judicial killings of suspected drug traffickers and users in 2003. Are the number and frequency of these articles important? When considering the role which the Thai print media (both English and Thai) plays in society, one can say with relative confidence that print media is extremely important when trying to assess how Thais understand and view the conflict in the predominantly Malay-Muslim southern provinces.

This thesis will examine how the English-language daily, The Nation, portrays the violence in the Malay-Muslim South through the use of agenda-setting concepts and framing analyses in articles published about four specific events in 2004. In Chapter One I give an overview of frame analysis and agenda-setting theory and explain how the media uses these two concepts to inform their audience. Also in Chapter One, I explain the methodologies that were used to both gather and analyze the articles selected from The Nation. To enhance the reader’s understanding of the print media in Thailand I have

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2 Srisompob Jitpiromsri with Panyasak Sobhonvasu, “Unpacking Thailand’s Southern Conflict,” 96.
included a brief discussion of the history of Thai print media (both Thai- and English-language) and specific information on the relationship between the Thai government and reporting on specific events.

Chapter Two focuses on what I have termed the “three waves of Malay-Muslim separatism” in southern Thailand. This chapter includes a history of the Malay-Muslim dominant provinces and their incorporation into the Thai kingdom during the eighteenth century. The focus of this chapter is the evolution of the original separatist movement in southern Thailand into three distinct movements with similar and yet very different agendas. Understanding the history of the southernmost provinces and these separatist movements is critical to understanding how the current violence has developed and what the present-day motivations may or may not be.

Chapter Three is my analysis of how The Nation framed four specific events that occurred in 2004 in southern Thailand. The four events this study will focus on are two instances in which state actors (e.g., police, military) responded violently to the Malay-Muslim public and two instances in which alleged Muslim perpetrators enacted violence against the state. The year 2004 was chosen because it is at this point in time that the violence in southern Thailand reached its tipping point. Daily reports of violence (regardless of the perpetrators) streaming in from the southern provinces and government responses elicited international concern. While the specific events are not necessarily equal in severity (e.g., number of dead/wounded, widespread versus contained attacks)

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these four events provide an opportunity to examine the way in which reports in *The Nation* explain (or frame) the violence in terms of who the perpetrators are, who is to blame for the escalating violence, and how the Thai state and Thai people should respond.

The four events chosen for analysis are:

1. 4 January 2004: A raid on the Rajanakarin Army Camp, the first instance of violence in the South for the New Year.
2. 22 January 2004: First attack on Buddhist monks, the first attack on any Buddhist religious image in the southern provinces.
3. 28 April 2004: Simultaneous raids on government security forces in Yala, Songkhla, and Pattani provinces. This date is more commonly known for a raid conducted by government security forces on Krue Se mosque in Pattani.
4. 25 October 2004: A protest in Tak Bai district, Narathiwat province in which multiple Malay-Muslim protesters were killed.

The three frames identified in this study are “Southern Violence: A Regional Problem,” “The Threat of International Terrorism,” and “Shirking Responsibility.”

In my final analysis, Chapter Four, I argue that the identity of “Thai” is an unstable concept in conjunction with the status of minorities living in Thailand. The media, government, and public are constantly redefining “Thai identity.” This has the effect of shifting blame for the violence so that the Thai state and Thai people fail to take responsibility for the ways in which they contribute to the escalation of violence both through their actions and inaction.

A short analysis of articles published in the Thai-language weekly *Matichon sutsapdā* can be found in Appendix A. This analysis focuses primarily on the differences between articles published by *The Nation* and those published by *Matichon sutsapdā*. 
Matichon sutsapā uses similar framing mechanisms but also introduces new frames and details that were not found in *The Nation*.

**Frame Analysis**

Humans create frames of reference to interpret every new piece of information in their day-to-day living and to decide how to respond to events—this is how we ‘organize’ and ‘define’ our world. We create a point of reference to work from instead of having to constantly redefine our experiences. Goffman interprets Gregory Bateson’s term ‘frame’ and describes ‘frame analysis’ in this way:

I assume that definitions of a situation are built up in accordance with principles of organization which govern events—at least social ones—and our subjective involvement in them; frame is the word I use to refer to such of these basic elements as I am able to identify. . . . My phrase “frame analysis” is a slogan to refer to the examination in these terms of the organization of experience.4

The media uses framing to help the audience ‘organize an experience’—to make sense of a particular topic, story, event, etc. Pan and Kosicki argue that framing “involves political actors making sense of an issue and participating in public deliberation.”5 The media can be considered an important political actor in terms of public deliberation because they are able to shape how the public thinks and feels about some event, person, or organization—whether it is a political candidate, government official, a war, or a social group.

McCombs and Ghanem develop Stanley Cohen’s idea that the media’s use of agenda-setting tells us what to think about and suggest that through framing and second level, attribute agenda-setting the media tells us “how to think about some objects.”6 By

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5 Zhongdang Pan & Gerald M. Kosicki, “Framing as a Strategic Action,” 59.
second level, attribute agenda-setting McCombs and Ghanem mean the “properties and
traits that fill out and detail the content of news stories and people’s thoughts”—in other
words, framing.⁷ Many communications researchers, including McCombs and Ghanem,
conclude that framing is a part of agenda-setting theory—specifically paired with
priming. Priming is a process used by the media to bring certain content to the foreground
while other content is purposely relegated to the background. This process allows the
media to exercise control over public opinion. Framing and agenda-setting theory paired
with priming consist of the evaluative component of agenda-setting theory called agenda-
extension.⁸ In other words, framing is a part of agenda-setting theory.

Many researchers have argued against this co-opting of framing theory by
agenda-setting theory. Maher differentiates between the use of agenda-setting theory and
framing theory in that agenda-setting theorists define the relationship of elements within
the text, while framing theorists allow the authors of the original texts to define the
relationship. Maher uses systems theory to argue that while agenda-setting theory and
framing theory may share some overlap, they are not the same. The four basic elements
of all systems are objects, attributes, relationships, and the environment. From the
perspective of systems theory, framing and agenda-setting can be used simultaneously to
provide a broader and deeper understanding of the texts in question. According to Maher:

Taking a cue from framing theory, agenda-setting studies have begun to
acknowledge the controversy within individual issues and measure the effects of
the media’s role in framing contested definitions of problems. . . . Framing
studies, on the other hand, have begun to adopt the greater empirical

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⁷ Ibid., 70.
⁸ Jim A. Kuypers, Press Bias and Politics, 198.
sophistication of agenda-setting research . . . [of] considering the impact of framing on the public.⁹

Agenda-setting theory makes use of objects (issues, people) and attributes (properties associated with the objects) while framing theory’s key concepts are relationships (among elements organized by the communicator) and the environment (what news stories do and do not describe).¹⁰

Maher suggests that framing places a greater emphasis on causal reasoning—how media portrays the cause of social problems—than does agenda-setting. He cites Entman, who suggests “four functions of framing: defining problems, diagnosing causes, making moral judgments, and suggesting remedies.”¹¹ These functions can be seen in the way articles in The Nation describe violence and government reactions to violence in southern Thailand. First The Nation defines the problem(s) through their story-line and in doing so attempts to isolate the root cause of the problem (government misunderstanding, insurgent anger, etc.), and follow with their suggestions for “solving” such a problem, which typically involves a moral judgment—about the government, the general Thai public, or the insurgents.

There are two different types of framing that can be used in order to shape the audience’s perception of who holds responsibility: episodic framing and thematic framing. Episodic framing suggests responsibility lies with an individual or individuals, while thematic framing suggests society at large is responsible for the problem.¹² The articles analyzed use thematic framing in suggesting that overall Thai society and

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¹⁰ Ibid.
¹² Shanto Iyengar, Is Anyone Responsible?, 16.
government are responsible for the history of violence in the region; however, in some instances they include elements of episodic framing, suggesting that moderate Muslims in the South are responsible for the violence because of their complicity in allowing it to occur in the first place.

Methodology

This study attempts to understand the editorial frames used by *The Nation* by combining both agenda-setting theory and framing theory. Using Stephen Reese’s general working definition of framing—“Frames are organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world”—this study approaches frames as “cultural structures with central ideas and more peripheral concepts.”13 According to Hertog and McLeod, central or core concepts are more abstract and general while peripheral concepts can be more concrete and specific. They point out that culturally specific myths, narratives, and metaphors may have tremendous symbolic power in framing. This study seeks to identify the myths, narratives, and metaphors that are used in Thai society when looking at the framing mechanisms of articles published in *The Nation*.

*The Nation*’s website offers full online access to all archival material. However, a keyword search was performed using Lexis-Nexis Academic due to the database’s ability to complete a more advanced and specific search. For each incident, a key word search was performed using seven different clusters of three terms: (1) South*, Muslim*, Conflict; (2) South*, Islam*, Thailand; (3) Conflict, Islam*, Thailand; (4) Violence, ...

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13 Stephen D. Reese, “Prologue,” 10-11, original emphasis; James K. Hertog and Douglas M. McLeod, “A Multiperspectival Approach,” 141, respectively.
Islam*, Thailand; (5) Separatism, Islam*, South*; (6) Separatism, Thailand, South*; (7) Violence, Thailand, South*. Of the articles identified through these search terms, only articles published within the first two weeks following the event and longer than 500 words were chosen. The two week timeframe was chosen because the event would still be somewhat fresh in both the reporters’ and audience’s minds. In addition, a two week span would allow significant time for a response by either side—the government or the insurgents. Articles longer than 500 words were chosen because these articles are more likely to include in-depth analysis rather than a basic fact-based report.

The breakdown of articles per event is as follows:14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Event Date</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
<th>Main Actor</th>
<th>No. of Articles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rajanakarin Army Camp raid</td>
<td>4 Jan.</td>
<td>4 – 18 Jan.</td>
<td>Insurgents</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First attack on Buddhist monks</td>
<td>22 Jan.</td>
<td>22 Jan. – 5 Feb.</td>
<td>Insurgents</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krue Se mosque raid</td>
<td>28 Apr.</td>
<td>28 Apr. – 12 May</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above breakdown illustrates that more articles were published following state aggression against southern insurgents than when the primary aggressors were the insurgents alone. When looking at the year 2004 as a whole, the tendency for more coverage following state violence is constant. The Thai state was not the primary instigator in any of these events; however the state’s responses to these situations were largely overreactions resulting in a great number of casualties—which is why I labeled the state as the main actor. In instances of insurgent activity, fewer articles are published;

14 See Appendix B for a detailed reference list of the articles analyzed for this study.
however when the government responds in a manner in which hundreds of people (e.g., insurgents, attackers, innocent or guilty) die, the number of articles doubles if not triples.

The editorial frames used by The Nation will be identified using textual analysis. Alan McKee describes textual analysis as making “an educated guess at some of the most likely interpretations that might be made of that text.”\textsuperscript{15} We interpret texts “in order to try and obtain a sense of the ways in which, in particular cultures at particular times, people make sense of the world around them.”\textsuperscript{16} For the purpose of this study, textual analysis is used to interpret articles in The Nation regarding four violent incidents in southern Thailand in an attempt to identify the framing mechanisms and agenda-setting concepts used by The Nation.

Six frames were initially identified as the most frequently used during the span of these four events: (1) Kingdom’s unity and national identity; (2) Distance (physical and cultural); (3) Misdiagnosis of the problem or situation by the government; (4) State incompetence; (5) State insensitivity to the southern Muslim population; and (6) Outside influence or involvement of a foreign element. After the initial six frames were identified, relevant quotations were pulled from the articles and organized by frame for each incident. An initial analysis was done for each incident independently of the other incidents. This was done in order to reaffirm or disprove the use and frequency of the above-mentioned six frames.

The final analysis entailed combining the four incidents by like frames. After the initial analyses were combined and reworked, overlap between frames became noticeable

\textsuperscript{15} Alan McKee, \textit{Textual Analysis}, 1.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
which resulted in the condensing of the six frames into three: “Southern Violence: A Regional Problem,” “The Threat of International Terrorism,” and “Shirking Responsibility.” A fourth frame, “Thai-Muslim Identity,” was also identified at this time but is not included in the frame analysis. While working through these frames and analyses it came to my attention that “Thai-Muslim Identity” was not an editorial frame but that Thai national identity was an underlying factor in the separatist movements and violence in southern Thailand. “Thai-Muslim Identity” initially appeared to be an editorial frame, but through further analysis I have come to believe that Thai national identity is embedded in the discussion of southern violence and therefore becomes something much more than a framing mechanism. This issue of embedded national identity is given further attention in Chapter Four.

Particular attention was given to The Nation’s use of agenda-setting and priming—which content was brought to the foreground and which was left unmentioned. This was done by reading various accounts of the incidents written by a Thai-language paper (Matichon sutsapdā 17), different English-language news agencies (both Thai and international), and reports written by international NGOs (e.g. International Crisis Group). This was done in order to gain greater insight about the four incidents and to see which aspects The Nation chose to focus on. Gaye Tuchman states, “The news media have the power to shape news consumers’ opinions on topics about which they are ignorant.”18 Because The Nation is one of two English-language newspapers printed in Thailand, their influence, in regards to southern violence, over the English-literate

17 See page 28 for description of Matichon sutsapdā and Appendix A for an analysis of articles featured in Matichon sutsapdā about violence in the southernmost provinces.
18 Gaye Tuchman, Making News, 2.
population (both Thai and foreign) is indeed immense. *The Nation* is not necessarily
telling its audience “what to think, but rather what to think about.”19 Thereby *The Nation*
determines the agenda of the reporting on the southern provinces by which stories are
emphasized. Examples include, the southernmost provinces being excessively violent
compared to rest of the nation, the South as problematic because of their Muslim
majority, or the inability of the central Thai government to successfully govern these
provinces.

*State of the Print Media in Thailand*

Unfortunately to date, quantitative and qualitative studies examining the English-
language print media of Thailand and its role in politics and society have not yet been
published. Several studies examine the Thai media in general or specifically the Thai-
language media and its role in major events, with side-notes referring to the English-
language press—especially the events of Black May20 in 1992. Duncan McCargo has
done extensive research on the relation between media and politics in Asia and has
published several field studies of Thai-language dailies and their practices in reporting
techniques, relationships between reporters and politicians, and the national election in
1995. Despite the wide-ranging work published on Thai-language media, little attention
has been given to the English-language publications. Of what has been written, much of it
is repetitive of earlier publications and the length is typically a few paragraphs to a few

20 Black May refers to protests held in Bangkok against the unelected government of Prime
Minister General Suchinda Kraprayoon. The protests began in April and not only involved students, which
were key elements in the previous democracy protests of the 1970s, but also the newly established middle
class of Bangkok. On 17 May 1992, 85 unarmed protesters were shot and killed by soldiers who had
opened fire on a gathering at Bangkok’s Sanam Luang.
pages. With this information in mind, a brief history of the print media of Thailand will follow inclusive of a discussion of the state of the English-language press as it has been researched thus far.

The kingdom’s first newspaper was begun in Bangkok by Dr. Dan Bradley (1804-1873) in 1844, an American missionary and private physician to King Mongkut (Rama IV, r. 1851-1868). Bradley’s first attempts at a newspaper, the Bangkok Recorder, were printed in English despite “his conviction of the value of a Siamese-language paper.”21 The Bangkok Recorder printed the country’s domestic and international events, however, due to lack of interest only lasted for 16-months and Bradley abandoned the idea for another 20 years. In 1865, Bradley revived the Bangkok Recorder, published every two weeks, and created a sister publication entitled the Siamese Recorder, published every Thai lunar month. “Through his papers, Dr. Bradley hoped to influence King Mongkut . . . and through the king, the kingdom.”22 This resurrection and new publication only lasted for two years when Bradley was pressured to drop both papers for printing material insulting the monarchy. “At least seven English-language newspapers began and ceased publication between 1844 and 1877.”23 To counter the attempts of papers begun by foreign missionaries in Bangkok, King Mongkut launched the Royal Gazette in 1858. The Gazette acted as a type of government newsletter edited by Mongkut himself. However, the Gazette was abandoned due to Mongkut’s other royal duties and was not published again until 1876 under Chulalongkorn’s reign.

22 Ibid.
King Chulalongkorn (Rama V, r. 1868-1910), Mongkut’s son and successor, revived the *Royal Gazette* under the new title *Government Gazette*. Chulalongkorn also provided subsidies to the foreign language press in an attempt to control content—a policy that was not successful. Despite the attempts to control content, 52 newspapers and magazines existed during Chulalongkorn’s reign. Also during this period, calls for a free press were first made both by foreign missionary columnists and Thai journalists alike. American missionary Samuel John Smith wrote columns calling for autonomy to be given to Protestant churches, schools, newspapers, and women. And Thai journalist, Tianwan wrote “provocative articles demanding freedom for slaves and women. He was eventually jailed for 17 years, partly for his radical views.”

Under King Vajiravudh (Rama VI, r. 1910-1925) more newspapers were established, with the King contributing columns to several under pseudonyms. King Vajiravudh continued to provide subsidies for newspapers, including Thai, English, and Chinese-language papers, for the sake of controlling content and public opinion of the monarchy. “Attempts by the court to dominate political discourse were strongly countered by sections of the press which referred to themselves as ‘political newspapers’ (*nangsuephim kanmuan*), adopting a critical, oppositional stance.” During King Vajiravudh’s reign a large number of newspapers were founded that took a critical stance towards the Sixth Reign, demonstrating the declining popularity of King Vajiravudh. The growing newspaper market illustrated the emergence of a new class of educated and

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literate Thais whose under-employed status was emphasized through their contempt with the ruling monarch.

McCargo points out that the origins of the Thai press “lay in the efforts of competing elite interest groups both inside and outside the charmed circles of power to advance their own positions and to undermine the standing of others.”26 From the beginning the Thai press was known to be partisan with each publication either cheering its friends or deriding its enemies in attempts to control and influence power. While the Thai press was created and developed under an absolute monarchy in which its political opinions were somewhat limited, the fact of its existence helped to increase the public’s political awareness. “What began as an elite medium nevertheless had the effect of breaking down barriers, increasing the size of the politically engaged and informed class.”27

Today the Thai media is considered to be one of the freest in Asia, although because lèse-majesté is still in place outright criticism of the monarchy continues to be taboo. According to the 2002 Freedom House survey, Thailand is one of the six freest countries for news media in Asia, standing alongside Japan, South Korea, Mongolia, the Philippines, and Taiwan. The print media is considered to be under less government supervision as compared to television and radio, since these two mediums are still government owned while newspapers are privately owned. However, the Thai press is still required to obtain a government issued license that can be revoked and/or suspended at any time by the government. Because of this stipulation, the print media cannot be

26 Ibid.
27 Ibid., 8.
deemed completely free of government influence. However many newspapers remain critical of government administrations and defy censorship rules implemented by the government as was seen during Black May in 1992.

