

AFL-CIA leads revolt against Thai government

by an EIR Investigative Team

After four days of clashes between protesters and the Thai military in the streets of Bangkok May 17-21, which took the lives of at least 40 people, Thailand's King Bhumipol Adulyadej intervened directly into the political process to bring order to Thailand. "If Bangkok is destroyed, then all of Thailand is destroyed," the king said.

The king's words are correct: The crisis in Thailand is a life-or-death struggle for the Thai nation-state. An *EIR* investigation has discovered, however, that far from being a conflict internal to Thailand, the rioting that broke out on May 17, led by Gen. Chamlong Srimuang, the former governor of Bangkok and leader of the renegade Buddhist cult Santi Asoke, is the result of a carefully planned revolution against the Thai government and king, 100% controlled and directed by assets of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency and the AFL-CIO. This U.S.-based and -led operation has been intensifying over the last year, in wait for the "spark" that would set off a full-fledged U.S.-led overthrow of the Thai military.

Thai nation, military targeted

Behind all the demands for "democracy" from Thailand's students and lower classes in the streets of Bangkok, is the strategic decision by the Bush administration to:

1) target the Thai military, the country's core institution, for destruction, in the same way that the militaries of Ibero-America have been slated for annihilation;

2) use the destabilization to destroy the Thai nation-state, as the necessary enforcement policy of George Bush's new world order; and

3) use the destruction of Thailand as the springboard to destroy the rest of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries—especially Malaysia and Indonesia—which would potentially mount opposition to the looting of

their countries or to U.S. strategic will.

In Thailand, sources in the U.S. embassy revealed on May 15, two days before rallies began against the government, that there would be violence in Bangkok in the days ahead. Washington also precipitated the constitutional crisis that ostensibly sparked the riots. Thai national elections, in accordance with demands from the U.S. State Department, were held on March 22. The military party, the Sammakhi Tham Party, won the most seats in parliament and named Narong Wongwan as prime minister. Within a week, State Department spokesman Margaret Tutwiler announced that the United States had denied Narong a visa in 1991 on suspicion of drug trafficking. Within another week, Narong had stepped down, and the ruling party named Gen. Suchinda Kraprayoon, former supreme commander of the Armed Forces, as prime minister.

Immediately, the AFL-CIA's democracy movement sprang into action, demanding that Suchinda step down since he is not an elected parliamentarian. Suchinda replied that he would stand aside, if asked by parliament, but that he would not bend to the will of mobs in the streets.

The protesters were led by a combination of forces on the ground:

- Gen. Chamlong Srimuang, the former governor of Bangkok and leader of the Buddhist renegade cult, Santi Asoke, which has ties to the Hare Krishna drug cult. Chamlong's party, Palang Dharma, swept Bangkok in the March 22 elections, and Chamlong has indicated his aspirations for the prime ministership. Chamlong, according to Amnesty International spokesman in Washington, is not involved in intramural conflicts within the Thai military, but is "definitely democracy movement." An avid environmentalist, he is also a close friend of Roger Fishman, operative of the AFL-

CIO International Department in Bangkok. The AFL-CIO has bought off and runs most of the Thai trade unions, including the powerful Thai Trade Union Confederation, and has pitted them against the government over the last year.

- Gen. Chavalit Yongchaiyuth, a former supreme commander of the Armed Forces, who also has aspirations to the prime ministership. Aside from his own personal ties to the U.S. CIA, Chavalit's most prominent adviser is Prasong Soonsiri, national security council chief under the 1980-88 government of Gen. Prem Tinsulanond. Soonsiri is reportedly an asset of the Team B (hardline anti-Soviet) faction of the CIA, which includes such satellite outfits as Freedom House in New York.

