



**THAI PERSPECTIVES ON SECURITY COOPERATION
WITH MALAYSIA: A STRUCTURE AND AGENCY
ANALYSIS**

BY

MR. SONGPON THAMCHEEWATAD

**AN INDEPENDENT STUDY SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF MASTER OF POLITICAL SCIENCE IN
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
FACULTY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC YEAR 2019
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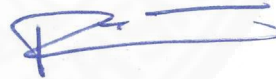
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A STRUCTURE AND AGENCY ANALYSIS

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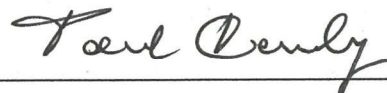
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ABSTRACT

Thailand and Malaysia have a strategic partnership and good security cooperation: however, the outcome of bilateral security cooperation is not always successful in outcome. The analysis of structural factors and agential factors is essential to understand their bilateral cooperation. In the beginning, both countries present their great friendship in the highest military partnership to an initiative through their security mechanisms. This close status begins with the background of successful security cooperation as a result of dealing with the Communist Insurgency. This study represents the significance of security cooperation for both countries from Thai perspectives. Then, it will examine how both structural factors and agential factors directly affect security cooperation in two cases in this study; 1) border management to develop the border area and 2) The Peace Dialogue Process. The distinction between structural and agential factors have an impact on the outcome of security cooperation. The study result found that the convenience of the political context during the Cold War makes Thailand and Malaysia stand on the same side to eliminate the communist regime successfully. Then, both countries continue their excellence in security cooperation under the influence of their respective armies, which is the main agential factor in this study. This is especially true for the Thai side, which has increased bilateral cooperation on border management to developing the border area. In contrast, the Peace Dialogue

Process is a matter of ongoing cooperation, which will mainly present the structural factor and agential factor relating to Thai Domestic Politics. The study demonstrates the belligerents between the Thai government and the opponents' groups, especially the influential role of BRN in the conflict. The different political circumstances and structures during the time of Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra (2011 – 2014) and Prime Minister General Prayuth Chan-o-cha (2015 – now), which have both hindered a successful peace deal due to the different views and condition by each side, will present the cause of structural factor that shape the agency in the Peace Dialogue Process. Consequently, the Thai political context became highly centralized under the military after the coup d' état in 2014, which allow the military to prioritize and conduct the way forward on the Deep South conflict, including the Peace Dialogue Process complying with National Security. Additionally, it is worth monitoring the development of security cooperation, including the role of Malaysia to help Thailand in this issue and understanding why their friendship is essential to security cooperation in terms of foreign affairs.

Keywords: Thailand, Malaysia, Security Cooperation, the Military Agency, the Deep South Conflict, and the Peace Dialogue Process

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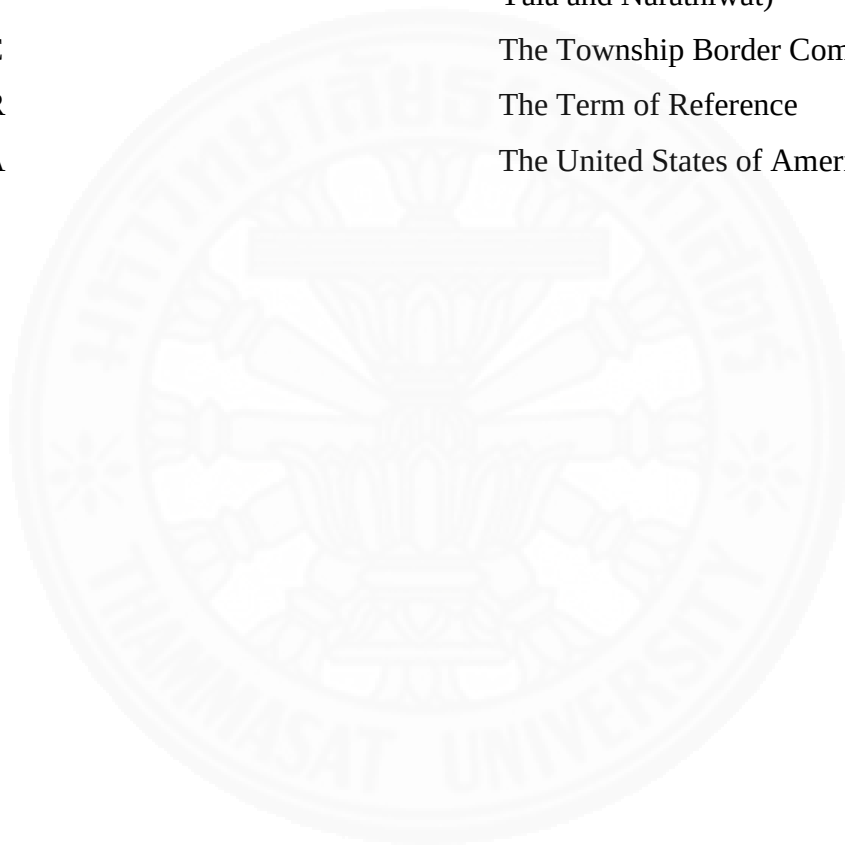
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Symbols/Abbreviations	Terms
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BIPP	The Barisan Islam Pembebasan Patani
BRN	The Barisan Revolusi Nasional or the Patani Malayu National Revolutionary Front
CPM	The Communist Party of Malaya
GBC	The General Border Committee
GEN	General (Military Rank)
GMIP	The Gerakan Mujahidin Islam Patani
HLC	The High-Level Committee
IS	Independent Study
ISIS	The Islamic State
ISOC	The Internal Security Operations Command
JBC	The Joint Boundary Committee
JWCSC	The Joint Working Committee
LBC	The Land Boundary Committee
LFRP	The Liberation Front of Republic Patani
MCP	The Malaya Communist Party
MPLA	The Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army
NDP	The National Development Policy
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NLFP	The National Liberation Front of Patani
NSC	The Office of the National Security Council
NVP	The National Vision Policy