Black May 1992

Thitinan Pongsudhirak explains in his study on Thai media that traditional institutions of power (e.g., military, civilian bureaucrats, political parties) have “had to yield to new forces in the developing civil society”—most notably mass media.²⁸ The current power and influence of the print media is a direct result of its’ role in the turbulence surrounding the unelected government led by General Suchinda Kraprayoon in May 1992. Following numerous protests in Bangkok in April and May 1992, inconsistent reporting by state media (e.g., radio and television) and print media (privately owned) were glaringly obvious—the state media did not report on any of the anti-Suchinda movement’s activities. “It was the press which published news from the opposition and at the same time, openly criticized the government’s censorship effort[s].”²⁹

On 17 May 1992, thousands of demonstrators amassed on Bangkok’s Sanam Luang to protest against Suchinda’s position as prime minister and the military’s role in Thai politics. What was a peaceful demonstration ended in violence with soldiers opening fire on unarmed protestors leaving around 85 dead. Electronic media did not cover these events—the radio frequencies were owned by the military and the television channels were under state control. Two stations were able to uplink to foreign satellites and

facilitated the transmission of uncensored footage aired by foreign news networks. However, only those with access to cable or satellite television were able to see this coverage.

The print media, on the other hand, did not remain silent. Despite the declaration of martial law and the order that newspapers should not publish any inflammatory material, most Thai-language papers were already going to press. The English-language, *Bangkok Post*, practiced self-censorship and blanked out several articles while its more liberal rival, *The Nation*, carried full coverage of the events. As retaliatory measures, the government attempted to close three dailies (Thai and English) for a period of three days because the content of their reports contained items that were detrimental to the nation’s safety and security and might incite further public unrest. That evening, King Bhumibol (Rama IX, r. 1946-present) appeared on national television to denounce the actions of the Suchinda government, making Suchinda’s resignation inevitable. Due to the events of Black May and the resignation of Suchinda, new discussions were held on the future of the Thai news media.

A new television channel, iTV, was launched which emphasizes independent news coverage. Dozens of new print media titles appeared. *The Nation* was commended for its coverage of events by receiving an award from the International Committee to Protect Journalists. However, not all newspapers remained independent and unbiased by the Suchinda government. McCargo points out that:

... the stance of the press during the May events was largely a function of the personal alliances of key columnists, editors and owners. The press was far from monolithic. While the print media was infinitely more oppositional than the
captive electronic media, the quality of critical coverage in the press varied significantly from one publication to another.\textsuperscript{30}

Thai newspapers as a whole remain the more reliable and informative means of receiving information. With the large number of national daily papers published\textsuperscript{31}, one can choose which to read by which slant one wants to receive—liberal, conservative, pro-government, anti-government, etc.

\textit{Thai-Language Newspapers}

The most popular daily Thai-language newspaper is \textit{Thai Rath} with a circulation of 1,200,000 in 2004. \textit{Thai Rath} is by far the most well read newspaper in Thailand circulating throughout both the urban and rural areas in all four regions.\textsuperscript{32} \textit{Thai Rath} was formed in 1958 as a pro-government paper. While one cannot dispute the popularity and the reach of \textit{Thai Rath}, one can call into question the seriousness of its reporting. This paper is well known for its tabloid-esque layout—large-type headlines, graphic images in color of crime and accident victims coupled alongside television stars and beauty queens. Political influence it appears to have, as the late owner and founder, Kamphol Wacharapong, was appointed to the Senate in 1983. Duncan McCargo notes that “\textit{Thai Rath} typically carrie[s] six or seven front-page stories, one of which [is] a political story—two in times of tension or crisis.”\textsuperscript{33} Within the paper itself there is a political page.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[31] In 1998 Thailand boasted 34 total dailies (25 national and 9 regional), down from 44 in 1997. \textit{World Press Trends}, 638.
\item[32] While \textit{Thai Rath}’s 2004 circulation figures were 1,200,000 its readership numbers were far greater at 9,254,000. \textit{World Press Trends}, 638.
\end{footnotes}
However, “the political page tend[s] to be given over mainly to columns and ‘routine’ items of political news which [are] of little interest.”\textsuperscript{34}

\textit{Matichon}, the leading Thai-language political daily boasts a 2004 circulation of 600,000 and takes a more anti-government stance.\textsuperscript{35} \textit{Matichon} also publishes a Thai-language weekly, \textit{Matichon sutsapdā}, which remains true to its political stance and coverage while featuring longer editorial style articles rather than daily news items. \textit{Matichon} was founded in 1978 following the closing of \textit{Prachacha}, a Thai-language daily, after the military coup of Thanin Kraivichien in 1976. \textit{Matichon} traditionally concentrated on political reporting, “giving over virtually its entire front page to political stories, its coverage ha[s] now broadened to encompass more economic and business news, as well as crime stories and ‘soft news.’”\textsuperscript{36} As McCargo notes, \textit{Matichon} does not have a political page, as nearly all of its articles are political. \textit{Matichon} is considered essential reading for Thailand’s educated classes.

\textit{English-Language Newspapers}

Thailand has two Thai-owned English-language dailies, \textit{The Nation} and the \textit{Bangkok Post}. Circulation for both the \textit{Bangkok Post} and \textit{The Nation} are relatively the same, ranging from 60,000 to 80,000.

The \textit{Bangkok Post} was established in 1946 through a partnership between American Alexander McDonald, a former World War II U.S. OSS agent, and Thai Prasit Lulitanond. Presently, the \textit{Post} is owned by Post Publishing Public Co. Ltd., whose major shareholders include the Chirathivat family (owners of the Central Group), the \textit{South}

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{35} \textit{Matichon}’s 2004 readership numbers are 763,000. \textit{World Press Trends}, 638.
\textsuperscript{36} Duncan McCargo, \textit{Politics and the Press in Thailand}, 82.
China Morning Post of Hong Kong and GMM Grammy Pcl., Thailand’s largest record label and entertainment firm. The Post is seen to have a more farang (foreign) or internationalist view, which can be attributed to the fact that the Post employs far more foreigners than Thais.

The Nation was established by journalists in 1971 and was strictly Thai-owned. Suthichai Yoon, one of the founding editors, feels that as a Thai-owned company, The Nation has the “moral right to comment critically on our own country.” Suthichai described those Thais working at the Bangkok Post as “nominees” working for foreign editors and directors hired on five-year contracts. Because of the foreign editorial board at the Post, Suthichai firmly believes that the Bangkok Post remains uncritical of the government because they must always fear having their license revoked by the government.

Presently the Nation Multimedia Group, which produces several newspapers, television channels, books, magazines, and web sites owns The Nation. The majority of The Nation’s staff are Thai, a major factor in its superior coverage of local news and analysis as compared with the Post. Editorially, The Nation is usually more critical of the government than the Post and has recently been described as “a vehemently anti-Thaksin English-language daily.”

The major differences between the Post and The Nation can be seen in each paper’s reaction to government-imposed censorship. Following the mass attacks on protesters at Sanam Luang during Black May in 1992, martial law was declared and the

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37 Nicholas Coleridge, Paper Tigers, 442.
38 Ibid.
39 Daniel Ten Kate, “Gunpoint Democracy.”
government ordered that newspapers should not print any inflammatory material. As mentioned previously, the *Post* practiced self-censorship and blanked out several articles while *The Nation* carried full coverage of the events. Only two other papers (both Thai-language) published similar accounts of the events. The government attempted to close the three papers for three days as punishment; however, this order failed due to King Bhumibol’s national address denouncing the actions of the Suchinda government.

Following the election of Thaksin Shinawatra as Prime Minister in 2001, several companies associated with Thaksin ceased advertising with *The Nation* in an attempt to pressure the paper into more favorable reporting on Thaksin. Rather than change their editorial stance, *The Nation* reported on this attempt at coercion and brought this information to the public. Again we see *The Nation* not succumbing to the pressures of government intervention in regards to their editorial outlook.

This unwillingness to back away from controversial issues affecting Thailand can be witnessed in *The Nation’s* reporting on violence in the southernmost provinces as well. While both the *Post* and *The Nation* do not flinch at reporting the violence in the South, *The Nation’s* coverage is far more comprehensive and consistent than the *Post*.

Until recently both papers offered free online access to full-length archived articles. In 2005, the *Bangkok Post* instituted a policy of limited access to archived articles older than seven days. One can search the archives and have free access to article summaries; however, the article in its entirety costs the equivalent of 1 USD per article.
Full access to some articles is still available through search agents such as Lexis-Nexis™ Academic. However more recent full-length articles are difficult to find.\textsuperscript{40}

Not only does The Nation continue to offer free and unlimited access to archival material but since 2004 their website has featured several different special reports about the violence in the South on its homepage. For example in January 2005 through March 2007 a special report with the title “Fire on South [sic]: Violence and Peace Building” with links to ‘News & Analysis on Major Incidents,’ a convenient list with links to articles published in The Nation dating back to 2002, and ‘Tak Bai Reports,’ an English translation of the National Reconciliation Committee’s official reports on the incidents at Tak Bai and Krue Se Mosque.\textsuperscript{41} Bangkok Post’s homepage does not offer any such feature presently, nor have they since this writer’s research began in 2004.

The Nation’s uniform coverage and comparative analysis over time is consistent with the media acting as a ‘watchdog’ or guardian of the public interest instead of ‘servant.’ Thitinan describes Thai newspapers as taking on the role of ‘educators’ of the public following the 1992 protests. “Readers of daily newspapers now read debates about society and democratisation [sic] by prominent intellectuals like Chai-Anan Samudavanija and Nidhi Aeusrivongse who, among other ‘public intellectuals’, have posed competing analyses of the causes and effects of the country’s rapid

\textsuperscript{40} Using Lexis-Nexis™ Academic, this researcher conducted a basic search using “Krue Se” (a historic mosque in the southern provinces) as the search term in both The Nation and the Bangkok Post between January and December 2004. The Nation’s search resulted in 45 articles whereas the Post’s search turned up zero articles. Performing the same search on the Bangkok Post’s website (www.bangkokpost.net), 188 articles were found but only summaries consisting of 1-3 sentences were available for free. The Nation’s website (www.nationmultimedia.com) provided 180 articles with free access to the full text for each article.

\textsuperscript{41} Available at http://www.nationmultimedia.com/specials/south2years/index.php (accessed 12 November 2006).
industrialisation [sic].” Suthichai Yoon, *The Nation’s* founder-editor, is a consistent advocate of public interest journalism and has attempted to promote this idea of ‘media as educator’ in Thailand. We can see this exemplified in the numerous opinion pieces about the situation in the South published in *The Nation* by prominent individuals (e.g., Surin Pitsuwan, Chaiwat Satha-Anand). While Suthichai’s view reflects the desire for Thai journalists to perform in a more ‘Western,’ professional manner, McCargo points out that “[w]hile energetically campaigning for the reform of political institutions and other aspects of Thai society, the Thai media have been singularly ineffective at reforming themselves.” McCargo suggests that rather than seeing the Thai media as a ‘watchdog,’ a more persuasive description would be to view the Thai media in the role of ‘agenda-setting.’ However, as McCargo points out, viewing the Thai media as ‘agenda-setters’ is somewhat ambiguous because this would imply that newspapers have but one owner who supports one political viewpoint when in reality the opposite is true. Thai newspapers have multiple owners and stockholders, who have multiple loyalties and obligations to various political actors. With this in mind, the following analysis of *The Nation’s* coverage of four specific events in the South examines *The Nation’s* role as a ‘watchdog’ and ‘agenda-setter’ through the use of editorial frames.

Before discussing the analysis of *The Nation’s* coverage of the four events in the South, I will first introduce the history of the Malay-Muslim dominant provinces. To fully understand the present acts of violence, one needs to examine the history of the separatist movements and their relation to the Thai state. I argue that we can draw

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43 Duncan McCargo, “Political Journalists and Their Sources in Thailand,” 94.
distinctions between the various separatist movements in the southernmost provinces and it is those distinctions that create the three waves of Malay-Muslim separatism. The violence that reached its tipping point in 2004 did not emerge in a vacuum but is clearly rooted in earlier separatist movements. These movements and their origins will be explored in the next chapter.
Chapter Two: Three Waves of Separatism in Southern Thailand

Through a careful and detailed study of the history of the southern provinces and their relationship with the Thai state as well as a comprehensive understanding of the current events in the area, we can differentiate the central themes of the separatist movement and identify three waves of violent separatism in southern Thailand. The violence that emerged during the period Thaksin Shinawatra was Prime Minister has roots in earlier separatist movements, but is different in important ways. This historical overview helps to clarify the issues at stake today.

The history of the Muslim community in southern Thailand is generally organized in terms of separatist movements. These separatist movements are historically rooted in the marginalization of the ethnically Malay and religiously Muslim population by the Thai-Buddhist government. This marginalization is a direct result of the historical conquest of the South by the Thai monarchy.

I argue that in southern Thailand there have been two different waves of Malay-Muslim separatist movements, and currently we are seeing a third wave emerging. The first wave of separatism focused on the ethnic identity of the Malay-Muslims, while the second wave focused on Islamic identity. I argue that a third wave began when Thaksin Shinawatra dismantled strategic government programs created to negotiate between the central Thai state and the southern Muslim population.\footnote{The dismantled programs are the Southern Border Provinces Administrative Center (SBPAC) and the Civilian Police Military Task Force 43 (CPM-43), both remnants of the Communist and separatist insurgency of the 1970s.} This emerging third wave appeals to a wider population, including the younger Islamic community—typically
young, disenfranchised, and unemployed men—which has increased the number of violent actions against the Thai state.

_Historical Background of the Malay-Muslim Southern Provinces_  
_(Mid 1400s – Early 1900s)_

The present day Thai provinces of Satun, Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat were once known as Patani Raya or Greater Patani. Historically Patani\textsuperscript{45} was the ancient Malay kingdom of Langkasuka, founded in first century AD. Langkasuka was an important commercial port in Southeast Asia due to its relative proximity to the larger kingdoms of Angkor, Pagan, and Srivijaya. Langkasuka eventually dissolved and the kingdom of Patani rose to power in its place. As elsewhere in Southeast Asia the ruler and people of Patani converted to Islam through contact with traders from Arabia and India who eventually settled in the region and intermarried with the local peoples. While the exact date is not known, it is believed that the kingdom of Patani was officially declared an Islamic state in 1457. Patani grew to be an important religious center for Muslims. “When Western colonial powers established their foothold on the Malay Peninsula, Patani was already producing Islamic scholars who wrote their own original religious works and translated famous works of Arab scholars for Malay readers.”\textsuperscript{46} From 1630 until 1785, the kingdom of Patani experienced alternate periods of independence and Thai rule.

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\textsuperscript{45} Patani (with one ‘t’) refers to the Malay kingdom of Patani, while Pattani (with two ‘t’s) refers to the current Thai province of Pattani.  
\textsuperscript{46} Surin Pitsuwan, _Islam and Malay Nationalism_, 49.
The kingdom of Patani was permanently incorporated into the Thai kingdom under the leadership of Phra Phutthayotfa (Rama I, r. 1782-1809) in 1785. Patani was not considered a vassal or tributary state but an “integral part of the Kingdom in which Thai interests were involved.” Several uprisings against Thai rule occurred between 1789 and 1791. To combat these revolts and weaken the power of the Patani sultanate, Bangkok implemented a policy of “divide and rule.” The kingdom of Patani was divided into seven smaller provinces: Saiburi (or Teluban), Pattani, Nongchik, Yala, Yaring (or Yamu), Ra-ngae (Legeh or Tanjongmas), and Rahman.

The “Seven States” were lower in status than Pratesrat or “Vassal States,” but more independent in their conduct of internal affairs than an ordinary province. They were similar to provinces in that each Raja had to be theoretically chosen from among the close relatives of the old rulers and formally confirmed by Bangkok.

This situation proved effective until the reign of King Chulalongkorn (Rama V, r. 1868-1910).

King Chulalongkorn introduced a “policy of administrative centralization known as the thesaphiban system of provincial administration, aiming at the exertion of more direct control from Bangkok over subordinate areas, which included the Malay tributary states.” Chulalongkorn wanted to ensure loyalty of the provinces to the national capital, particularly during a time when the colonial powers of France and Britain were expanding their empires in Thailand’s neighboring countries. The Malay Rajas were

47 To avoid confusion and maintain consistency, I will use ‘Thailand,’ ‘kingdom of Thailand,’ ‘Thai State,’ ‘Thai government,’ etc. in reference to the country, government, and people throughout this chapter despite the time period. It is noted that prior to 1939, the country was officially called ‘Siam’ or ‘kingdom of Siam.’ In 1939 the name was changed to Thailand, which can be defined as “Land of Thais,” or “Land of Freedom,” by Phibul Songkram during his rule in order to equate ethnicity with nationalism.


50 Ibid.
opposed to direct Thai rule and resistance movements were soon organized. This opposition collapsed shortly thereafter following the deposition and exile of the Rajas of Patani and Ra-ngae. The Rajas were eventually allowed to return, however only under the condition that they complied with the *thesaphiban* system and refrained from further political activity.

In 1902, the Malay nobility were officially removed from power and Thai Buddhist civil servants were placed in charge of the southern provinces. Those assigned to the southern provinces were unfamiliar with the customs, Islamic law, and Malay language of the general population, thus creating a rift between the governors and governed. This rift still persists today despite various changes implemented by the central Thai government.

In 1901, the Raja of Patani, Abdul Kadir Qamaruddin, wrote Sir Frank Swettenham, the British governor of the Straits Settlements in Singapore, petitioning for British intervention on behalf of the Malay population living under the suppression of the Thai monarchy. While the colonial British government did not intervene as requested, they did insist that Thailand exert greater authority over the southern region, thereby destroying any positive relationship between the Malay nobility and the Thai government. This allowed the British to remain distanced from the problem while maintaining a good relationship with the Thais. This diplomatic maneuver proved successful because in 1909 the Anglo-Siamese Agreement was finalized. This agreement ceded Kedah, Kelantan, Trengganu, and Perlis (British Malaya’s four northernmost provinces) to the British in exchange for the recognition of Thai authority over the
provinces of Pattani (née Patani, Yaring, and Nongchik), Yala (née Yala and Rahman), Narathiwat (née Ra-ngae), and Satun (Thailand’s four southernmost provinces).

In their respective Malay states, Thai and British rule differed causing even more tension between the Thai state and their Malay provinces—the British appeared more concerned with the well-being and development of the Malays whereas the Thais were more suspicious of the intentions of the Malay nobility that had been usurped. “It is very clear that while the British were prepared to recognize the ruling families and keep them in their positions, the Thais had decided that the royal privileges would end at the passing away of the ‘living generation.’”\textsuperscript{51} Aside from limiting the nobility’s authority, the Thai government was also very concerned with the assimilation of the Malay population into Thai society.