- Sulak Sivaraksa, who fled the country in October 1991, after he was charged with *lèse majesté*. In early May, Sulak, who is the leader of the array of opposition forces in Thailand, was a featured guest speaker at Freedom House, the outfit of U.S. Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board member Leo Cherne. Sulak has also been hosted in the United States by Asians for Democracy, run by one Elsie Bush, a cousin of George Bush. Sulak is the point man for the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating in Thailand.

The command structure

The so-called democracy movement that has moved behind these leaders, however, is owned, directed, and operated from outside Thailand.

At the top of the operation is the AFL-CIO International Department, the Ford Foundation, the Washington-based Asia Foundation (a documented offspring of the CIA), and the Carnegie Endowment for Peace, which also works closely with Langley. The case officer for the Thai operation is Catherine Delpino, who heads the Asia Foundation's Center for Asian-Pacific Affairs out of the office of the Carnegie Endowment.

"Ironically," Delpino told an investigator, the Asia Foundation has been working on a "civil-military relations" program to sponsor "dialogue" between the military and civilian leaders. General Suchinda is not one of the foundation's "grantees," however, she added. The program itself is part and parcel of an array of operations coming from U.S. think-tanks and the State Department for the forced dismantlement of national militaries in Ibero-America, Asia, and Africa. Delpino was present at a conference at the National Academy of Sciences on March 30 in Washington on "Issues on Democratization: Civil-Military Relations Workshop."

However, democratization efforts are not being limited to mere "dialogue." The Asia Foundation, with Delpino as the point-man, is actively engaged in organizing and directing the forces for insurrection against military governments or national militaries, as was witnessed in Bangkok May 17-21. Delpino reports that over 50% of the Asia Foundation's money is going for democratization. She said the Asia Foundation is working to "strengthen the court system," to direct the private NGOs to "target the government for reform,"

and on human rights. The foundation also funds "advocacy groups" of greenies and slumdweller to "lobby" for change.

The Asia Foundation, said Delpino, has spent \$1.5 million in training greenies on the "democratic aspects" seeking approval of the government for environmental causes, although "we have to be careful not to appear as though we are lobbying foreign governments."

One of the Asia Foundation's most important operatives on the group, whom Delpino worked with in Bangkok, is Pratheep Ungsongthem Hata, head of the Duang Pratheep Foundation and "one of the leaders of the confederation for democracy," according to Asia Watch. Pratheep, who also receives funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development, according to Delpino, was a leader of the rioting protests May 17-21 and was arrested.

According to another controller of the operation, who had just returned from Thailand, the non-governmental organizations, which are directed and funded from outside Thailand, are protectors of the democracy movement. The women's movement, the democracy movement, the greenie movement, the anti-poverty movement, and the human rights movement are all the same thing, this source said. The NGOs, in turn, organize and protect the Thai students and lower classes who rallied behind Chamlong.

Before the NGOs were legalized, this source explained, they were already functioning as an insurgency in Thailand at the elite Thammasat and Chulalongkorn universities in Bangkok, at the YMCA in the northern city of Chiang Mai, under cover of university research centers, and also under cover of Buddhist monasteries. In the last six months, this entire movement, the source said, has come into its own.

Key in directing the entire movement on the ground is David Thomas, the Ford Foundation operative in Bangkok.

In short, although the United States and Thailand have been close allies since World War II, the Asia Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the AFL-CIO, Freedom House—all agencies with multiple ties to the U.S. government—have been consciously organizing and funding a revolutionary movement against the Thai government and nation over the period of at least the last year.

At the same time, the entire press and media in the United States, Great Britain, and Australia have been demanding that their governments take harsh stands against the Thai government. On May 19, Britain's Foreign Office called in the Thai ambassador and demanded that Gen. Chamlong Srimuang be released from jail; Asia Watch, a prominent Project Democracy agency, is now demanding trade sanctions against Thailand, as is the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

In Thailand itself, Chamlong declared, upon his release from jail, that "this is just the beginning." Obviously, he feels assured of the solid backing of U.S. intelligence in his insurgency against the Thai government. He has called for more and bigger demonstrations to begin on May 25.