

- During the early morning of 1 September 2008, members of the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD), which has been staging protests against the Government since May, and members of the United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship of Thailand (UDDT) clashed. Despite the best effort of the police to contain the situation, one person died and 45 persons were injured.
- In view of these extraordinary and unfortunate circumstances, the Thai Government was left with limited choice but to declare a state of emergency in Bangkok in order prevent a recurrence of violence, as well as to restore public order in the coming days.
- By invoking the Emergency Decree on Government Administration in States of Emergency Act B.E.2548 (2005), the Prime Minister used his powers under the Emergency Decree to appoint :
  - General Anuphong Phaochinda, Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Thai Army, who is also the Deputy Director of the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC), as the Chief Official responsible for resolving the state of emergency; and
  - The Commissioner-General of the Royal Thai Police and the Commanding-General of the 1<sup>st</sup> Army Area Command as Deputy Chief Officials.
- General Anuphong heads a committee of responsible persons comprising senior commanders of the Royal Thai Armed Forces and the Royal Thai Police, Permanent Secretaries of government ministries.
- At the same time, the Prime Minister used his powers under the Decree to announced five preliminary measures under this legislation to ensure the safety of the public as follows:
  - (1) Prohibit the assembly or gathering of more than five persons with the purpose of inciting unrest in the area of Bangkok;
  - (2) Prohibit the dissemination of news, or the sale or propagation of newspaper, publications or other media which could create fear among the public or intentionally distort information and lead to a misunderstanding of the situation which affect state security, public order, or public morality throughout the Kingdom;
  - (3) Prohibit the use of routes or vehicles as proscribed by the Chief Official responsible for resolving the state of emergency;
  - (4) Prohibit the use of buildings or enter into or stay at any place as proscribed by the Chief Official responsible for resolving the state of emergency;

- (5) To evacuate people out of a designated area for the safety of the people or to prohibit any person from entering a designated area as proscribed by the Chief Official responsible for resolving the state of emergency.
  - General Anuphong chaired a meeting of the committee of responsible persons later on 2 September 2008, to draw up a framework for resolving the state of emergency.
  - Measures will be taken in accordance with the rule of law and respect for the democratic process as provided by the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand. General Anuphong reaffirmed that there is no question of any extra-constitutional action by the Army.
  - The immediate priority will be to prevent a recurrence of violence. For this, there will be an enhanced security presence, comprising mainly Royal Thai Police personnel, supported as required or as necessary by special peace-keeping companies of the Army. All security personnel will not be armed, and will have only anti-riot gear for their personal protection.
  - The Ministry of Interior has instructed all provincial governors to engage in dialogue with supporters of both groups in order to discourage them from joining the protesters already in Bangkok.
  - The committee has defined its role purely in terms of resolving this immediate crisis - to prevent any further violence and to ensure the safety of the public. The officials involved will not play a role in resolving the political crisis.
  - It should be emphasized that:
    - The state of emergency has been declared only in Bangkok. Within Bangkok, only a few districts have been affected; elsewhere, life continues as normal.
    - As for the prohibition of assembly, the police will only take action against assemblies that incite violence.
    - The involvement of the Army is only to support the Royal Thai Police, who have at times been overwhelmed by the large number of protesters. The Army personnel are unarmed and are under clear instructions not to use any violence.
    - The state of emergency is only a temporary measure. At its weekly meeting on 2 September 2008, the Cabinet has endorsed the Prime Minister's invocation of the Emergency Decree, which will therefore be in effect initially for a period of three months. Hopefully, the situation can return to normal, and the Decree rescinded, before that.
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