The process of assimilation occurred over several decades beginning with the reign of King Chulalongkorn. Chulalongkorn wanted his ‘foreign’ government officials to acquire Thai hearts and manners. This was to be accomplished in several different ways. Prominent Malay-Muslim officials were forced to ‘transfer’ to provinces in the North. Sons of Malay nobility were offered on-the-job training with the Thai governor-general. Islamic law (\textit{shari’a} and \textit{adat}) was replaced with Thai law, except in cases dealing with family matters and inheritance rights. \textit{Qadi} (Muslim judges) were appointed under the close supervision of the sitting Thai judges who were also given the right to override the decisions of the \textit{Qadi}.

\textsuperscript{51} Surin Pitsuwan, \textit{Islam and Malay Nationalism}, 39.
The First Wave of Separatism: Ethnic Malay-Muslim Identity
(Early 1900s – Late 1950s)

According to Dorairajoo, “The separatist movement arose as a reaction to the state’s disenfranchisement of the Malay nobility and the installation of Thai-Buddhist bureaucrats.” This first wave of separatism was primarily concerned with Malay ethnic identity, and leaders drew on that identity to promote their agenda. This does not omit Islam as a factor in these early irredentist movements; however, the leaders typically were in possession of noble or religious titles (e.g. Raja or hajji) connoting that they were from elite levels of society and not from the ranks of the common people. Peter Chalk notes that “three main pillars underscore Malay separatist identity in this region: a belief in the traditional virtues and ‘greatness’ of the Kingdom of Patani (Patani Darussalam); identification with the Malay race; and a religious orientation based on Islam.” In Malay culture and language, the term used for conversion to Islam is “masok melayu, meaning ‘entering into Malay’ culture or joining the religio-cultural world of the Malays.” So it should not be surprising that the Malay-Muslims of Thailand should want to reunite with the Malay-Muslim world directly to their South. As will be seen, the primary leaders of these first separatist movements, who came from the political and/or religious elite, gave more weight to their ethnic identity (Malay) in enlisting support from the populace in Thailand as well as outside support.

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52 Saroja D. Dorairajoo, “Violence in the South of Thailand,” 467.
53 Nantawan Haemindra, “The Problem of the Thai-Muslims (part 1).”
54 Peter Chalk, “Militant Islamic Separatism,” 165.
55 Moshe Yegar, Between Integration and Secession, 80.
Raja Abdul Kadir Qamaruddin

The former Raja of Patani, Abdul Kadir Qamaruddin, is noted as the leader of the first movement against the Thai government—occurring prior to the Anglo-Siamese Agreement of 1909. In 1901, Abdul Kadir is said to have purchased ammunition from a German merchant to be used against the Thai state. Both the British and Thai governments were warned of this purchase, and Thailand called for the arrest of Abdul Kadir shortly thereafter. Subsequently he was sentenced to ten years in a Phitsanuloke prison (Northern Thailand). However he was released after two years with the promise that he would refrain from further political activity. In 1915, Abdul Kadir moved to the British Malayan province of Kelantan away from the reaches of the Thai government. With the assistance of the Raja of Kelantan, Abdul Kadir continued to inspire/sponsor rebellions against Thai rule.\(^56\)

The most serious uprising sponsored by Abdul Kadir was the Baan Namsai Rebellion in 1922 in response to the Primary School Act of 1921, initiated under the rule of King Vajiravudh (Rama VI, r. 1910-1925). This Act required all Malay-Muslim children to attend Thai primary schools in which the medium of instruction would be Thai. The Malay-Muslims saw this as a direct attack on their culture and ethnicity—a way of Thai-icizing the Malay-Muslim population. The former Malay nobility ordered the Malay-Muslim villagers of Baan Namsai to refuse payment of taxes and land rent to

the Thai government. This rebellion caused a clash between villagers and security forces, which resulted in many casualties and the execution of several Muslim leaders.\(^5^7\)

As a result, Bangkok was forced to reassess its integration policies. King Vajiravudh issued new guidelines for dealing with the Malay-Muslims in an attempt to lessen the resistance of the southern provinces. These included: all government regulations that opposed Islam be abolished and future regulations should be supportive to Islam; taxes in the Malay-Muslim states of Pattani should be no higher than in the Malay states of the British; and public officials assigned to Pattani should be respectful and honest in regards to their charges.\(^5^8\) These concessions were granted because Vajiravudh was worried that the British might intervene and force Thailand to cede its southern provinces to British Malaya. Many historians have noted Vajiravudh’s nationalist tendencies and his determination “not to lose any more territory to the colonial powers as his grandfather, King Mongkut (1851-1868), and his father, King Chulalongkorn (1868-1910), had been forced to do.”\(^5^9\)

The adoption of a constitutional monarchy in 1932 led to greater willingness within the Malay-Muslim population to become a part of the Thai nation-state. Three Malay-Muslims were elected to Parliament in 1937. Regional elites of the southern provinces began to see their prominent roles and influence restored. This improvement was somewhat short lived; the Thai Rathaniyom (Thai Custom Decree) was issued in 1939 under Phibul\(^6^0\) Songkram’s ultra-nationalist military regime (1938-1944) and

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\(^5^7\) W.K. Che Man, *Muslim Separatism*.
\(^5^9\) Surin Pitsuwan, *Islam and Malay Nationalism*, 70.
\(^6^0\) Listed as Field Marshall P. Phibulsongkhram in Appendix E.
seriously affected all of Thailand’s minority groups. This decree was the most vigorous attempt at assimilation by the central government. Malays were to be educated in both the Thai language and culture—including Buddhism. The central Thai dialect was made the language of instruction in all schools throughout the country, public or private. The government attempted to equate patriotism with Buddhism by controlling even the religious life of Thailand—statues of the Buddha were placed in all public schools and all students were expected to prostrate before the Buddha as an act of patriotism. People were no longer allowed to wear sarongs in public, have Malay names, or use the Malay language and both shari’a and Islamic instruction were banned.\textsuperscript{61} This attempt at forced assimilation created a backlash.

The fusion of national security and national identity created one of the central paradoxes of the conflict: the state saw assimilation as the key to reducing a perceived security threat posed by Malay Muslims who refused to adopt Thai culture, but the only real threat to security came from protest against assimilation policies.\textsuperscript{62}

In this way, the national government fueled the separatist fire and caused more resentment than would have arisen naturally. This policy of forced assimilation resulted in widespread resentment among Malay-Muslims causing thousands to flee to neighboring British Malaya or Saudi Arabia.

Following World War II, Phibul’s regime was ousted from office and the Rathaniyom decree was repealed, however much damage had been done in the span of a few years. Malay-Muslim leaders reacted strongly to the Rathaniyom decree, thus marking the beginning of the creation of separatist groups.

\textsuperscript{61} David Brown, “From Peripheral Communities;” Nantawan Haemindra, “The Problem of the Thai-Muslims (part 2).”

**Gabungan Melayu Patani Raya**

Gabungan Melayu Patani Raya (GAMPAR or the Association of Malays of Greater Patani) was formed shortly after the close of World War II. The leaders of GAMPAR were the former princes Tunku Mahmud Mahyuddin and Tunku Abdul Jalal who were working out of British Malaya away from the reaches of the Thai government. GAMPAR aimed to unite all Malays living in the south of Thailand, establish closer contacts between the Malays living in Thailand and British Malaya, improve the standard of living for the Malay-Muslims in south Thailand, and improve the education system in south Thailand in hopes of reviving Malay culture in the region.63 Since GAMPAR’s base was in British Malaya they worked closely with the Patani People’s Movement based in Pattani headed by Hajji Sulong.

**Patani People’s Movement and Hajji Sulong**

The Patani People’s Movement (PPM) was organized by Hajji Sulong bin Abdul Kadir bin Muhammad Al-Fatani, a religious teacher and President of the Provincial Council for Islamic Affairs (Majlis Agama Islam), and other Muslim leaders in the Pattani region. Unlike past movements, the PPM’s authority rested with the religious elite rather than the political elite of the Pattani region. Hajji Sulong is most noted for his

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63 Nantawan Haemindra, “The Problem of the Thai-Muslims (part 1).”
seven-point petition of 1947.\textsuperscript{64} The purpose of this petition was to reconstruct the southern region into an autonomous Malay state with a local-born and elected Malay as head of state. The Thai government, under the regime of Phibul II,\textsuperscript{65} ignored Hajji Sulong’s petition on the premise that if this ethnic group were granted autonomy then all ethnic groups residing in Thailand would request the same privilege.

According to the official Thai narrative, Hajji Sulong is also credited with the Dusun Ynor Rebellion in the village of Dusun Ynor, Narathiwat province on 28 April 1948. The Thai authorities had arrested Hajji Sulong in January 1948; the government suspected that the Malay-Muslims would retaliate with a violent attack and kept them under close government surveillance. On 28 April, a rebellion occurred led by Hajji Tingamae that lasted for 36 hours in which 400 Malay-Muslims and 30 Thai police were killed. Thanet Aphornsuvan offers a contending explanation of events that does not include Hajji Sulong as playing a role in this rebellion. Thanet’s account explains that due to long-standing prejudices and fear, Thai security forces overreacted to a Muslim ceremony being held in Dusun Ynor village. Following the Rebellion, Hajji Sulong was released on 30 April and 2,000-6,000 Malay-Muslims fled to Malaya. These events led to a petition requesting that the United Nations intervene and allow the four southern provinces of Patani, Yala, Narathiwat, and Satul [Satun] to become an independent state with a local-born and elected Malay as head of state. The petition was as follows:

1) The government of [Thailand] should have a person of high rank possessing full power to govern the four provinces of Patani, Yala, Narathiwat, and Satul [Satun], and this person should be a Muslim born within one of the provinces and elected by the populace. The 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 [Thai] 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 give the former full authority to conduct cases. (Ibrahim Syukri as cited in Thanet Aphornsuvan, “Origins of Malay Muslim ‘Separatism,’” 33.)

\textsuperscript{64} Phibul’s second term as (unelected) Prime Minister (1948-1957).
provinces to secede and join the newly formed Federation of Malaya—which internationalized the Malay-Muslim agenda. Phibul declared a state of emergency and sent military forces to Narathiwat on the premise of battling Communists. Pattani was now an international issue and attracted attention from Indonesia, Pakistan, the Malay Nationalist Party, the Asia Relations Organization, the Arab League, and the United Nations.66

Despite his release less than a year before, in 1949 Hajji Sulong, his son, and three colleagues were soon re-arrested and accused of treason and sentenced to seven years in prison. In 1952 the group was released; however in 1954 they were again picked up for questioning and subsequently disappeared—many speculate they were murdered by the Thai police.

Some scholars may not agree with my placement of Hajji Sulong in the first wave of separatism because his leadership marks the first time a religious leader took on the separatist fight. However, I tend to categorize him at the tail-end of the first wave because of his elite position in society. Hajji Sulong was born to a wealthy family and was sent to study in Mecca at the age of 12 where he remained for 20 years as the head of an Islamic school. Also, Hajji Sulong did not rely primarily on religious imagery in creating a cohesive movement against the Thai government but was still pulling from the ethno-political imagery of an autonomous Malay state. The presence of Hajji Sulong in the irredentist movement taken with the aftermath of the Dusun Ynor Rebellion set the stage for the second wave and the groups that were created therein.

GAMPAR, the PPM, and the activities of Raja Abdul Kadir Qamaruddin and Hajji Sulong were engaged in a political struggle—the Malay elite wanted a return to power and the “cessation of Muslim southern districts from Thailand and their unification with the sultanates of the Malay Peninsula.” Aside from the involvement of Hajji Sulong, these groups were not yet trying to appeal to a global, Islamic community but to their Malay brethren to the south in British Malaya. Their tactics were primarily politically oriented with sporadic outbursts of violence and drew support from the aristocratic and religious elite of British Malaya, Indonesia, Singapore, and the colonial British community. They did not seek popular support from the Malay-Muslim community in Malaysia or the larger global Islamic community. Tunku Mahmud Mahyuddin (GAMPAR leader) had allied himself closely with the British leaders in Malaya. Due to this alliance, when the British demanded Tunku Mahyuddin restrain his supporters in Pattani (because the British had no intention of endangering their friendly relations with Thailand), he was obliged to respond . . .

. . . despite the fact that this weakened the guerilla activity which he supported and had actually begun. The deep respect he held for Britain coupled with his aspiration to win British agreement for his activities detracted from his loyalty to the separatist cause. He hesitated to declare independence for Patani, and this indecisiveness lost him his credibility as a leader.  

This paired with the disappearance/death of PPM leader Hajji Sulong symbolized the decrease of traditional aristocratic leadership among the Malay-Muslim separatist cause in southern Thailand and the end of the first wave of separatism.

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67 Moshe Yegar, *Between Integration and Secession*, 103.
68 Ibid., 120.
The Second Wave of Separatism: Islamic Identity (Late 1950s – 2000)

The second wave of separatism initially began as an ethnic movement but became an Islamic movement due to external factors imposed on the southern provinces. Both religious and economic factors played key roles in the inflamed situation in the south. There were obvious economic gaps between the different ethnic groups in the south; Malay-Muslims were mostly poor farmers while the Chinese and Buddhist Thais made up the majority of landowners and merchants. Under the martial law of Sarit Thanarat (1957-1963), Thai Buddhists (mostly poor farmers from the Northeastern provinces) were encouraged to settle in the “troubled” southern provinces and guaranteed seven to ten acres of land per family. “The policy was undertaken to encourage assimilation and to increase government control of the area, a policy which the government assumed would be useful in its war against the terrorists.”69 During the 1960s and early 1970s, approximately 160,000 Buddhist Thais migrated to the southern provinces—the Malay-Muslim population objected to this encroachment and attempted Thai-icization of their homeland.

Also at this time many Malay-Muslim students were returning from receiving education overseas due to government mandates that Thai be the language of instruction and that the curriculum in all schools, including pondoks (Islamic school), teach aspects of Thai-Buddhist culture. The majority of these students studied in neighboring Malaysia or Middle Eastern Muslim countries. Upon returning to Thailand, these students found that the Thai government would not employ them causing more animosity; it was these

69 Ibid., 125.
disenfranchised, foreign educated young men who would eventually take jobs as teachers in local pondoks.

Other external factors included the spread of leftist ideology during the late 1960s and early 1970s, mostly as fall-out from the Vietnam-American War but also due to the student led democracy movements in Bangkok during the 1970s. Student leaders, some inspired by leftist ideology, were labeled Communists and traitors by the government. This caused hundreds of students to flee to the jungle and border areas, which included the Thai-Malay border where separatist violence had already created tension. The government’s reactions to these student protests showed the southern separatists that it was dangerous to be identified with left political groups. An Islamic identification appeared to be safer.

To the south of Thailand in Malaysia, Anwar Ibrahim and other student activists inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood formed the Islamist movement Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM) in 1971. In 1974 ABIM rallied impoverished rural youth in Baling to protest conditions similar to those experienced by the Malay-Muslims—poverty, government discrimination, lack of political representation. The 1979 Iranian Revolution may also have inspired Islamism within the Malay-Muslim separatists, as this was the first successful Islamist movement that would later inspire many more around the world.

The encroachment of traditional Malay-Muslim territory by Northern and Northeastern farmers at the insistence of the central government coupled with disenfranchised, well-educated youth helped to spawn the second wave. The Islamic
identity of the second wave was not initiated in the southern provinces but introduced and encouraged by the external actors and events that I have described above. Education abroad allowed Malay-Muslim students to network with other students in these predominantly Muslim countries to which they traveled. Through these networks links were formed with Islamist groups such as the Arab League, the Palestinian Liberation Organization, Islamic Secretariat, and Partai Islam.

**Barisan Nasional Pembebasan Patani**

The beginnings of the Barisan Nasional Pembebasan Patani (BNPP or Patani National Liberation Front) are somewhat uncertain. Dates range from 1947 to the late 1960s, while the founder may be Tunku Abdul Jalal (Hajji Sulong’s former student) or Tunku Yala Naser (grandson of Abdul Kadir Qamaruddin). The majority of my sources contend that the original leader of the BNPP was Tunku Abdul Jalal, who formed this underground organization after the alleged assassination of Hajji Sulong in 1954. Whereas GAMPAR supporters were primarily traditional aristocrats and PPM leaders were religious elite, the BNPP was able to draw support from both of these groups as well as popular support. The BNPP’s objective was complete independence and the establishment of an Islamic state. GAMPAR and the PPM relied mostly on political activities, whereas the BNPP’s preferred strategy was a combination of both political activities and armed guerrilla warfare.

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71 Ibid.

The BNPP is the most veteran of the second wave of separatist groups and counts large numbers of foreign-educated Malay-Muslims in their ranks. Through these students, an international network of relations with Islamic countries was formed (including the Palestinian Liberation Organization, the Islamic Secretariat, the Arab League, and the Partai Islam)—ultimately introducing more radical ways of thinking. The BNPP organized a provisional army, Tentera Nasional Pembebasan Rak’yat Patani (TNPRP or National Liberation Army of the Patani People) that at its peak had 200-300 armed men. The BNPP also relied on the written word to spread their message, publishing materials in Malay, English, French, and Arabic that were circulated worldwide.\(^{73}\) The BNPP is considered a conservative Islamic group and eventually splintered because of disagreements between the conservative members and the more moderate and progressive members. One such member, Abdul Karim Hassan (aka, Ustaz Karim Hajji Hassan), who studied in Cairo and admired Indonesia’s Sukarno, formed his own group in 1963.

**Barisan Revolusi Nasional**

Abdul Karim Hassan formed the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN or National Revolutionary Front) in 1963, drawing support from foreign educated young Muslims and intellectuals, particularly those educated in Malaysia and Indonesia. The BRN is yet another example of an elitist separatist group considering that only wealthy families are capable of sending their children abroad for education. However, the BRN targeted *pondoks* as their support base. Since Abdul Karim Hassan was the headmaster at a *pondok*, it was fairly easy for this group to gain a stronghold within the education system.