OIC	The Organization of Islamic Cooperation
PAS	The Malaysian Islamic Party
PULO	The Patani United Liberation Organization
RBC	The Regional-Border Committee
SBPs	The Southern Border Provinces (Patani Yala and Narathiwat)
TBC	The Township Border Committee
TOR	The Term of Reference
USA	The United States of America



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Thailand-Malaysia Relationship

Thailand and Malaysia celebrated their 60th diplomatic anniversary in 2019.¹ Both countries have a solid partnership in many branches of cooperation. For the economic aspect, Malaysia is the fourth trade partner for Thailand, the first place in ASEAN members. For the cultural-society aspect, both citizens share collective identities, particularly to the southern part of Thailand and the northern part of Malaysia. For the security aspect, Malaysia is a crucial actor as a facilitator to Thailand for dealing with the Deep South conflicts currently, and Malaysia also acknowledges the active response from Thailand to resolve the Communist Threats.

According to security cooperation, both countries show a great friendship in the highest military partnership to an initiative through their security mechanisms. Their collaboration ultimately plays an essential role in making them strengthen security cooperation so far. This strong partnership is also proved by crucial evidence of the Thailand-Malaysia military as a **special relationship**, which makes both countries **never go to war**.²

Geographically, Thailand shares a border with Malaysia along with four provinces, namely Satun, Songkhla, Yala, and Narathiwat. The land border has a distance of 542 kilometers, while the maritime border has a distance of 95 kilometers. The continued excellent cooperation between Thailand and Malaysia in the area of security, including along the shared border, has successfully contributed greater security awareness, which in turn had promoted stability and socio-economic development along with the border areas. Consequently, Thailand-Malaysia partnership shows a great outcome, as well as interesting activities in term of security cooperation, which became the analytical subject of this research; particularly, to acknowledge that

¹ 30th August 1957

² Malaysia is a Thai's neighboring country which never goes to war with Thailand.

how Thailand and Malaysia establish their solid partnership on security cooperation as a critical principle to maintain peace along the border area.

In their spirit of cooperation, the frequent exchange of high-level visits and their close collaboration represents the most special status of Thai-Malay relationships, including understanding how they strengthen the security cooperation to meet the mutual goals. Meanwhile, there are primary concerns in their relationship. This study aims to explore in-depth how the security cooperation between Thailand and Malaysia in some regards effectively works and why other regards it does not. As for Thailand, the national security agencies in Thailand acknowledge that Malaysia is the only neighboring country that has no serious conflict along their border. Significantly, this relationship is distinct from the relationship with other neighboring countries that share the borderland with Thailand. (Thailand militarily clashed with Myanmar during 2010 – 2011 due to ethnic conflict, with Cambodia in 2008 due to territorial conflict, and with Laos in 1988 due to territorial conflict.)

Moreover, Malaysia is also the only country where Thailand has demarcated the borderline completely.³ This development is beyond other Thai neighboring countries, which means the Thailand-Malaysia border area welcomes any development on infrastructure and other projects, which are the ultimate goals of promoting their border trade so far.

