

# Feudal Time in Thailand

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January 13, 2015

To tell the truth, I would enjoy-I think-being part of the regular guys at some Washington think tank. Not only are you doing research and advocate what you come up with, the government, or better yet, a private corporation pays you - handsomely - for the effort. In turn you provide a well written, organized, itemized and cross-referenced narrative that is used by various organizations, always with your name and that of the think tank you work for on the pages. So, it's kind of neat.

Accuracy is really an issue, however, in think tank work. The uncertainty involved in prognosticating based on contemporary thinking kind of reminds me of the TV series "House" where a drug-plagued always-in-pain expert diagnostician runs into some esoteric ailment that he misreads thirty nine times before finally getting it right, just in time to end the episode.

In real life, however, getting it wrong can lead to consequences the kind of which men only dream. One such example would today's current SE Asia conundrum in Thailand where in May 2014 a military junta repeated decades-old procedures of undertaking yet another coup after spending months remaining idle while democracy was being undermined by loyal fascists intentionally creating anarchy. From November 2013 to May the following year, government agencies became inaccessible and non-functional as Yellow Shirt protesters and their royalist allies blocked voting booths and even occupied government buildings. None of this would have been possible, much less pursued, in a democracy – which Thailand never was and is now likely to never be. While this mayhem was proceeding, the Thai army, which intervened when the country's Democrats were in power, stood by silently and watched yet another freely elected government be destroyed by feudalism-protecting interests.

Think tank consultant and senior fellow at the Cato Institute Doug Bandow had an article that appeared in Forbes Magazine on 22 December 2014 titled, "Thailand's Military Junta Destroys Democracy, Enjoys Exercising Power: Generals Postpone Elections Before Rigging Them." Reprinted in the Huffington Post (see, it does pay to be a think tank guy/gal) the lengthy posting provides a cursory overview of Thai events from the late 1940s to the present. The writer does indicate several important aspects of the ongoing Thai drama – one, that when the elites could not get their way they proceeded to destroy the kingdom until they got it, and two, that violence may be in the cards given recalcitrance of the elite. Says Bandow in the article, "If Prayuth continues to suppress the majority's political aspirations he risks creating millions of very unhappy people who believe they have no alternative but violence. Before the coup Red Shirt leader Jatuporn Prompan warned of the possibility of "a civil war that no one wants to see." That

doesn't seem in Thailand's character, but the junta's current course makes conflict of some sort much more likely.”

Bandow reflects a perceptive eye on the Thai situation. The sometimes-cited inevitability of civil war in the kingdom may be more credible than merely observing that it does not seem to be in the “Thailand’s character.” In fact, neither did the thoroughness with which the military and other traditional royalist elites are combing through the country’s infrastructure and institutions tearing out any potential roadblocks to overt loyalty to the crown and replacing free aspirations with limitations and legislation that will effectively sideline yearnings for freedom – the hope is that the ever-present “Thainess” culture indoctrinated from ancient times, feudal times, can still work. So far that hope has been validated.