\(^{73}\) Moshe Yegar, *Between Integration and Secession*; Omar Farouk, “The Historical and Transnational Dimensions.”
The BRN aimed at establishing an Islamic Republic in which the Patani region seceded from Thailand and formed a united front with the entire Malaysian Archipelago.74

The BRN established a leftist reputation because of its Socialist platform and radical revolutionary aims. This deterred the conservative majority and religious leaders from joining. At some point the front split into three factions. The first, the BRN Coordinate has ceased activities in Thailand and concentrates more on political activism in Malaysia. The second, the BRN Congress headed by Rosa Burako is primarily concerned with conducting military actions. Abdul Karim Hassan headed the third, BRN Uram, until his death. The BRN Uram focused on political and religious work. Of the three, it appears the BRN Congress is the most active and carries “out political and military activities in the southern border provinces. Its main headquarters are located in Malaysia.”75

Pattani United Liberation Organization

Kadir Abdul Rahman (aka Tunku Bira Kotanila), of the former Patani nobility formed Malay Pertubohan Persatuan Pembibasan Patani (Pattani United Liberation Organization or PULO) in 1967. During PULO’s inception, Kadir Abdul Rahman was finishing his studies at Aligarh Muslim University in India and the organization’s platform was formulated a year later in Mecca with a group of Pattani students from the same university. While the previously mentioned organizations were formed on the bonds of aristocracy and religious leadership, “PULO attempted to speak to all elements in the

74 Moshe Yegar, Between Integration and Secession; W.K. Che Man, Muslim Separatism; Syed Serajul Islam, “The Islamic Movements.”
75 U.S. Commander in Chief, Pacific’s (USCINCPAC’s) Virtual Information Center (VIC), “Primer,” 10.
Malay-Muslim population and took a position which could unite all parts of the community.\textsuperscript{76} The ideology of PULO is based on UBANGTAPEKEMA (Ugama, Bangsa, Tanach, Air, and Perikemanusiaan), which stands for Religion, Race/Nationalism, Homeland, and Humanitarianism. While PULO is concerned with liberating the Malay-Muslim provinces of Thailand and establishing an independent Islamic state, they are also aware of the need for a long-term strategy to prepare for the goals of secession. This has included the need to improve the standard of education as well as fostering a local political consciousness among the southern Malay-Muslims.\textsuperscript{77} PULO “made a great effort in public relations throughout the Muslim world to make its cause known, and avoided referring to pan-Malay rhetoric.”\textsuperscript{78}

PULO advocates violence as part of its struggle. The military wing, which is known as PULA (Pattani United Liberation Army), has claimed responsibility for several bomb and arson attacks against government establishments in the south. The majority of PULA members have received their military and political training abroad. Thai intelligence believes PULA has training facilities in Syria and Palestine. In 1995 Thai police claimed to have found evidence that “PULO were co-ordinating \textsuperscript{sic} their operations with radical Shi’ite Muslims trained in the Middle East.”\textsuperscript{79}

New PULO emerged in 1992 as a dissident faction of the original PULO. Ar-rong Moo-reng and Hajji Abdul Rohman Bazo established New PULO with the intention of pursuing Pattani’s self-autonomy through less dramatic but more consistent actions than

\textsuperscript{76} Moshe Yegar, \textit{Between Integration and Secession}, 146.  
\textsuperscript{77} Peter Chalk, “Militant Islamic Separatism;” Omar Farouk, “The Historical and Transnational Dimensions.”  
\textsuperscript{78} Michel Gilquin, \textit{The Muslims of Thailand}, 81-82.  
\textsuperscript{79} Peter Chalk, “Militant Islamic Separatism,” 173.
its parent organization. New PULO’s focus has been on “carrying out minor attacks that are intended to constantly harass and pester police, local authorities and other symbols of Thai socio-political suppression, particularly schools.”\(^80\) It is believed that New PULO uses young drug addicts to carry out many of their missions—conserving human resources and limiting the chances of compromising group security. In general, PULO and New PULO have refused to coordinate their efforts due to differences in strategy. However, a combined effort in 1989 was seen between PULO, New PULO, and several other splinter groups in a coalition known as Bersatu.

**Mujahideen Pattani Movement**

The Mujahideen Pattani Movement (BNP) was established in 1985 with the ideology of liberating the southern provinces. The BNP’s original goal was to consolidate the separatist organizations in the south into a single group. BNP placed emphasis on military training and political work. This movement is headquartered in Malaysia and most of its activities are confined to the Thai-Malaysia border area. The majority of the BNP’s leaders were originally members of the BIPP—a factional group of the BNPP.

**Bersatu**

Bersatu (The United Front for the Independence of Pattani), an alliance between PULO, New PULO, the BRN Congress, the BNP, and the BIPP, was formed in 1989 when leaders of these groups “held a joint meeting called ‘the gathering of the fighters for Pattani.’”\(^81\) At this meeting an agreement was made to unify and “carry out the struggle in the same direction to avoid creating confusion in accepting financial donations

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\(^80\) Ibid., 174.
\(^81\) USCINCPAC’s VIC, “Primer,” 11.
from foreign countries.” In the late 1990s, Bersatu organized “Operation Falling Leaves,” “a series of coordinated attacks aimed at killing off state workers, law enforcement personnel, local government officials, schoolteachers and other perceived symbols of Thai Buddhist repression.” Between August 1997 and January 1998, at least 33 separate attacks were carried out under this operation, which has been labeled the “most serious upsurge of Muslim separatist activity since the early 1980s.” This campaign of violence increased international attention on the area and caused Thailand and Malaysia to tighten their shared border. At this time Malaysia made a series of high-level arrests of secessionist leaders in the northern region. “Operation Falling Leaves” forced Malaysia to reconsider their previous stance, that these separatist movements were just a domestic Thai problem.

By the late 1990s the Islamic separatist groups in southern Thailand had established links with Muslim sympathizers overseas capable of supplying monetary support as well as tactical and political training. This leads me to suggest that a third wave of separatism was emerging. I argue that the actions and policies of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra do not acknowledge the emergence of this third wave and thereby have exacerbated the conflict. The motives of this new wave of violence are still somewhat unclear.


In May 2002, Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra dismantled the Ministry of Interior’s Southern Border Provinces Administrative Center (SBPAC) and the Civilian

82 Ibid.
83 Peter Chalk, “Militant Islamic Separatism,” 175.
84 Ibid.
Police Military Task Force 43 (CPM-43) because “the rebellions and insurgency in the south were coming to an end.”\(^85\) The SBPAC was a major administrative body established in 1981 one level above the provincial governor and included local community members on its board. It was responsible for the administration of the southern provinces as well as educating the Thai public about the culture of the southern population. Originally established to support the counter-insurgency effort against the Communist parties of Thailand and Malaysia, the SBPAC also proved effective in dealing with the separatist movement. The SBPAC provided a channel for communication between leaders in the southern provinces and policy makers in Bangkok.

The Center [SBPAC] was well known throughout the South for being able to listen to complaints from southern Muslims concerning corrupt or inept Thai Government officials and was believed to be able to order the transfer [of] any civilian senior government or military official within 24 hours if the complaints were proven to be accurate.\(^86\)

The Civilian Police Military Task Force 43 (CPM-43) was another remnant of the counter-insurgency effort against Communism. CPM-43 combined elements from the Border Patrol Police, Rangers, Thai Army, Air Force, and Navy troops. Good ties between the CPM-43 and the local population were established during the counter-insurgency period when members of the Communist movement and earlier separatist movement who surrendered were allocated farmland and their rights as Thai citizens were restored without prejudice. Combined with the CPM-43 was the regular Royal Thai Army’s Fourth Army Region. “This unique organization insured that every Thai Government element would cooperate in the process [counterinsurgency efforts],

\(^86\) Saroja Dorairajoo, “Khao Yam Violence;” This also appears verbatim in USCINCPAC’s VIC, “Primer,” 15.
something that previously had been very difficult to achieve.”

With the deactivation of the SBPAC and the CPM-43, the responsibility for security of the area was transferred to the Thai police—marking the “beginning of the end for good governance in the South.”

To replace the SBPAC, Thaksin had earlier instituted his plan of “Governors as CEOs Program” in six key southern provinces. These new CEO governors were able to operate without the traditional oversight from the Ministry of Interior in Bangkok.

The following months of May and June saw a marked increase in violent activities in the provinces of Narathiwat, Pattani, and Yala. Most of these attacks were on police stations and local police boxes or direct assaults on police officials. The *Bangkok Post* referred to the perpetrators as gangsters with no affiliation to separatist or Islamic groups. Thaksin and other government officials are quoted as saying there were not any connections between the recent attacks and separatism, that the violence was only due to conflict over drugs.

I choose to label these acts of violence as a “third wave” because there appears to be no one responsible—no one is taking credit for the chaos created and the state does not appear to agree on just who or what is to blame (e.g., separatists, bandits, drug smugglers). Prior to this wave, the various separatist groups would claim responsibility for their actions and had a clear agenda that was promoted through propaganda. These separatist groups also had clear identities, the first wave identified with the Malay ethnicity while the second wave identified more with Islam. It has been difficult to determine just who is responsible for this third wave and what their motives are—at times

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87 USCINCPAC’s VIC, “Primer,” 16.
88 Ibid.
89 “Resolution in Two Months,” *Bangkok Post*; “PM Says Conflicts Over Drugs,” *Bangkok Post*. 
it appears to no longer be defined as a separatist movement but merely retaliation against the government due to longstanding prejudices and marginalization.\textsuperscript{90}

A 2005 International Crisis Group (ICG) report “Southern Violence: Insurgency, Not Jihad” tackles precisely these issues in their analysis of the recent violence contextualized within the history of separatist movements. The ICG identifies four factors as contributing to southern Thailand’s recent violence: “International Islamic Inspiration and the War in Iraq,” “Poverty and Under-development,” “Government Architecture Revamped,” and “Deterioration of Human Rights and the War on Drugs.”\textsuperscript{91} The ICG report suggests that the main cause for increased violence is government mismanagement of the southernmost provinces—this theory is shared by Thai newspapers and researchers alike (this researcher included). “The key issues driving the violence are political. . . .It was only during the 1980s, when political grievances were addressed, that violence was curbed.”\textsuperscript{92}

While an increase in radical Islamic ideology has been evident in the southern provinces and sympathy for Muslims in other parts of the world can produce a sense of shared victimhood among the Muslim community, it cannot produce sufficient enough friction to ignite the fire that is presently burning in the South—local grievances are a much more powerful motivator. Poverty and underdevelopment are important issues in

\textsuperscript{90} For example, see Srisomphob and Panyasak’s “Unpacking Thailand’s Southern Conflict” where they investigate the escalation of violence in the South and how this violence is perceived by locals. They state, “Whereas many local people do not understand what is happening, ascribed causes range from the acts of separatist movements, international terrorist attacks, a resurgence of historical consciousness on the part of local Malay Muslims, the outcomes of the government’s mishandling of the southern problems, to long-standing grievances related to poverty, unemployment, lack of educational opportunities, drug abuse, vice, crime, and social deprivation” (100).

\textsuperscript{91} International Crisis Group, “Southern Thailand,” 32-36.

\textsuperscript{92} Ibid., 33.
the Malay-Muslim provinces. While attempts have been made to rectify this—since the 1960s the central government has implemented various development projects and pumped millions of dollars into the South—the standard of living in the Malay-Muslim provinces has only been minimally improved. These projects amount to putting a band-aid on a festering puncture wound and not using antibiotics to treat the infection. Recently the central Thai government has attempted to develop tourism in the South in order to boost the local economy, but much of the associated entertainment industries are forbidden and/or offensive to Islam (e.g., alcohol, sex, gambling). Local sentiment holds that the National Economic and Social Development Board make their plans in “air-conditioned rooms in Bangkok but never ask if the people really want these projects,” a project cannot be successful without the support of the community it is to benefit.93

The revamping of government architecture has been particularly crucial in the mismanagement of the southern provinces. Thaksin deemed the SBPAC and CPM-43 unnecessary and dismantled the programs, allowing the situation to spin out of control. Thaksin, a former police officer, saw any instability as a problem of law and order—his policies were directed at establishing law and order, not at dealing with the issues that had been at the root of separatist movements. I turn now to the escalation of violence that occurred after the SBPAC and CPM-43 had been dissolved, focusing on 2004.

4 January 2004

A major peak in the cycle of violence attributed to Malay-Muslims occurred on 4 January 2004 when the Rajanakarin Army Camp was raided. This is discussed in greater

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detail in the next chapter. There are many theories as to who was responsible for the raid and fires; however, there is no definitive proof of one group as opposed to another. What can be agreed upon is that the events on 4 January brought a new sophistication to the violent activities so that even Thaksin agreed that this was not the work of ordinary bandits or a drug conflict. According to the ICG, there appear to be three possibilities for those behind the attacks:

. . . reinvigorated armed separatist movements, the security forces, and corrupt local officials and politicians. Of these, only BRN and GMIP, among the separatists, and the Royal Thai Army (RTA) and Royal Thai Police (RTP), had the capacity to carry off the coordinated attacks.94

While involvement of security forces in this operation cannot be overlooked due to a history of corruption in the southern provinces, the evidence suggests separatist activity: 1) arson attacks were against schools (an emblem of the assimilation policies of the state), 2) the BRN has heavy influence in the area of attack, and 3) the GMIP is known for several arsenal raids during 2002-2003. Despite circumstantial evidence and arrests by the police of religious teachers, no group or individuals have claimed responsibility.

Following 4 January, attacks began increasing in number. However what is exceptionally notable is the targeting of Buddhist religious figures beginning on 22 January. It is unclear who was responsible for the violence perpetrated against Buddhist monks or the reasoning behind the attacks. Prior to these incidents any explicit image of Buddhism (e.g., monks, temples, statues) had been left untouched. Despite Thaksin blaming separatist groups and insisting no connections with international terrorism and

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the arrest and questioning of four Islamic teachers in Pattani, no specific group or person has been identified or blamed for these attacks.

Following the 4 January raid and declaration of martial law, police began using heavy-handed tactics against suspected Malay-Muslims. One tactic was to “carry away” suspects and make them disappear. Between January and April 2004, 200 Malay-Muslims were “carried away” by the police or military and never seen again. Complaints regarding missing persons were buried under the more popular news items of “daily killings” attributed to the separatist movement and received little if any public attention.95

On 12 March 2004, Somchai Neelahphaijit, a high profile Muslim lawyer from the southern provinces was reported missing. The (mis)handling of this case by Thai authorities and comments made by Thaksin caused more tension in the south. Somchai was defending several individuals accused of the 4 January terrorist activities and was also campaigning for the lifting of martial law in the region. On 11 March, Somchai submitted letters to five independent bodies calling for investigations regarding police torture of his clients—he was reported missing the next day. Omar Tayib of Narathiwat, a member of the Senate sub-committee on Islamic affairs, petitioned the government to set up an independent investigation because “any indications of mishandling would further divide the Muslim community and the state.”96 Thaksin refused an independent investigating committee on the grounds that “Somchai is merely a lawyer . . . [and] not representative of the Muslim community.”97 In June 2004, an indictment was submitted naming five suspects in the disappearance of Somchai. All five were members of police

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95 Thanet Aphornsuvan, “Origins of Malay Muslim.”
96 “Missing Lawyer,” The Nation.
97 Ibid.
forces. They were charged with coercion and conspiracy to commit robbery. To date, no other information is available regarding Somchai’s whereabouts or the outcome of the indictment.

28 April 2004

28 April 2004 has been labeled the “bloodiest day” in the southern provinces. Attacks on eleven security outposts and police stations in Yala, Songkhla, and Pattani left more than 100 people dead. The suspected Islamic militants, under-armed with machetes and a few assault rifles, were mostly young teenagers ranging from 15 to 20 years old. Following the initial attacks, a standoff at the Krue Se mosque occurred when 32 suspected Muslim militants sought refuge in the mosque. The siege lasted for six hours until security forces using rocket-propelled grenades and M-16 rifles killed the 32 young men inside. Witnesses said the militants called for jihad (holy war) over the mosque’s loudspeaker and urged Muslims in the area to take up arms against Thai forces and fight to the death. Thaksin was quick to claim a victory, “using the death count as a benchmark for success and praised the security forces for prompt and deadly response.” Many Malay-Muslims and historians were quick to see a historical connection behind the attacks. 28 April 2004 marked the 56th anniversary of the Dusun Ynor Rebellion. However, no group or person has taken credit for either the 1956 or 2004 attacks, so a true connection cannot be drawn, only hypothesized.

What is notable about the attacks of 28 April is that the perpetrators were mostly young, deeply religious, poorly armed, and willing to die for their cause. It is reported

98 “Indictment,” The Nation.
99 “Southern Carnage: Kingdom Shaken,” The Nation (See April 29e in Appendix B).
100 Ibid.
that some of the young men requested their families not ritually cleanse their bodies, which in Islam is reserved only for martyrs. Historically the perpetrators of southern violence were neither young nor noted as calling for jihad. The attacks appear to have been organized by the Hikmat Allah Abadan (Brotherhood of the Eternal Judgment of God) headed by Ismael Yusof Rayalong (aka Ustadz Soh, Ustadz Ishma-ae), an Indonesian educated ustadz (religious teacher) from Yala. However, there is no definitive proof or admission of responsibility by this group or others.

According to local officials, the Brotherhood is divided into at least 10 cells throughout Yala, Pattani, and Songkhla provinces and has training camps in Malaysia. It appears Ustadz Soh was highly revered among his circle and instituted specific Sufi practices “in order to become invisible at will and be impervious to bullets and knives.”

It is alleged that Ustadz Soh was once a member of the BRN-Coordinate but became impatient with long-term strategies and wanted to take immediate action.

25 October 2004

In October 2004, six young men were arrested in Tak Bai, Narathiwat province, suspected of supplying weapons to Islamic militants. On 25 October in protest of these arrests, around 1,500 people gathered outside the police station. Security forces opened fire and detained more than 1,300 people. Six demonstrators were shot dead and seventy-eight of those arrested died from suffocation or convulsions due to being haphazardly herded into the back of military trucks. Thaksin blamed the 78 deaths on the protestors’ weakened condition due to religious fasting, and not because they were

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102 “78 Perished,” The Nation.
sardined into the back of trucks with poor ventilation. Following this incident and the reaction by the state, there was another increase in violent acts against police, schools, Thai teachers, and Buddhist monks.

“Peace Bombing”

Two weeks after the Tak Bai tragedy Thaksin announced a campaign designed to “promote peace and unity in the deep south.” Thaksin called on Thai citizens to fold 63 million origami paper cranes, one crane for each Thai citizen. This gesture was an attempt “to heal the wounds of Thailand’s southernmost provinces.” The 63 million origami cranes, believed to bring peace and hope to all that lay eyes on them, would be dropped over the southernmost provinces on 29 November, as part of King Bhumibol’s birthday celebration. The government received an overwhelming response to this campaign and a total of 120 million origami “birds of peace” were dispersed over the southern provinces from fifty military planes and helicopters.

This act drew varied reactions from all levels of society, the majority of them critical of Thaksin’s decision—which appears to dismiss the seriousness of the situation in the South. The Bangkok Post noted that “relatives of those killed in the Tak Bai tragedy have belittled the release of millions of paper cranes, saying it won’t make their loved ones come back to life or end unrest in the deep South.” Abdul Rahman Abdul Samad, chairman of the Narathiwat Islamic Council said, “Birds are not enough. . . .

