

-Unofficial Notes-

Q&A

**During the Briefing for the Diplomatic Missions and International Organizations
on the Current Situation in Thailand
by Mr. Krit Garnjana-Goonchorn,
Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs,
and General Winai Phattiyakul,
Secretary-General of the Council for Democratic Reform,
25 September 2006 at 16.00 hrs.
Narathip Room, Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

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1. **Q** Apparently at least 4 officials of the former government have been detained, perhaps more. Is the intention to charge them or to release them?

A They have merely been invited to come in for their own security and safety, and for the security of the country. They have not been charged with any offence. It will not take long, and we will let them leave at the appropriate time. General Sonthi Boonyaratglin answered the other day that they have been put in a decent place and given things they need, as well as allowed visits from the family.

2. **Q** When the CDR turns into the Security Council under the Interim Constitution, will it have the same members? Please clarify about the specific tasks that the Security Council will have.

A The CDR will turn into the Security Council after the promulgation of the Interim Constitution. As for membership, the Security Council may have more members than the CDR. The Security Council will stay to provide confidence for the government and for the people and look after the security of country, as well as ensure free and fair elections at the end of the period.

3. **Q** Request clarification on the establishment of the legislative body and the constitution drafting body.

A One function of the Security Council will relate to counter-coup efforts. As for the legislative body and the constitution drafting body, one can see 2 tracks. The legislative body will be involved with normal legislation, with the passing of bills and acts. The other track will involve the constitution drafting body, which will work on the new Constitution. The People's Assembly will elect the constitution drafting body comprising about 200 members.

4. **Q**
4.1 During General Sonthi Boonyaratglin's briefing last week and in the Note Verbale sent previously, mention was made of "words and actions which have shaken and proved to be against the very foundation of Thailand's democracy with HM the King as Head of State". This reference was not included in the latest documents sent to the Diplomatic Missions before this Briefing. Why?

4.2 Also, when elections take place in 1 year's time, will they be prepared by the same Election Commission that would have overseen the elections envisaged in 8 weeks' time?

4.3 Will the People's Assembly include representatives from upcountry as well?

A Unrest had been going on for quite some time, and there was no way of solving this in a normal way. The situation suggested that there would be more and more violence. There was an announcement that on 20 September, the PAD would be planning a major rally, which the pro-Thaksin was intending to counter by bringing in people from the Northeast. With violence imminent, a decision had to be taken to prevent the loss of innocent lives. This is in view that so many lives had already been lost in the Southern Provinces in the last 3 years. The intervention was a lot better than having 2 groups of demonstrators clashing, and if one did not take action, there will be a day when everyone would feel sorry that action was not taken to prevent violence and loss of life.

Free and fair elections will be run by the Election Commission.

As for the People's Assembly, the representatives will come from all over the country, from all provinces and professions.

A On the "words and actions" referred to, there have been some misleading reports and misunderstanding that this intervention had a link or connection with the monarchy. It is important to get the picture straight that that the CDR sought an audience with His Majesty the King at midnight on 19 September, after the process of takeover was completed, to report on what had occurred. His Majesty had no foreknowledge of the action, and merely took note of the report. In his capacity as constitutional monarch, His Majesty is above politics. Moreover, if one looks at events over the past year, His Majesty has been cautious not to accede to requests for his intervention. That His Majesty turned down requests for a royally-appointed Prime Minister by invoking Article 7 of the Constitution gives a clearer indication of the way His Majesty applies his role as monarch. We do not wish anything that would give rise to misunderstanding to be reflected in any report, and thus decided to delete any references to constitutional monarchy in this context.

5. Q Will the current main parties be able to participate in the next elections?

A The political parties still remain. They have just been requested not to undertake political activities for the moment.

6. Q

6.1 How will the People's Assembly be selected? As it is appointed it will hardly be democratic. So, will members of political parties be able to participate in this body, even in their personal capacity?

6.2 Will the legislative body have full legislative authority, such as in determining the budget?

A The process may be regarded as a rolling process. In the previous experience of 1973, people from all walks of life were involved, but a figure of 2,000

is nearer the mark for the People's Assembly. The democratic element will be seen in the final stages of consideration of the new Constitution.

7. Closing Remarks by PS Krit We are not expecting a U-turn in the judgement of the Diplomatic Missions, just to keep them under review. Don't judge us in haste, and please judge from the intentions rather than appearances.

Several reports in the media have even referred to the Thai case as a "pro-democracy coup d'etat". We hope that all would reserve their judgement and be cautious, keeping capitals updated on what is happening on the ground.

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