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103 Because this incident is discussed in depth in Chapter Three, my commentary here will be limited so as to avoid repetition.
These birds do not mean anything to Muslims.” The PULO website posted, “Even if you used 500 baht (U.S. $13) banknotes to fold 100 million paper birds and dropped them it would not stop the suffering of those who have been severely oppressed.” Interestingly, The Nation presented this gesture in a positive light and only included positive comments from southern Thais. Such as Rungrawee Petchkaew, from Narathiwat, “I’ve never felt this happy and proud of being Thai in my life. . . .We’re locked in our daily misery here, but this magnificent gesture of goodwill from across the nation has made us realise [sic] how much people worry and care about us.”

While many in the general population supported the idea as evidenced by the overwhelming number of cranes, others were more negative, “I think other forms of birds will serve [the Muslims] better. . . .Lay siege to the south and send them birds infested with bird flu.” Even some cranes carried ugly messages directed at Thai-Muslims written by their fellow Thais, “I want to kill militants,” “Stop killing Thai people,” and “All bandits must die.” Despite this, Thaksin claimed “the effort had achieved an enormous, positive psychological effect’ toward peace.” Immediately following this “peace bombing,” two bombs were detonated, one defused, a shop owner murdered, grenades were thrown into the homes of policemen, and schools were set on fire in Pattani and Yala provinces.

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108 www.pulo.org. This website has been dismantled, www.pulo.org.uk appears to be their current site, however only contains a brief “introduction” in English about the organization.
112 Ibid.
What is it: jihad, separatism, corruption, insurgents?

Some have labeled the violence in southern Thailand as *jihad* or an Islamic war against the Thai-Buddhist state. I do not think one can accurately label this situation *jihad*. The ICG states, “Although changes in the religious outlook of Muslims in southern Thailand have contributed to the sense of alienation and grievance, the violence is primarily driven by local issues.”\(^{113}\) While the second wave of separatist movements utilized the Muslim identity of Malays in their propaganda, this third wave has shifted to something different than what we have seen before.

Various scholars, newspaper articles, and politicians have identified a variety of possible culprits. These range from 1) a turf war between the military and police due to the dismantling of the SBPAC and CPM-43 and shifting of power away from the military to the police (under equipped to deal with the situation); 2) retaliation by disgruntled business owners who did not receive government contracts; 3) violence between rival gangs and/or criminal organizations; 4) typical criminal racketeering and/or drug smuggling; 5) disgruntled or corrupt local government officials (e.g., politicians, police, military); 6) Malay-Muslim separatists; 7) southern citizens reacting to what is seen as an unjust and biased central government. *The Nation* typically does not conjecture about the identity of the perpetrators or the motives behind the violence. *The Nation* does not mention any specific Islamist or separatist group in their reporting nor do they positively label the perpetrators of violence as Malay-Muslim or separatists—when labels such as these are used, *The Nation* is quoting government representatives.

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\(^{113}\) International Crisis Group, “Southern Thailand,” 32.
The following chapter examines the framing mechanisms and agenda-setting concepts used by *The Nation* when reporting on four key events in the southernmost border provinces. This chapter provided an understanding of the roots of the separatist movements and how they have developed and evolved over time. It is with this historical background that we can begin to understand the violence in 2004 as much more than random acts of violence but deliberate and intentional acts against the Thai state.
Chapter Three: Southern Violence as Framed by *The Nation*

In this chapter I examine articles in *The Nation* that report on the four specific events mentioned in Chapter One. This chapter begins with a synopsis of each of the four incidents; each synopsis is followed by a chronological list of the articles analyzed for each event. When directly quoting from these articles, I reference the date published and not the title of the article.114 Articles in the online version of *The Nation* appear with pre-defined headings, which can also be interpreted as a framing mechanism. Some of these labels include, “Southern Violence,” or “Muslim Militants,” thereby framing the articles by categorizing them in this way while other articles remain unlabeled. I differentiate these categories (section labels) from headlines in Appendix B by fully capitalizing these phrases.115 Following the event synopses is my analysis of the three frames identified in this study, “Southern Violence: A Regional Problem,” “The Threat of International Terrorism,” and “Shirking Responsibility.”

The Four Incidents

4 January 2004: Rajanakarin Army Camp raid

A pre-dawn raid on the Royal Thai Army’s Fourth Engineering Battalion in Narathiwat province marked the first major violent incident in southern Thailand for 2004. Anywhere from 60-100 assailants stormed Rajanakarin Army Camp and stole 300-400 weapons leaving four soldiers and two police officers dead. Simultaneously, perhaps as a diversion, twenty government schools and three police posts were set afire in eleven

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* *The Nation* uses British-English and those differences in spelling (e.g., ‘ou’ instead of ‘o’; ‘s’ instead of ‘z’) will remain intact when directly quoting passages from *The Nation*.

114 A detailed reference list of the articles in this sample is located in Appendix B.

115 For example, SOUTHERN VIOLENCE, DEEP SOUTH, REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE, SOUTHERN UNREST, MUSLIM MILITANTS.
of Narathiwat’s thirteen districts. On 5 January, police in Pattani province were notified of several bombs that had been planted throughout the province—most within the district capital. Two bomb squad officers were killed and one wounded in their attempts to defuse the bombs. All of these events are believed to be linked.

Eleven articles were published by The Nation regarding these events that meet the research criteria:116

1. EDITORIAL: Gov’t denial puts Kingdom’s unity at risk (5 January)
2. ANALYSIS: Iron-fisted response may worsen the crisis (6 January)
3. SOUTHERN VIOLENCE: Pattani hit, martial law declared (6 January)
4. EDITORIAL: The calm is well shattered (7 January)
5. New approach to security needed (7 January)
6. EDITORIAL: Intelligence shows new face of terror (9 January)
7. SOUTHERN VIOLENCE: Attackers had ‘outside help’ (9 January)
8. SOUTHERN VIOLENCE: Two more suspects held in swoop on Pattani village (9 January)
9. REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE: Gov’t gets real but could still stumble in South (12 January)
10. Local and regional cooperation critical to solving South’s problems (13 January)
11. SOUTHERN VIOLENCE: Militants face treason charges (15 January)

22 January 2004: First attack on Buddhist monks

Historically speaking, the separatist movement in southern Thailand has remained a fight between Muslims in the southern provinces of Thailand and symbols of the Thai state (e.g., police stations, army barracks, and public schools). This changed on 22 January 2004 when a monk was hacked to death with a machete in Narathiwat province by two black-clad men who fled the scene on a motorbike. The following day two civilians were injured and one killed in the same manner; all were Buddhist. Within a week of these incidents, two more monks were hacked to death, including a 13-year-old

116 All capitalization, grammar, and spelling are exactly how it appears in the headlines as retrieved from Lexis-Nexis™ Academic.
novice, and another was injured. Threats were made on public school teachers (also Buddhist) throughout the southern region, and 1,000 schools were temporarily shut down for safety reasons. With this round of violence, a shift from state related targets to religious targets is seen. These attacks seem to be obvious attempts to drive a wedge between the southern Muslim and Buddhist communities, which have reportedly coexisted together in the past.

What is somewhat surprising about the reporting of this event is that the first article printed regarding the initial murder of a monk was not published until two days after it occurred.\(^{117}\) It should also be noted that only six articles meeting the research criteria were published about this shift in targets. Something as sudden and drastic as a change in targets and possible motives would appear to merit more investigation and discussion.

1. SOUTHERN UNREST: 1,000 schools to shut down (28 January)
2. EDITORIAL: Tolerance assailed by hate-mongers (28 January)
3. Flood of government VIPs has brought little comfort to the troubled South (30 January)
4. SOUTHERN STRIFE: Soldiers sent to replace teachers (30 January)
5. REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE: Muslim stakeholders must decide the future (2 February)
6. EDITORIAL: Intolerant Islam must be stopped (6 February)

28 April 2004: Krue Se mosque raid

28 April 2004 has been labeled the South’s bloodiest day, not because of insurgent activity but due to the government’s response to pre-dawn attacks on eleven security outposts leading to a standoff at the historic Krue Se mosque in Pattani province. The results of the attack on one particular outpost brought much criticism to Thaksin and

\(^{117}\) This article is not included in the sample as the length does not meet the minimum requirements of this study.
government security forces. Two groups of young men attacked a security check-point near Krue Se Mosque. The fighting between the insurgents and the security forces spilled over into a nearby Chinese cemetery, Lim Koneaw, located next to the mosque. The militants were able to retreat into the sanctity of Krue Se mosque and hide from the security forces. After a six-hour standoff, the military conducted a raid that lasted less than ten minutes. In those ten minutes, thirty-two militants between ages 15 and 63 were killed leaving no survivors. The official death count for all of the attacks included 105 attackers, 1 civilian, and 5 security force members. Government reports insisted that the attackers, all young men, were intoxicated from alcohol or drugs.118

Thirty-five articles were published by *The Nation* that meet the research criteria:

1. Businesses take a big hit (29 April)
2. COMMENT: Will our country be the same again? (29 April)
3. EDITORIAL: Brute violence is no lasting solution (29 April)
4. MUSLIM MILITANTS: Rebels expected to mount more attacks (29 April)
5. SOUTHERN CARNAGE: KINGDOM SHAKEN (29 April)
6. Troubled South’s worst day of violence (29 April)
7. High alert as deep South mourns (30 April)
8. Is this the end of violence in the South? Not likely (30 April)
9. OVERDRIVE: A critical juncture for Thailand (30 April)
10. SOUTHERN COMMAND: Pallop moved for insubordination (30 April)
11. TAT urges gov’t to clarify killings (30 April)
12. VIOLENCE IN SOUTH: Domestic demand ‘may suffer’ (30 April)
13. BETWEEN THE LINES: Victims of a very unfair state of affairs (1 May)
14. MASSACRE AFTERMATH: Police launch hunt for masterminds (1 May)
15. Mosque at centre of tragic history (2 May)
16. REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE: As the South burns, Thaksin fans the flames (3 May)
17. SOUTHERN VIOLENCE: Suicide-bomb warning issued (3 May)
18. Villagers surprised at ‘quiet, devout’ teacher’s role (3 May)
19. SOUTHERN VIOLENCE: Army strengthens presence in Pattani (4 May)

According to the official report released by the National Reconciliation Commission, blood samples and urine tests collected from the dead and arrested indicated that drugs and alcohol were not involved. An English translation of this report is available at http://www.nationmultimedia.com/specials/takbai/p2.htm (accessed July 29, 2006).
20. ANALYSIS: PEACE IN THE SOUTH: Does Chaturon’s plan still have a chance? (5 May)
21. Islamic boarding schools call for heightened security (5 May)
22. SOUTHERN CARNAGE: Warrant issued for key suspect (5 May)
23. Investigators to seek help of rights body (6 May)
24. SOUTHERN AFTERMATH: Muslim lawyers plot suits (6 May)
25. SOUTHERN VIOLENCE: Youths flee surveillance to Malaysia (6 May)
26. OVERDRIVE: The economy will weather April 28 (7 May)
27. Inflammatory labels ‘widen rifts’ (8 May)
28. Muslim envoys tour province (8 May)
29. SITUATION IN THE SOUTH: PM to visit Krue Se Mosque (8 May)
30. COMMENTARY: Interpreting the South (10 May)
31. NATION ROUNDTABLE: The deep South is not a war zone (10 May)
32. SOUTHERN VIOLENCE: Den: Police trying to abduct, kill me (10 May)
33. HARD TALK: Serious failings on the media front (11 May)
34. Thaksin guarantees Den’s safety (11 May)
35. Suspected militants likely to surrender (11 May)

25 October 2004: Tak Bai tragedy

Approximately 1,500 people congregated in front of the police station in Tak Bai district, Narathiwat province on the morning of 25 October 2004. This group of people gathered to protest the arrest of six village defense volunteers who had given their government issued weapons (supposedly under duress) to local militants. Several hours passed and the crowd still had not dispersed nor were family members of the detainees or local religious leaders able to satiate the crowd. At approximately 3pm several protesters allegedly tried to break through the police barrier. It was at this point the order to forcibly disperse the crowd was given by Fourth Army Region Commander Lt. General Pisarn Wattanawongkiri. Shots were fired into the air and a water cannon and tear gas were fired into the crowd. In retaliation some protesters threw rocks, bricks, and bottles at the security forces. Five minutes later shooting started. After the commotion settled, protestors were ordered to lay face down on the ground; women and children were
allowed to leave. The men who remained were ordered to remove their shirts, lie on the ground face-down, and had their hands bound behind their back.\footnote{This is similar to the treatment of the 1970s student protesters in Bangkok. The young male students were forced to remove their shirts, lay face down with their hands bound behind their backs. This is not only a means of subduing protesters but also a way in which to shame the detainees.} The male detainees, totaling around 1,300, were then herded into trucks and transferred to Ingkhayuthaborihan, a military camp,\footnote{Ingkhayuthaborihan’s proper name is Ingkhayuth. Borihan translates to administrative center or administration whereas Ingkhayuth is the proper name of the camp. The camp will hereby be referred to as Ingkhayuth unless a direct quote.} for processing and questioning. Six protestors were killed on the scene and seventy-eight died during transport. The official death count total is 84 protesters and 2 members of security forces (1 police officer and 1 soldier). Seven police officers and five soldiers were injured, the number of injured protesters cannot be found by this researcher.

Twenty-seven articles were published by The Nation that meet the criteria:

1. Protest in Narathiwat: Six killed in bloody clashes with troops (26 October)
2. NARATHIWAT DEATHS: Troubled South at ‘point of no return’ (27 October)
3. TAK BAI BLOODBATH: PM: Deaths due to religious fasting (27 October)
4. EDITORIAL: Has Thailand lost its conscience? (28 October)
5. TAK BAI AFTERMATH: Fears violence could spread beyond South (28 October)
6. TAK BAI AFTERMATH: Outrage, concern, defiance (28 October)
7. TAK BAI CRACKDOWN: Global outrage as grim details emerge; PM shows no remorse (28 October)
8. Bodies of 22 victims numbered, laid to rest (29 October)
9. THAKSIN’S RESPONSE: Concerned PM to face public (29 October)
10. VIOLENCE IN THE SOUTH: Mahathir proposes autonomous region (30 October)
11. VIOLENCE IN THE SOUTH: Muslim leaders blame PM (30 October)
12. IN CUSTODY: Survivor tells of his ordeal (31 October)
13. TAK BAI VIOLENCE: Govt offers olive branch to the South (31 October)
14. SOUTHERN VIOLENCE: HM asks govt to change tack (2 November)
15. EDITORIAL II: Populist hard sell is no salve for southern tragedy (2 November)
16. CRISIS IN THE SOUTH: Crackdown takes its toll on the SET (3 November)
17. Indonesia asks tough questions about Tak Bai (3 November)
18. TAK BAI CRACKDOWN: Fourth Army chief Pisarn transferred (3 November)
19. CONFLICT RESOLUTION: Respected figures urged to help cause (4 November)
20. TAK BAI AFTERMATH: 6 shot dead as violence spirals in deep South (4 November)
21. THAKSIN HAS LOST MORAL MANDATE TO GOVERN (4 November)
22. SOUTHERN STRIFE: PM on Tak Bai crisis mission (6 November)
23. SOUTHERN VIOLENCE: PM warns of escalation (6 November)
24. WATCHDOG: Dearth of spirituality blamed for failed southern policy (7 November)
25. DEEP SOUTH: Business looking bleak (8 November)
26. EDITORIAL: Time for dialogue in the South (8 November)
27. Knowing and yet not knowing the South (8 November)

Frame Analysis

Southern Violence – A Regional Problem

*The Nation* uses the frame “Southern Violence” to create a divide between the turbulent southern region—which includes only the three southernmost provinces and not the fourteen provinces that geographically make up the region designated as the South—and the other 73 peaceful and tolerant provinces. The manner and frequency in which this frame is used does not remain static and there are three noticeable shifts in the use of the “Southern Violence” frame. As the year begins, the language used to report on the southernmost provinces emphasizes physical and cultural distance. This distance creates Thai-Muslim (Malays) as distinguished from the majority of Thailand. With the passage of time, the language chosen by *The Nation* in reporting on the South becomes more neutral and less oppositional. In *The Nation*’s reporting of the Krue Se incident, the only articles that represent the South at a distance deal with the effects of southern

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121 While some reports will say anywhere from three to five southern provinces, the most commonly accepted number of provinces in this regard is three: Narathiwat, Pattani, and Yala – and sometimes Songkhla.
122 “Southernmost provinces,” “deep South,” “attacks in the deep South,” “southern unrest,” “southern violence,” “our southern problem,” “Muslim-dominated southern border provinces,” “predominantly Muslim South.”
violence on the Thai economy and tourism. A third shift occurs after protesters in Tak Bai die in government custody. This final shift serves to create a stated difference between Thai-Muslims and Muslim insurgents.

In reporting on the first two incidents *The Nation* uses this frame to create the idea that the three southern provinces are more violent than the rest of the country. The fact that violence occurs throughout the country and is not specific to any particular region is omitted when this frame is used.

. . . violence in the country’s southern tip. Failure to resolve or contain it could alter the country’s political landscape in the five predominantly Muslim provinces, particularly Narathiwat, Yala and Pattani, and even beyond the South.

The government’s efforts to contain the violence in the South have all the characteristics of mismanagement of an “ethnic strife” with unnecessary publicity about its ‘foreign dimension.’

Over this past week in the deep South, roving assailants hacked to death three monks and two Buddhist laymen and slashed another monk. . .

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123 Currently there is no statistical information available showing the number of violent crimes committed in Thailand broken down by region or province. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the numbers of reported crimes for Thailand are 781,139 (1998), 580,762 (1999), and 565,108 (2000). Of the total reported crimes, the following percentages represent the number of completed and attempted intentional homicides, intentional homicides committed with a firearm, non-intentional homicides, assaults, robberies, and thefts: 14.27% (1998), 18.38% (1999), and 19.25% (2000). According to *Thailand in Figures*, the number of reported deaths in Thailand is 310,534 (1998), 362,607 (1999), and 365,741 (2000). Of the total reported deaths, the death rates in the southern region are 10.6% (1998), 10.6% (1999), and 11.4% (2000). Compared with the other regions of the country (Central, Northeastern, Northern, and Southern), the death rates occurring in the South are less than the other regions. However, if you break the Central region into four sub-regions (Vicinity of Bangkok, Central, Eastern, and Western) as *Thailand in Figures* does, the death rate in the South is only less than the North and Northeastern regions. If we were to assume that half of all deaths occurring in Thailand were due to violent crimes, the southern provinces would still be less violent than the rest of the country. However, as there currently is no statistical evidence to support these claims we can only conjecture on the matter. (Death rate = number of deaths per 1,000 people)

124 January 12.

125 January 13.

126 January 28b.
The fact that the history of the South is one of secessionist movements and “un-Thainess” due to the cultural and historical differences helps to reinforce the “Southern Violence” frame. It becomes acceptable to make sweeping generalizations about violence in the South being different from violence elsewhere. Government officials take advantage of the frame “Southern Violence” in labeling the problem localized banditry between rival groups specific to the border region.

[Deputy Prime Minister General] Chavalit [Yongchaiyudh] said that the assault on the military camp was merely an armed robbery by gangsters active along the Thai-Malaysian border who have suffered from the government’s recent crackdown on illegal arms sales and smuggling.\(^\text{127}\)

The government usually describes attacks against government installations in the Muslim-dominated region as banditry.\(^\text{128}\)

In the articles reporting on the stand-off between Muslim attackers and the Thai Army at Krue Se mosque, a shift in the frame “Southern Violence” takes place and the problem is reframed as a national problem. This change comes about due to the incident in which the Thai military kills 32 Muslim attackers holed up in a mosque. The fact that those killed within the mosque were not innocent victims but individuals who had planned and perpetrated attacks in the area and fled to the mosque for safety and cover from security forces is ignored in The Nation’s reporting. Articles in The Nation tend to vilify the military for the attack and humanize the attackers who were killed. The Nation characterizes the army’s actions as a harsh knee-jerk reaction to a situation that should have been diffused through negotiation.

Wednesday’s killings, which included the deaths of five security officials, will go down in history as a failure on the part of the government and Thai society at

\(^{127}\) January 5.

\(^{128}\) January 6b.
large to deal with a religious minority group in a peaceful – or at least a less bloody – fashion.\textsuperscript{129}

The attackers were young, barely out of their teens, and poorly armed, mostly with machetes – just a few had fire arms. By all accounts, well-prepared police and Army reinforcements mowed them all down.\textsuperscript{130}

It seems that our special forces have been trained to specialise in one thing only, killing. They seem unable to resort to any other form of confrontation. . . . Why then was it so easy for these soldiers to pull their triggers and aim at the parts of the body that would ensure death?\textsuperscript{131}

The attackers were only lightly armed for the most part – four pistols, eight assault rifles, a grenade launcher, four grenades and a number of machetes were recovered from the clashes.\textsuperscript{132}

Strangely when eighty-four unarmed people died due to negligence and heavy-handed tactics by the military following the protest at the Tak Bai police station, \textit{The Nation} returned to its previous use of the “Southern Violence” frame, portraying the South at a distance or as the other. “Increasingly volatile situation in the deep South,” “troubled South,” “unrest in the southernmost provinces”—all these expressions bring back that invisible barrier between the problematic provinces and the rest of the country. This type of language again frames the southern provinces as troublesome posed against the rest of the country, which is apparently steeped in peace and social harmony. The following two excerpts particularly distance the South and almost debase the seriousness with which all Thais should be viewing these latest events.

This is the first time we have felt that the southern violence has a real possibility of spreading to areas where it would be felt more deeply (such as major tourist

\textsuperscript{129} April 30b.
\textsuperscript{130} April 29f.
\textsuperscript{131} May 1a.
\textsuperscript{132} May 6b.
destinations and Bangkok). This is negative for the prime minister and for the market in general in the near term. 133

The violence, however, is unlikely to spill over from the three southernmost provinces, he [Priapol Koomsup, an economist at Thammasat University] said, so its impact on the economy would be limited.134

These statements suggest that violence within the Muslim minority does not affect the rest of the country or their relations with its Muslim majority neighbors of Malaysia and Indonesia.

The threat of international terrorism

“The threat of international terrorism” frame escalated through four levels of increasing intensity. The first being, the presentation of arguments by The Nation that the government should have been aware and prepared for the ‘fire in the South’ to spread. The second is the internationalization of the ‘southern agenda’ and increased involvement of foreign entities in the battle against the Thai state. The third level is the evolution of the three southernmost provinces into a war zone prone to bloody battles and daily acts of violence. The fourth level is the government’s manipulation of the threat of international terrorism to react with extreme force in the name of ‘clamping down’ on acts of terrorism against the State. The last two levels are not reached until the events at Krue Se Mosque on 28 April 2004.

Level One: The government should have known

The first level, the presentation of arguments that the government should have known and been prepared for such attacks to occur is commonly found in The Nation following the 4 January attacks at Rajanakarin. This rhetoric that the government should
have been aware and prepared for such attacks remains constant throughout The Nation’s reporting on violent events in the South.

In an editorial published after the Rajanakarin incident The Nation argues that because Thailand had become involved in the reconstruction efforts in Iraq, Thailand has become vulnerable to possible terrorist attacks. Therefore, the Thai state should have been prepared for an escalation in violence in the southernmost provinces as the Thai-Muslim community has protested against Thailand’s involvement in Iraq. According to The Nation, “Violence in the southernmost provinces is no longer a purely domestic issue,” and the article also suggests that funding from international terrorist organizations, such as al Qaeda, has found its way to southern Thailand in order to revive the dormant separatist movement and encourage attacks on the Thai state.135

Articles in The Nation about the Rajanakarin incident are peppered with references and comparisons of violence in southern Thailand to the 11 September 2001 attacks in the U.S. and the 2002 Bali bombings with the implication that it should have been obvious to the government that the southernmost provinces would become involved in Islamic militancy. The references to 11 September and the 2002 Bali bombings continue to be noticeable in reporting on all four incidents, which creates the idea that Thailand has its own ‘War on Terror’ to fight. This idea is made concrete with statements such as, “It is no coincidence that these tactics are in line with those employed by international terrorist movements in the September 11, 2001 attacks on the US and in the Bali bombings in Indonesia” and Deputy Prime Minister Chavalit’s comment that the

135 January 9a.
attacks on 24 April should serve as a “lesson for security authorities to always stay vigilant against terrorism.” 136

**Level Two: The internationalization of the ‘southern agenda’**

The second level, the internationalization of the ‘southern agenda’ is first evident following the events surround the raid of Krue Se mosque in April 2004. This level introduces the idea that international actors or groups could become or are already involved in the southern violence. This level also produces numerous theories of Thai-Muslims receiving military training and financial assistance from other Islamic countries. What remains unclear, however, is what *The Nation* means when referring to the ‘southern agenda.’

Reporting in *The Nation* emphasizes the internationalization of the ‘southern agenda’ and fear of increased involvement of foreign terrorist organizations on Thai soil. *The Nation* claims that the Muslim world is closely watching Thailand’s treatment of its Muslim minority population—especially Thailand’s Indonesian and Malaysian neighbors.

Neither PAS [Parti Islam se-Malaysia] nor the conservative wing of the ruling United Malay National Organisation 137 will be able to overlook the conflict in southern Thailand for both religious and ethnic reasons. 138

*The Nation* suggests that the ‘southern agenda’ of the perpetrators of violence is to create a situation that will result in a violent backlash from the Thai state against the

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136 February 6 and April 30d respectively.
137 Parti Islam se Malaysia (PAS or Islamic Party of Malaysia) is an Islamist political party in Malaysia aiming to establish Malaysia as a country based on Islamic law (*shari’a*). The United Malay National Organization (UMNO) is the largest political party in Malaysia based on Malay nationalism and some Islamic ideology.
138 May 3a.
Thai-Muslim minority (e.g., a protest, ‘innocent’ raids). Then animosity between the Thai state and the Thai-Muslim minority will increase which could facilitate the radicalization of more Thai-Muslims.

. . . violence in the Muslim-majority South could intensify if militants succeeded in provoking brutal measures by the authorities to solicit sympathy and support both locally and abroad.\(^\text{139}\)

Thailand is bracing itself for far-reaching repercussions. Many Muslims would treat those killed at the Krue Se Mosque yesterday as martyrs. Many who have hitherto shunned extremism will now come forward and join the jihad against the central authority.\(^\text{140}\)

*The Nation* also suggests that international terrorist groups could seek out these southern militants and channel funding to support and increase their activities.

**Level Three: A war zone**

After the Army ended the stand-off at Krue Se mosque with deadly force, *The Nation* begins to describe the three southernmost provinces as a war zone. News articles in *The Nation* are full of descriptions of dead bodies with machetes still clutched in their hands, blood-spattered copies of the Qur’an, heavily-armed forces gunning down the 32 inside the mosque, schools and police checkpoints on fire, and wounded policemen receiving medical attention.

. . . television viewers watched scenes of the actual shooting and killing. . . . the sight of human bodies lying on the roads and littered about the ancient Krue Se mosque in pools of blood. The rain of shells that fell on this holy place, a community centre turned into a killing field . . .\(^\text{141}\)

\(^{139}\) November 8c.

\(^{140}\) April 29c.

\(^{141}\) May 1a.
Bodies lay on the roads in pools of blood, armoured personnel carriers patrolled the streets and one of the country’s most revered mosques was left bullet-scarred and smoking.

... It looked like a war zone.
In the last of 10 battles across the region, helicopters hovered over the historic Krue Se Mosque outside Pattani, where more than 30 besieged rebels holed up in a six-hour stand-off.\textsuperscript{142}

\textit{The Nation} reports the circulation of rumors about suicide bomb attacks and jihadist groups and notes that one bank will not allow patrons inside until they have been identified, while other banks have temporarily closed. According to \textit{The Nation} both teachers and students fear traveling to school, no one dares leave their house after dusk for fear of roving assailants, and local Muslims have lost trust in the security agencies. Comparisons are made between southern Thailand and war-torn Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, and Israel.

It is still hard to imagine that the violence, revenge and killings previously confined to the Middle East, most recently Iraq, which we see almost daily on the TV, are now taking place within our own borders, in our own gentle and kind nation.\textsuperscript{143}

The image created for the audience is one of the South as a dangerous and deadly situation in which there is no safe haven—either the militants or the security forces can and will cause harm.

Today the people in the Deep South don’t \textit{sic} dare to side with the state authorities, because the terrorists are more powerful.\textsuperscript{144}

\textsuperscript{142} April 29f.
\textsuperscript{143} April 30c.
\textsuperscript{144} October 28c.
. . . moderate Muslims said they felt unsafe openly criticising the government. Especially if their names were to appear in the media. “I’m not going to risk being shot,” said one member, explaining why he didn’t want to be identified openly criticising the government.145

**Level Four: Manipulating public fear of international terrorism**

With the first attacks at Rajanakarin, *The Nation* reported that the government blamed foreign Islamic militant groups for indoctrinating Thai-Muslim students abroad in predominantly Muslim countries (e.g., Malaysia, Indonesia, Egypt, Saudi Arabia). In this instance *The Nation* appears to accept the government’s claims. This move allowed for the Thai government to not only suggest that ordinary Thai citizens could not produce such violence but also to plant the seed that the conflict would bloom into a legitimate battle between the Thai state and the Muslim other.

The government dispatched thousands of police and soldiers to the area, erected hundreds of roadblocks, declared martial law, arrested suspected Muslim insurgents and religious teachers, fingerprinted Muslim students, and searched and outlawed hundreds of religious schools known as pondoks.146

This battle is not only waged on the state level but also within the local populace through government propaganda broadcast on Army controlled radio, in which Thais are called upon to protect their homeland from radical Muslims who seek to disrupt their harmonious and tolerant way of life. The more hype that is created by the government regarding possible international terrorist cells operating on Thai soil, the more acceptable government violence against southern Muslims becomes for the Thai-Buddhist majority population. *The Nation* draws attention to this problem through their reporting of public rallies held in the North supporting Thaksin’s harsh measures used during the protest at

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145 October 31a.
146 February 2.
the Tak Bai police station, Army controlled radio broadcasts, and hate filled messages posted on Internet discussion boards.

Shirking Responsibility

The “Shirking Responsibility” frame serves to highlight the missteps of both the security forces (Army and police) and Thaksin and his administration. *The Nation’s* use of this frame is consistent in that it is used throughout the reporting of the four events. However, the manner in which it is used changes over time in accordance with government actions and reactions. *The Nation* begins its use of the “Shirking Responsibility” frame by blaming the Army completely for the Rajanakarin incident. As time passes, *The Nation* begins to shift blame from the Army to Thaksin, as he is the Prime Minister and appears to be ultimately in charge of the policies and government maneuvers in the South. After the harsh government reactions at both Krue Se mosque and Tak Bai coupled with conflicting government reports, *The Nation* begins to seriously question the actions and knowledge of the Thai state in respect to the violence in the South.

The first event, the raid on the Rajanakarin Army Camp, is described by *The Nation* as the result of Army incompetence. This frame resonates with Thaksin’s criticism of the Royal Thai Army, “If you have a whole battalion there and you’re still negligent, then you deserve to die.” Thaksin also criticizes the security agencies for a lack of coordination thereby shifting blame away from his office and administration. *The Nation* later reports that this lambasting of the Army will only serve to widen the rift

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147 January 6b.
between the Prime Minister and the Army—as accusations of Thaksin favoring the police over the Army have been made due to Thaksin’s position as a former policeman.

_The Nation_ initially appears to follow Thaksin in criticizing the Army and placing all blame with them. However, in reporting on the Rajanakarin incident a shift is noticeable as government officials begin to issue conflicting reports. These competing official versions of events continue throughout the following three incidents and create an image of the government as incompetent and unaware of what is occurring within its own borders.

On several occasions public statements made by various high-ranking officials, including the Prime Minister, published on the same day contain inconsistent information. These inconsistent reports highlight government confusion as to who is ultimately responsible. In one article, Deputy Prime Minister General Chavalit Yongchaiyudh is cited as attributing the attacks to local bandits stealing guns to sell on the black market. The next day _The Nation_ reports Thaksin’s statement that the Rajanakarin attacks were not the work of local bandits but Muslim separatists and lauds his statement.149

His admission must be hailed because it finally allows authorities to speak about the reality as it is. . . . After years of denial, the government has finally admitted that the assailants were not bandits or arms robbers, as it tried to have us believe.150

The initial report by Chavalit was met with skepticism by _The Nation_, declaring that Chavalit was too quick “to tell reporters that the attacks were not linked to international

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148 See April 29c and April 29e; April 30b and April 30d.
149 January 5 and January 6b.
150 January 6a.
terrorism.”\textsuperscript{151} \textit{The Nation} reports that the government should refrain from describing the perpetrators as amateur bandits and “come clean about the real situation in the South instead of falling back on the usual refrain that robbers are to blame.”\textsuperscript{152}

Another instance of inconsistent information is seen in the government statements on the Krue Se mosque incident. \textit{The Nation} reports that General Pallop Pinmanee defended his actions in storming the mosque by claiming that “hundreds of onlookers started attacking his troops.”\textsuperscript{153} However, General Chavalit, responding to criticism of excessive force, said that security forces were acting in self-defense. General Pallop’s account gives the impression that an angry mob was forming outside of the mosque, whereas General Chavalit’s account states that those inside the mosque charged at the soldiers and policemen—which one is correct and who is going to shoulder the blame?

Another article on the same date written by a senior writer for \textit{The Nation} points to the way in which government authorities tried to avoid responsibility for the violence.

Pallop’s scanty excuses . . . are an affront to the government’s ability to control potentially deadly situations more humanely and sensitively. Unfortunately the events on Wednesday can be placed within a context. The Thai government, regardless of who is at its head, has always opposed any move towards greater respect for the South’s history, religions, culture and ultimately its right to self-determination.\textsuperscript{154}

The article continued on from denouncing the government’s attitude in regard to the Krue Se incident to show how much of the Thai media supports the government uncritically. \textit{The Nation} described how Thai television networks boasted of the military’s valiant efforts in killing the “drug-addicted bandits” responsible for the last four months of

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{151} January 5. \\
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{153} April 30d. \\
\textsuperscript{154} April 30b.
\end{flushleft}
violence. According to *The Nation*, these reports were in direct opposition to what was broadcast by the BBC—which emphasized discrimination against Muslims in the South. A later article openly blames the Thaksin government for its inadequacy in handling the situation as well as issuing inconsistent official reports.

Thaksin has only himself and his government to blame for the confusion and conflicting accounts that followed. Different senior government officials were giving different accounts of the incident and the motives behind it. Thaksin himself was quick to dismiss the apparently coordinated attacks as the work of young drug addicts financed by drug-smuggling rings, while Deputy Prime Minister General Chavalit Yongchaiyudh and senior security officials painted a picture of an organised Islamic militant movement.\(^\text{155}\)

Following the deaths of 84 protesters in Tak Bai, *The Nation* reported that Thaksin refused to admit that the deaths were a result of any state officials’ actions—Thaksin claimed that Ramadan fasting was the cause of death. *The Nation* describes Thaksin’s explanations for the Tak Bai bloodbath as “grasping at straws.” As reported by *The Nation*, Thaksin maintains that no protesters were killed by government forces, the six deaths at the protest site were “triggered by the commotion” of dispersing the crowd.\(^\text{156}\) Thaksin elaborates that anti-riot forces attempted to reason with the unruly protesters and in dispersing the crowd, strict adherence to crowd control measures were followed. After what appears to be a justification, Thaksin is quoted as adding that a large number of weapons, including M-16 and AK-47 rifles were confiscated from the protesters, many of whom he believed to be under the influence of drugs. *The Nation* discredits the government by reporting that a photograph obtained by the paper “clearly shows a soldier lying on the ground firing his rifle horizontally, refuting the prime ministers [sic] claim

\(^{155}\) May 11a.

\(^{156}\) October 27b.
that security forces only fired into the air and not directly at protestors.” Following the return of a Senatorial fact-finding trip to investigate the Tak Bai incident, *The Nation* reported that their findings might discredit the Thaksin administration’s claims regarding the death toll and cause of death. According to the official forensic report conducted by Dr. Pornthip Rojanasunand, the 78 deaths that occurred during transport were a result of suffocation and convulsions due to their close confines. *The Nation* reported that after interviewing the Ingkhayuth camp doctor and examining documents, the Senatorial fact-finding commission found that at least one of the dead men in the transport vehicles had died from gunshot wounds, refuting the government’s claims that no detainees died at the hands of the state (i.e., gun shot wounds or physical abuse).

Depending on which articles one reads on which day, the story becomes very different, and this may leave one feeling somewhat confused. Initial reports of the four incidents all portray the army and the government as heroic and working in defense of the nation; whereas, subsequent reports following the official review and investigation of such incidents begin to portray the government as rash and responsible for extra-judicial killings. The overall impression is that the government does not understand the situation in the South and is exacerbating pre-existing tensions by using ‘knee-jerk reactions’ to suppress violence with yet more violence.

*The Nation* portrays the government as exacerbating pre-existing tensions in the South and playing into the hands of the insurgents by using violent tactics as their method of dealing with southern violence. The connections and parallels made by *The Nation* offer a compelling argument, however, a deeper examination of the relationship between

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157 October 28d.
the Thai state, national identity, and the Malay-Muslims of southern Thailand becomes necessary in our attempts to better understand the situation in the South. Chapter Two’s examination of the history of the southernmost provinces and their grievances with the Thai state becomes necessary knowledge in order to unravel the deep-seated animosity between the two factions—the Thai state and the Malay-Muslim separatists or southern insurgents. In the following chapter I will explore the above-mentioned correlation between the violence in southern Thailand and the way in which Thai national identity helps to inform and shape this conflict and subsequent government reactions.
Chapter Four: The Thai State, National Identity, and the Malay-Muslims of Southern Thailand

From King Chulalongkorn’s reign until today, Thai national identity and culture have been synonymous with the majority Tai ethnic group, which has resulted in oppressive assimilation policies forced on the “other.” The Tai ethnic group has come to define the Thai national identity, which revolves around the concepts of Chat, Satsana, and Phramaha Kasat—Nation, Religion (Buddhism), and Monarchy. Alongside these concepts is the understanding that Central Thai (phasa thai khlang or phasa khlang) is the national language while other members of the Tai linguistic group are merely written off as regional dialects. The Thai state continues to be defined as a Buddhist state in which pockets of minorities with different religions and/or ethnicities exist. Those minorities are expected to assimilate and adhere to what has become the standard definition of Thai by the greater society as a whole. Reynolds describes this as problematic because it masks cultural and ethnic heterogeneity in the name of national uniformity and legitimizes an ideology for the state—an ideology that rationalized and legitimized rule by the ethnic Tai and undermined the influence of other ethnic groups in politics, government, religion, and culture.  

Over the period of ten months examined in this thesis, The Nation’s representations of the political identity of southern Thailand’s population shift—at times The Nation references the southern population as a part of Thai society whereas at other times the population is stripped of any political identity and is described in terms of religious identity or as undesirable elements. The most definite and obvious shifts are

158 Craig Reynolds, National Identity, 8-9.
seen when the Thai state reacts with violence against Thai-Muslims. Prior to state violence, *The Nation* portrayed Muslim separatists or insurgents as being located outside of Thai society in that they were seen as separatists and therefore were not referred to as Thai. Thai-Muslims do not take part in acts of violence; they are good, peaceful Thai citizens. The distinction between “Thai-Muslim” and “Muslim” occurs in reporting on all four incidents. When the attackers are given an identity other than “perpetrators,” “insurgents,” or “attackers” they are “Muslim,” not “Thai-Muslim” and definitely not “Thai.”

Once insurgents were killed by the Thai military, they became a part of Thai society and were labeled victims. An article in *The Nation* describes that . . .

. . . For the past few decades, previous governments have been able to convince the leadership and elites of the Muslim world that the Thai Muslim minority was well treated; that his Majesty the King acts as Supreme Patron of all religions; that freedom of religion is respected by all state agencies and civic entities; that Thai Muslims have access to all state instruments and decision-making bodies; and that there is no discrimination in any way whatsoever against Muslim participation in public, economic, cultural or political affairs of the nation.159

This passage taken from an article reporting on the Rajanakarin incident emphasizes the Thai government’s ability to convince Muslim-majority countries that despite the minority status of Thai-Muslims, they are full-members of the Thai state with the same rights as all Thai citizens. This has become of extreme importance in the world following the 11 September 2001 attacks on the United States and the 12 October 2002 bombings in Bali. The world is watching how and what Muslim-majority populations are doing and Muslim-majority countries are becoming more concerned with the treatment of Muslim-minority populations around the world. An interesting side note is that the king is referred

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159 January 9a.
to not as the Supreme Patron of Buddhism but the “Supreme Patron of all religions,” as the king is considered to be the earthly manifestation of the Buddha.160

Following the attacks on Buddhist religious figures in the South, The Nation defines national identity in terms of Thai citizenship and not a commonly shared religion or ethnicity. The emphasis is placed on the “Thainess” of society and how all Thais must band together to overcome the damage incurred from violence in the South. A national identity is not given to those responsible for the violence; they are referred to as “criminals” and “hate-mongers.”

All people in this country, regardless of race or religion, must be made to feel that they are part of a shared destiny, treating one another with mutual respect while cherishing our cultural diversity.

. . . people of this nation must not allow these acts to get the better of them. Because if this happens, we will only be contributing to the success of the criminals in their wicked attempt to shatter the national spirit of religious tolerance.

The general climate of tolerance and diversity in our society must be regarded as an asset, rather than a liability that can be exploited to disturb the peace. Thai people must unite to make sure that hate-mongers do not succeed in sowing the seeds of hatred where none exists.161

Following the 28 April attacks at Krue Se mosque an article is printed that questions the nationalist Thai narrative.

We have for too long been made to believe that wherever we were born in this country, we are all Thais and should feel the same loyalty to the motherland. Thais living in different regions want to believe this and have been acting as good citizens in the hope that the state and its officials everywhere will accord them equal treatment as such. They are mistaken. Particular groups in society, such as the ethnic hilltribes, drug-users, people living with HIV/Aids [sic], sex workers

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160 While the king oversees Islamic affairs in Thailand, he is advised by the Chularajmontri or Shaikh al-Islam, who is appointed by the king. The Chularajmontri is considered the official leader of the Thai-Muslim community and represents Thai-Muslims at the national level. For more information about the role of the Chularajmontri in contemporary Thai society see Imtiyaz Yusuf, “Islam and Democracy in Thailand: Reforming the Office of Chularajmontri/Shaikh al-Islam,” Journal of Islamic Studies 9, no. 2 (1998): 277-298.

161 January 28b.
and Muslim people in the southernmost provinces, have been socially, politically and economically discriminated against by society in general and by state authorities in particular.162

This passage points out that Thai-Muslims are citizens of the Thai state but they have not been afforded equal rights and have faced discrimination in Thai society. This article and subsequent ones that appear following the violence of 28 April deplore those Thais who have a narrow understanding of nationalism and believe that national boundaries and ethnic boundaries are one and the same. These articles point out that in the case of the southern Muslims, their ethnic identity of Malay and their religious identity of Muslim have excluded them from the national identity of Thai despite their birth rights as Thai citizens.

Following the incident at Tak Bai The Nation reports on the manipulation of identity by Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra in an attempt to exacerbate pre-existing tensions between the Thai-Muslim and Buddhist populations. As reported by The Nation, Thaksin and other members of the government labeled the protesters killed as “outcasts, thugs and drug addicts, unpatriotic, wanting to secede [sic].”163 The 84 Thai-Muslims killed were dangerous elements that needed to be eliminated from society. As reported by The Nation, the Army evokes feelings of Thai-Buddhist national pride during their southern broadcasts calling on Buddhists to react against the Muslim outsiders (i.e., non-Thai Muslims). The Nation describes how these broadcasts create a sense of duty and possibly even pressure that ‘true Thais’ within Thai society must exact revenge on those who threaten the nation.

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162 May 1a.
163 November 4c.
However *The Nation* portrays the 84 protesters killed in Tak Bai as victims emphasizing that although they spoke out against the government, they were not armed and they were not resisting. *The Nation* protests:

... [Thaksin’s] speech has not only galvanised Thai Muslims, but has also alienated a large portion of the Buddhist majority from their Islamic brothers. If there had been little sympathy toward the deep South from other parts of Thailand, Thaksin’s [sic] statement\(^\text{164}\) all but justified the Tak Bai tragedy. Reactions from Web boards have been alarmingly black and white: The dead Muslims were either victims of state-sponsored violence or got what they deserved.\(^\text{165}\)

*The Nation* uses the label Thai-Muslim, as opposed to Muslim, in reporting on the Tak Bai incident in order to maintain the national bond between Buddhists and Muslims based on the shared political identity of “Thai.” It points to how Thaksin is using nationalism to justify state violence.

By systematically demonising the victims themselves and their communities in Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat, the government can continue to use force as its sole option. By stoking a sense of nationalism, among those directly affected and those living outside the three provinces alike, Thaksin hopes that this sentiment would prove so overwhelming, that he could get away with harsher measures in engaging the southern quagmire.\(^\text{166}\)

Through the creation of a Thai-Muslim identity, ethnicity is removed from the discussion. Ethnicity, historically, was the central factor in the battle between the Thai state and the southern provinces. Southern Muslims are ethnically distinct from the rest of the country—they are Malay, they speak a Malay dialect (Jawi), their food is distinctly different, and their traditional dress is more closely related to Malay than Thai. However,

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\(^\text{164}\) This in reference to Thaksin’s nationally televised address in which he states that not one inch of Thailand will be given away, dismissing the deaths of the protesters and focusing on the daily killings done by insurgents, and criticizing the Islamic education system.

\(^\text{165}\) November 2a.

\(^\text{166}\) November 4c.
using a Thai-Muslim identity ignores this ethnic difference. This is not so for other ethnic
groups. The small community of Chinese-Muslims in the north are not called Thai-
Muslims but Chinese-Muslims. The larger community of Chinese-Buddhists throughout
Thailand are not called Chinese-Buddhists but Chinese-Thais. In both cases, the ethnic
Chinese identity is emphasized. The category Thai-Muslim has no parallel: Thai-
Buddhists and Thai-Christians are both referred to simply as Thai. The Thai-Muslim
label, a label that is supposed to encompass all Muslims in Thailand, in reality refers only
to those of Malay descent.

The central issue here is what is “Thai identity” and who gets to define it. The
Malay-Muslim states in southern Thailand have geographically and politically been
included in the kingdom of Thailand for over two centuries now—theoretically this
southern Muslim community is part of the Thai nation while being ethnically Malay, not
ethnically Tai. However, “the Thai government [has] attempted to expunge the notion of
being Malay from the people living in the southern provinces.”167 This was most
drastically evidenced post-WWII when Southeast Asian countries under colonial
domination began nationalist movements, which in many cases involved the embrace of
ethnic identity. Thai authorities, such as Phibul Songkram, feared the ethnic Malay states
would become fiercely nationalistic based on their Malay heritage and not Thai
citizenship, eventually eroding the southern region’s loyalty to the Thai nation-state. In a
recent article, “Ethnic or Religious Cleavage? Investigating the Nature of the Conflict in
Southern Thailand (2006), S.P. Harish highlights the religious cleavage that was created

167 S.P. Harish, “Ethnic or Religious Cleavage?,” 58.
through this Thai-Muslim identity in a supposedly religiously plural (and proud of it) Thailand.

Since Buddhism was intricately linked with the idea of being Thai (cited by McVey 1989, p. 36), the term “Thai Muslim” imposed on all Muslims in the country was one of “you are Thai but you are Muslim.” In short, it was not possible to be called just “Thai” and be considered a Muslim.168

As is noticeable throughout Chapter Three, all references to southern Muslims are made using the Thai-Muslim category. The Nation, while consistently including the southern population via the “Thai” label, is simultaneously excluding via the “Muslim” label. This is consistent in the mainstream print media in both Thailand and abroad. Unfortunately redefining a label cannot solve the problem of violence in southern Thailand.

Harish argues that the conflict in southern Thailand has been transformed from a “Thai versus Malay strife to a Buddhist versus Muslim discord.”169 He states that the recasting of the conflict as a religious issue is inaccurate as well as problematic because it allows the strife to spread outside of Southeast Asia. I agree with Harish that redefining the conflict solely as religious is mistaken and generates the potential for involvement of external Islamist groups. However, I do not agree with Harish’s characterization that the “discord in Thailand’s restive south is still between Thais and Malays,” meaning this is not merely an ethnic conflict.170

As I discussed in Chapter Two, the second wave of separatism initially began as an ethnic movement led by aristocratic leaders but became an Islamic movement due to external factors and events. Foreign-educated Malay-Muslim students returned to

168 Ibid. Emphasis in original.
169 Ibid.
170 Ibid., 65.
southern Thailand during the 1960s only to find that the Thai government was unwilling to hire them. Also at this time poor Thai-Buddhist farmers from the North and Northeast were encouraged to migrate to the troubled southern provinces under the government of Sarit Thanarat. This intrusion coupled with disenfranchised, well-educated youth spawned the second wave—initially still focused on ethnic identity. The Islamic identity of the second wave was not homegrown but introduced and encouraged by external actors and events. Education abroad allowed for Malay-Muslim students to network with students in countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan. Through these networks links were formed with Islamist groups such as the Arab League, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (founded by the Arab League in 1964), Saudi Arabia’s Islamic Secretariat, and Malaysia’s Partai Islam.

Other external factors were mentioned in Chapter Two, including the spread of leftist ideology during the late 1960s and early 1970s. When hundreds of student activists fled Bangkok for the jungles and border areas many settled along the southern border between Thailand and Malaysia. Thereby allowing separatist insurgents to form strategic alliances with the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) and “successfully harassing the Thai state for over a decade.”171 This joining of forces increased the ability and resources of the two anti-state movements. Another external factor, which has received little attention, is the role of Islamist movements occurring in other parts of the world. These movements did not occur in a vacuum and Malay-Muslim separatists most definitely were paying attention, as were other fledgling Islamists movements. In 1974 Anwar Ibrahim and ABIM led a protest in Baling, Malaysia to dispute similar conditions to those

experienced in the southernmost provinces of Thailand—poverty, government discrimination, and lack of political representation. One of the landmark events that has inspired many Islamist movements was the 1979 Iranian Revolution because it showed the ability and success of people power under the banner of Islam.

The second wave of separatism was clearly marked with influence from Islamist ideology, which only served to fuel the movement that was initially based on ethnicity. But Islamist ideology cannot explain the “calm” that was created in 1980 when General Prem Tinasulanond, a fellow southerner and former member of the Fourth Army, assumed the role of prime minister. Prem launched a “new strategy emphasising [sic] enhanced public participation, economic development and a broad amnesty, which hundreds of communist and separatist fighters took up.”172 The Civilian Police Military Task Force 43 (CPM-43) was designed to coordinate security operations and ensure that extra-judicial killings and disappearances ceased. The Southern Border Provinces Administrative Center (SBPAC) was established to handle political matters and included local community members on its board. The SBPAC emphasized “understanding Malay Muslim culture, so training was provided for non-Malay officials in cultural awareness and the local Patani Malay (known by Thais as Jawi) language.”173 This new approach appeared to work, and a significant decline in violence was seen during the 1980s and early 1990s.

172 International Crisis Group, “Southern Thailand,” 11. Those communists that accepted amnesty from the Prem administration came from the ranks of the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT). The CPT were living “underground” in the jungle areas and border regions of Thailand, many of their numbers consisted of student and labor protesters that had fled Bangkok during the late 1970s.
173 Ibid.
Despite the concerted efforts made by the Prem government with the SBPAC and CPM-43, corrupt government officials and police remained in the region and “political integration policies still contained Thai-centric elements.” The major separatist groups that had “died down” merely splintered and formed new militant strains of Islamic separatist activity, which I have defined as the latter half of the second wave. Coalitions such as Bersatu had established links overseas to receive monetary support and tactical/political training. While violent incidents still occurred, especially during Bersatu’s “Operation Falling Leaves” (1997-98), the SBPAC and CPM-43 were able to handle and defuse such situations.

Thaksin Shinawatra took office as prime minister in February 2001. On 24 December 2001, five well-coordinated attacks occurred in Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat provinces. “The near-simultaneous raids displayed much greater sophistication than the sporadic attacks (mostly extortion and kidnap-for-ransom) seen for more than a decade” and set the pattern for the attacks yet to come. Despite what appeared to be an apparent increase in attacks and sophistication in tactics, Thaksin dismantled the SBPAC and CPM-43 because “the rebellions and insurgency in the south were coming to an end.” This decision was the beginning of the downward spiral for the situation in the South and the beginning of the third wave.

The third wave is believed by some to have more of an international Islamic connection due to the sophistication of the attacks, causing many to believe that money

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174 Ibid., 12.
175 Ibid., 16.
and training has been filtered into the South via international terrorist organizations.\textsuperscript{177} Despite this belief no evidence exists to support it.\textsuperscript{178} I argue that this third wave of separatism, while utilizing aspects of Islamism, is rooted in the marginalization of the ethnic Malay community living in the southern provinces. The existence of the SBPAC and CPM-43 did not eradicate violent attacks but it did severely limit them. A major aspect of these organizations was the civilian component. Southern Malay-Muslims were active members of these organizations. Southern Muslims no longer fought against the state but worked with the state in order to create solutions for the problems that plagued the South—poverty, lack of political representation, and corrupt government officials who only antagonized those they represented.

The peace during the 1980s and late 1990s suggests that integrating the southern Muslims into positions of power within the Thai state helped to reaffirm their Thai identity. Dissolving the SBPAC and CPM-43 did not consist of just dismantling government agencies but disempowering those Malay-Muslims who had begun to self-identify as Thai citizens and trust the Thai government. This action helped to strip away the Thai national identity of the Malay-Muslim provinces in the South.

Supara Janchitfah, a staff writer for the \textit{Bangkok Post}, has recently published \textit{Violence in the Mist: Reporting on the Presence of Pain in Southern Thailand} (2004), a collection of her articles published in the \textit{Bangkok Post} between February 2001 and November 2004. Supara’s articles are not basic fact-filled reports but are the culmination of “in-depth research and interviews, with emphasis on social, environmental and human

\textsuperscript{177} For examples see \textit{The Nation}: January 5, January 6b, January 9a, January 30b, February 2, February 6, May 3a, and May 10a [As listed in Appendix B].

Violence in the Mist achieves what many news reports lack—the voices of the voiceless—the opinions and feelings of the average citizens living in the southernmost provinces regardless of religion, socio-economic status, education, etc.

Supara points to the role of the media when discussing how a societal attitude towards a problematic region can be transformed. However, Supara claims that a transformation of the media agencies themselves is much needed. Many media agencies only report what the authorities say and neglect the opinions and feelings of the locals who are directly affected. Even though several media agencies have sent reporters into the field to cover the “southern problem,” investigatory pieces are still not appearing in the mainstream Thai media. These “embedded” reporters are merely repeating press releases while their editors in Bangkok write opinion pieces—which still lack the words of the common people.

. . . the media’s crucial role in shaping public sentiment, the manipulation of the information may escalate, instead of placate, the problem. Can you imagine the pain of having to endure hearing the powers-that-be tell lies about you in the media? And what’s more painful is not even having a chance to speak for yourself because you are powerless and penniless. In the media world, the words of common people appear to be less newsworthy than that of the authorities.180

What becomes clear through Supara’s writing is that many of the problems in the southernmost provinces are not “southern or regional issues” but “Thai issues.” Thailand as a country is greatly in need of education reform. A reform that is suited to regional differences, histories, and local culture and knowledge. As it stands now Thai students learn a generic history of Thailand and learn nothing about their regional, provincial, or village history. A second key “Thai issue” is the limitation of local populations’ access to

179 Supara Janchitfah, Violence in the Mist, 282.
180 Ibid., 16.
natural resources (sea, forest) by state mandate. While the state prohibits locals from utilizing the natural resources that they have had access to for generations, the state tends to turn a blind eye at large commercial fishing trawlers along the coast lines or logging companies inside protected forests. A third key “Thai issue” is the rampant corruption that occurs in law enforcement and government agencies throughout the country—hence the ability of large corporations to use what locals are prohibited from. Despite these common problems, which are faced by all regions of Thailand, the South has been branded a problem area. This occurred because of the historical marginalization of the Malay-Muslims by the Thai state from which political grievances and separatist movements arose.

A recurring theme in Violence in the Mist is the discussion of justice. Southerners want justice from wrongs committed against them by both the state and the perpetrators of violence. Southerners want “the government and government officials to trust them.” Until government officials learn to trust and respect southerners and discontinue imposing prejudicial and religiously offensive policies, the southern population will remain on the fringe of society. Southerners are Thai citizens and identify as Thai but the state continues to strip them of their Thai identity.

The three frames identified in this study, “Southern Violence: A Regional Problem,” “The Threat of International Terrorism,” and “Shirking Responsibility,” show how “Thai” as a national identity is an unstable concept in relation to Thailand’s minority populations. The first two frames illustrate a divide that exists in Thailand. This divide consists of two levels, geographic and religious. The geographic divide is illustrated

181 Ibid., 85.
through the use of the “Southern Violence” frame—creating an imagined boundary between the violent southern provinces and the remaining “non-violent” provinces of Thailand. The religious divide is seen through the use of the “Threat of International Terrorism” frame—due to global events terrorism has become inextricably linked with Islam and because the majority of the southern population is Muslim they become equated with terrorist activity. These two frames change over time. After the Krue Se Mosque incident, *The Nation* humanizes the southern population, innocents and insurgents alike, when the Thai state reacts in what has been deemed a brutal manner. *The Nation* attempts to cross the dividing line and points out that the army and government were not acting against foreign elements but against Thai citizens.

*The Nation* uses the “Shirking Responsibility” frame to point out that the government and Thai society are not acknowledging their responsibility for the violence in the South. Because no insurgent groups are taking responsibility for the violence (if they are responsible) the government assigns blame to “foreign elements” and is able to avoid taking responsibility for their own actions as they are “defending the nation.”

As Supara Janchitfah states, “Justice seems to be the key issue in the southern unrest. But this concern has not been adequately addressed by the government.”182 For there to be justice, someone must be held accountable. This is not just in reference to crimes committed by security officials but also insurgents. Looking at the four incidents focused on in this thesis, not one group or individual has been accused, prosecuted, or found guilty of participation in any of the four incidents. The release of the National Reconciliation Committee’s report in April 2005 finally pointed the finger at those who

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182 Ibid., 17.
needed to take accountability. While this was a first step toward justice and healing, responsibility was still not undertaken by any persons or groups.

The NRC’s report plainly states that negotiations between the insurgents inside the mosque and the army should have been held given that the mosque is located outside the center of town and away from central activity. It acknowledges that Deputy Prime Minister Chavalit Yongchaiyudh gave the order that the incident should end through peaceful means, but emphasizes that “anti-riot forces lacked the necessary training to manage the crisis and bring about a peaceful conclusion.”183 For the Tak Bai incident, the report names the following officials as responsible both for the deaths of protesters on site and those killed during transport: Major General Chalermchai Wiroonphet, then commander of the Fifth Infantry Division, Major General Sinchai Nutsatit, then deputy commander of the Fourth Army Region, Lt.-General Pisarn Wattanawongkiri, the highest authority after imposition of martial law.184 But no action has been taken since the NRC report was issued. In the words of Supara Janchitfah, “To ease resentments and to stem the flow of tragic tears, the government needs to change its attitudes and policies towards locals, admit its mistakes and begin to seriously address the problem.”185

Through the use of editorial frames, The Nation attempts to show Thai society that they have a responsibility as Thai citizens to treat the southern Muslim population as fellow citizens. While The Nation brings attention to this issue, it is a superficial analysis of the southern situation because the articles do not explore the deeper roots of the

185 Supara Janchitfah, Violence in the Mist, 19.
problem. *The Nation's* 2004 coverage does not cover the views and opinions of the southern population in depth. After tragic incidents such as Krue Se or Tak Bai, reporters speak with families of the victims but do not delve into what people in the South think. When Thai society understands their responsibility to treat Muslims as Thai citizens, pressure can be placed on the government. The way toward a solution is the acceptance and empowerment of Malays in the South as Thai citizens. This conflict centers around issues of justice and the ability of Malay-Muslims to participate as full citizens of Thailand. However, representations of the conflict in the media frame it simply in terms of Thai/Malay ethnicity or Buddhist/Islamic identity obscure the need for political reforms that bring genuine citizenship and justice.
Appendix A: Southern Violence as Framed by Matichon sutsapdā

A limitation to this study that needs to be acknowledged is that the analysis is only of one Thai daily newspaper, The Nation—an English-language paper. Because I am not a native-Thai speaker/reader, a substantial amount of time would have been necessary in order to perform the same detailed analysis of articles in a Thai-language paper as was done for articles in The Nation. As I do not possess the requisite language skills or time I was unable to include a similar detailed analysis of a Thai-language newspaper. However, I do not want to neglect the Thai-language media altogether. Therefore, this appendix will include a textual analysis of a small selection of articles reporting on southern Thailand from Matichon sutsapdā.

In conducting my analysis of Thai-language news articles I chose Matichon sutsapdā because (1) it is a reputable and respected paper; (2) it has a wide circulation among the more urban, educated classes as well as Bangkok politicians and therefore could impact government policy; (3) due to it being a weekly paper the articles are substantial and read more like mini-essays than typical news reports; and (4) Ohio University’s Alden Library subscribes to Matichon sutsapdā, therefore I had unlimited, hands-on access to the physical paper instead of relying upon internet resources.

For my sample, I chose to translate seven articles published in the latter half of 2004. I chose these seven articles because they were all related to the incidents at Krue Se Mosque and Tak Bai. The crucial factor of the articles chosen is that each article presented a different perspective and/or story. For instance, one article contained information about the Tak Bai incident that was not included in any English-language
accounts, another article interviewed Suchinda Yongsunthorn, chairman of the
independent fact-finding committee for Krue Se, and other articles examined various
government tactics related to the southernmost provinces.

To identify the editorial frames used by Matichon sutsapdā, I used the same
methodology discussed in Chapter One. After the initial translation, textual analysis was
used to identify the framing mechanisms and agenda-setting concepts used by Matichon
sutsapdā. My analysis of Matichon sutsapdā found framing mechanisms that were
similar to those used by The Nation. However, the most interesting finding was that new
frames emerged exclusive to Matichon sutsapdā. Aside from the framing mechanisms, I
also paid close attention to details that were printed in Matichon sutsapdā but were absent
in The Nation as well as other English-language print media.

Because space is limited, instead of reiterating the common framing mechanisms
used by both newspapers I will focus on the frames exclusive to Matichon sutsapdā. But
first, I would like to give a brief summary of Matichon sutsapdā’s coverage of the
southernmost provinces during 2004. Of the fifty-two issues published in 2004, thirty-
two issues contained at least one article pertaining to violence in southern Thailand. Of
these thirty-two issues, the average number of articles per issue was 2.4375. The highest
number of articles per issue was six.186 Those six articles all varied in content—the
disappearance of Somchai Neelahphaijit, an interview with Senator Den Tomeena’s
daughter,187 and an article discussing theories and information about the “Master Minds”
behind the recent attacks. Matichon sutsapdā’s coverage was extensive and

186 Issue 1232, March 26 – April 1, 2004.
187 Pattani Senator Den is of Malay-Muslim descent and the son of former separatist leader, Hajji
Sulong.
comprehensive during times of turbulence in the southernmost provinces, especially surrounding the four events focused on in this study.

Missing elements

During the translation phase, the most noticeable elements found in Matichon sutsapdā were those details that were missing from reports published by The Nation. What some might describe as minor details provide interesting insight into the difference in reporting techniques between the two papers. These missing elements from the English-language reports speak to what the outside world (i.e., the non-Thai-language world) actually knows about these particular incidents—or rather does not know. It also speaks to the perspective and understanding of the writer and the audience—both Thai.

One such example includes a report on the protests at the Tak Bai police headquarters in Narathiwat province on 25 October 2004. Matichon sutsapdā reports that the protesters at Tak Bai were carrying signs objecting to the government’s actions in arresting and detaining the six village defense volunteers. These signs carried slogans such as:

“The government created the village security forces. The government destroyed the village security forces. Now who will protect us? We need justice!” and “Where are the moral values of the village unit? Where is the justice?”

English-language reports neglected to mention that protesters were carrying signs or that they were clearly speaking against government actions. Including the above detail shows the motivation of the protesters, they weren’t just concerned with the release of the detained men but with a government instituted program. The government established the

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189 Ibid.
village security forces or village defense units with the intention that villagers would assist government security forces in maintaining the peace and reporting suspicious behavior. This program has come under much criticism since its institution because not only does it give villagers with inadequate training weapons but also creates easy targets of those volunteers for robbery and murder by bandits, militants, and insurgents.

With the omission of this information from the English-language press the protest only appeared to have one motive, the release of the six village defense volunteers. This is not the only issue at stake here; local villagers are worried about their own personal safety because of the treatment and detainment of these six defense volunteers. The local knowledge was that the weapons had been stolen from the defense volunteers under duress by Islamic militants. Villagers saw the arrest of these volunteers as punishment for actions beyond their control and therefore unlawful. As Supara Janchitfah discusses in *Violence in the Mist*, local southerners want justice—punishment should not be meted out to the innocent and/or victims. Instead of creating conspiracy charges against defense volunteers, it is felt that security forces should focus attention on gathering intelligence about the whereabouts and identity of the thieves as well as tracking down government issued weapons.

*Psychological impact*

A major running theme found in more than half of the seven articles analyzed was the psychological impact of the events that transpired during the protests at Tak Bai. One of the psychological impacts is the inability for southern Muslims to separate the events at Tak Bai from “the army-led attacks on Krue Se on 28 April because hundreds died in
Both of these events are seen as situations that could have been avoided (the deaths) and situations in which the government reacted too harshly. The director of Amnesty International Asia-Pacific, T. Kumar, was quoted as saying that the Thai government could not use the “‘War Against Terrorism’ as permission to ‘escape responsibility from killing Thai-Muslims.’”

Abdul Rohman Abdulsamad, president of Narathiwat’s Islamic Committee, expressed shock and dismay about the 84 deaths following the protest at Tak Bai. He believed the “damage that was created by this mob in Tak Bai is psychologically deeper and more violent several times over than the situation at Krue Se mosque.” By this Abdulsamad means that the Tak Bai tragedy was more severe because those killed were not only unarmed but also implementing their constitutional right to freedom of speech. This sentiment was echoed in another article published in the same issue.

Do not forget the differences between the Krue Se case and the Tak Bai mob: the persons who created the riots at the Krue Se mosque were armed and attempted to kill government officers. In the case of Tak Bai, these people were only considered a gathering. Their status is very different, therefore they should be considered as two different situations.

These psychological implications and comparisons of Krue Se and Tak Bai are not found in reports published by The Nation. This type of information is geared directly at a Thai audience and written from a Thai perspective. The emphasis is to create an emotional attachment for the rest of the nation with the victims at Tak Bai.

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190 Ibid.
191 Ibid.
Another use of the “Psychological Impact” frame by *Matichon sutsapdā* was the impact of the photographs from Tak Bai after the break-up of the protest by security forces. Thais throughout the nation received images of the events at Tak Bai via television, newspapers, and magazines. The international audience received these same images, however because of recent Thai history, Thai nationals would experience these images differently than would non-Thais.

“The pictures showing arrested people lying down with their hands tied reminds us of the scene of October 14th [1973] and causes a psychological impact on the public.”

But the lesson that was not concluded was the psychological effects of these operations after these riots [at Krue Se and Tak Bai]. The scene that unfolded appeared very similar to the events of 6 October 1976. People were forced to take off their shirts, lie face down on the ground with their hands tied behind their backs. Those who were injured were forcefully pushed and pulled while herding those suspected of crimes into the GMC vehicles used to transport detainees to the holding camp.

*Matichon sutsapdā* coverage consistently refers back to this comparison between the images of Tak Bai protesters and the images of student protesters during the 1970s, particularly 1976.

These images remind Thais of the implications involved in being labelled “the other” or being viewed as non-Thai, despite definitive Thai citizenship. In these two cases “the other” includes the student protesters of the 1970s, who were labeled communists, and the southern Malay-Muslim population. These two groups lay outside the fold of the Thai national identity—*Chat, Satsana,* and *Phramaha Kasat* or Nation,

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Religion (Buddhism), and Monarchy. Pinkaew Laungaramsri states that “Thai nationalism . . . is not only a process of creating a unified national identity, but is also importantly a production of internal threats and enemies.” 196 In both cases, these two particular groups became labeled internal threats and enemies. The students were labeled leftist radicals and communists, which pits them directly against the Thai nation, religion, and monarchy. Malay-Muslims, despite their Thai citizenship and reverence for the present King, are not ethnically Thai or practitioners of Buddhism. As with the leftist students the Malay-Muslim population appears to stand outside of Thai society. Therefore, if they (students or Muslims) are not Thai then they become “the other,” which creates a space for legitimized murder, torture, rape, etc. in order to protect Chat, Satsana, and Phramaha Kasat.

Not only does the incident at Tak Bai dredge up painful memories for those involved in the student movements of the 1970s but also it becomes a national embarrassment. Images of the Tak Bai protest in 2004, the “Black May” protest in 1992, and student protest in 1976 look almost identical. 197 All three of these protests resulted in a large number of detainees and a large number of deaths. 198 Despite Thaksin’s push for the National Economic and Social Development Board and the National Bank to develop a model to effectively handle such a situation should it occur, it proved to be an utter failure. Sorragon Adulayanon writes,

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197 See Appendix C for these images.
198 Despite the similarities in images of all three of these events, not one article mentions the protest in Bangkok in May 1992. Tak Bai images are only compared with those images from the 1973 and 1976 protests in Bangkok.
Because of past experiences in similar situations, the government should have been more prepared to adequately contain and disperse this particular mob/protest. The situation that took place at Tak Bai clearly shows that the government was highly unprepared to handle this scenario effectively and safely.  

Articles in *Matichon sutsapdā* utilize the framing mechanism that the government should have been aware and informed to handle such situations. This is similar to *The Nation’s* usage of this frame, however *The Nation* does not use this particular frame in their reports on Krue Se or Tak Bai. Whereas, *Matichon sutsapdā* really emphasizes this frame in articles reporting on both the Krue Se and Tak Bai incidents. According to an interview with Suchinda Yongsunthorn, chairman of the independent fact-finding committee to investigate Krue Se, “interviews with the villagers living in the area of conflict relayed that government officials knew about the problems in the area but did not take action or put any new ideas into practice.”  

According to *Matichon sutsapdā*, the government had the knowledge and yet still neglected to act preventatively.  

**A Thai-language perspective**  

A comparative analysis of Thai English-language and Thai-language print media’s reporting on the same events produced interesting results. Not only are the Thai-language reports more contextualized for a Thai audience but also in many cases they contain much greater detail than the English-language reports. This small analysis only serves to illustrate the beginning of a hypothesis, that English-language reporting is skewed due to the target audience—non-Thais. There is information contained in Thai-

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200 Khwa’m song c’ham thi’ ‘Krue Se’ phon sōp su’an kho thetc’hing c’ha’k pā’k ‘Suchinda Yongsunthorn,”” *Matichon sutsapdā*, 13-19 August 2004, 28.
language reports that may never appear in English-language reports, this may be a face-saving technique on the part of the Thai media. However, due to the present availability of technology throughout the world information can be spread much more quickly and accurately (or inaccurately) than ever before. Then we must ask, is the face-saving technique a viable answer? We must also ask, does the world outside of Thailand care about these minute details or are they more concerned with overarching human rights abuses? To fully answer these questions, a more in-depth analysis of Thai-language print media is needed. This would include a cross-section of not only Thai-language dailies and weeklies but also publications from the southern provinces themselves, which most likely would not be in Thai but possibly Malay or Jawi.
Appendix B: List of Articles on Southern Violence in *The Nation*, 2004


Appendix C: Image Comparisons

Figure 3. Tak Bai protest, 25 October 2004.  
*MuslimThai Newspaper*, 15 November – 14 December 2004, 25. (The author was unable to contact or obtain written permission from the apparent copyright owner of the image produced above. The author will remove this image upon request of the copyright owner if necessary)
Figure 4. Black May 1992.
Phap prawattisat lu’at: 40 hot maisam bæp, 18 phru’tsapha mahahot, 14 Tula mahawipayok, Bangkok: s.n., 1993. (The author was unable to contact or obtain written permission from the apparent copyright owner of the image produced above. The author will remove this image upon request of the copyright owner if necessary)
Figure 5. 6 October 1976.
Watthanachai Winitchakun, Samutphap du’an Tula: khu’ tamnan wirachon khonhangla: pramuan phap hetkan 14 Tulakhom 2516 læ 6 Tulakhom 2519 phrom botsamphat Seksan Prasoetkun, Kriangkamon Loahaphairoth, Saman Lu’atuanghat, Sane Chamarik, ’Aphichai Phanthusen, Mo. Ro. Wo. Seni Pramot, Bangkok: Sahaphan Nisit Naksu’ksa hang Prathet Thai : Phak Sæng Tham, Mahawithayalai Thammasat, 1988. (The author was unable to contact or obtain written permission from the apparent copyright owner of the image produced above. The author will remove this image upon request of the copyright owner if necessary)
Appendix D: Chronology of the Chakri Dynasty

1. Phra Phutthayotfa (Rama I) 1782 – 1809
2. Phra Phutthaloetla (Rama II) 1809 – 1824
3. Phra Nangklao (Rama III) 1824 – 1851
4. Mongkut (Rama IV) 1851 – 1868
5. Chulalongkorn (Rama V) 1868 – 1910
6. Vajiravudh (Rama VI) 1910 – 1925
7. Prajadhipok (Rama VII) 1925 – 1935 (abdicated)
8. Ananda Mahidol (Rama VIII) 1935 – 1946
9. Bhumibol Adulyadej (Rama IX) 1946 – present
Appendix E: Chronology of Prime Ministers

1. Phraya Manopakorn Nititada (28 June 1932 – 20 June 1933)
2. General Phraya Phahol Pholphayuhasena (21 June 1933 – 11 September 1938)
4. Major Khuang Apivongse (1 August 1944 – 17 August 1945)
5. Thawee Boonyaket (31 August 1945 – 17 September 1945)
8. Pridi Phanomyong (24 March – 21 August 1946)
9. Rear Admiral Thavan Thamrongnavasawat (23 August 1946 – 8 November 1947)
11. Field Marshal P. Phibulsongkram (8 April 1948 – 16 September 1957)
15. Thanom Kittikachorn (9 December 1963 – 14 October 1973)
30. General Chavalit Yongchaiyudh (1 December 1996 – 9 November 1997)
31. Chuan Leekpai (9 November 1997 – 9 February 2001)
34. General Surayud Chulanont (1 October 2006 – present)
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