For the Thai side, the active feedback from Malaysia to Thailand is more intensive than other Thai's neighboring countries according to their unique relationship. Because Malaysia is the only country in which Thailand cooperates national security through the full-level of mechanism; the operational-level, policy-level, and government-level. This factor is crucial and different from Thailand's relationship with other neighboring countries. Significantly, the complete cooperation between Thailand and Malaysia is the main reason to understand how both countries make progress; particularly, the development of their relationship on security cooperation.

³ Directorate of Security Strategy and Border Affairs, Office of the National Security Council, Thailand

Table 1.1

The Mechanisms of Security Cooperation: Comparative to Thai's Neighboring Countries⁴

Thai's Neighboring Countries	Malaysia	Myanmar	Laos	Cambodia	Vietnam
Policy Level (Military)	General Border Committee (GBC)	-	General Border Committee (GBC)	General Border Committee (GBC)	-
Policy Level (Military)	High-Level Committee (HLC)	High-Level Committee (HLC)	-	-	-
Operational Level (Military)	Regional Border Committee (RBC)	Regional Border Committee (RBC)	-	Regional Border Committee (RBC)	-
Operational Level (Military)	6 Sub - working groups under RBC	Township Border Committee (TBC)	Sub-General Border Committee	-	-
National Level (Government)	Joint Working Committee on Security Cooperation (JWCSC)	-	-	-	Joint Working Group on Security Cooperation (JWGSC)
National Level (Government)	Annual Consultation	Annual Consultation	Annual Consultation	Annual Consultation	Annual Consultation
Demarcation (Government)	Land Boundary Committee (LBC)	Joint Boundary Committee (JBC)	Joint Boundary Committee (JBC)	Joint Boundary Committee (JBC)	-

⁴ Directorate of Security Strategy and Border Affairs

In brief, there are three essential agreements, according to the Thailand – Malaysia security cooperation, which are: 1) the 1970 agreement on setting up the Regional Border Committee (RBC) 2) the 1977 agreement on setting up the General Border Committee (GBC) and High-Level Committee (HLC) 3) the 1966 agreement which fulfills and develop the structure of GBC, HLC, and RBC. Historically, the RBC mechanism is the first mechanism on their cooperation after Thailand and Malaysia have successfully defeated communist threat during the Cold War. Then, the agreement on May 18, 1996, allows the authorities to reorganize the mechanisms, which are currently active in playing an essential role in the bilateral cooperation, namely 1) General Border Committee (GBC) and 2) High-Level Committee (HLC). Currently, the Joint Working Committee on security cooperation (JWC-SC), which is the newest mechanism, established by the National Security Council of both countries on January 19, 2018, to rectify the inefficiency that the existing arrangements are unable to do, such as the existing problem with dual-citizenship.

Furthermore, there is the Annual Consultation for the leadership to review the progress of the implementation at the national level regarding, which both governments mutually agree to meet periodically. This channel was usually used to introduce the new relevant actors after both countries have installed the new governments domestically. At the same time, this channel is the arena where both sides can review their foreign policies, including security matters in the broader picture.

Consequently, the outcome of their cooperation on security issues along the border area is quite impressive in many dimensions, under the context of mutual benefits or win-win negotiation, for example, counter-smuggling, counter-narcotics, and counter-human trafficking. Technically, these existing mechanisms are also focusing on building a relationship with a friendly atmosphere. Not only to promote contact for the relevant national agencies but also for those government officers who are executing their duties along the border area. This impressive cooperation is a significant result of their friendship and mainly in place to contain and limit the problems before becoming widespread into the national-level crisis.

Under the thriving scene of the smooth relationship between Thailand and Malaysia, both countries primarily carried out their national security priorities based on a peaceful internal situation. The beginning of this study will analyze the outcome of

Thailand-Malaysia security cooperation under the framework of structure and agency, which will present the different conditions in the cooperation. The first case is border management is a successful cooperation between the two countries, and the second case is the Peace Dialogue Process, which is continuing and ongoing cooperation.

Table 1.2

Comparative Outcome of Cooperation between Thailand – Malaysia

Successful Cooperation	Ongoing Cooperation
Border Management	
1) Joint Details Survey for demarcation	
2) Improvement the Infrastructure Projects along the borderland	Peace Dialogue Process

1.2 Border Management for Developing the Border Area

After the end of the Cold War, the international and domestic structures, which stimulated actors on both sides, were in the best interests of both Thailand and Malaysia. This study will demonstrate a significant movement in the development of Thailand – Malaysia security cooperation. The best outcome from border management to develop the border areas will show as the following cases;

1.2.1 Joint Detail Survey for Demarcation

The highest military partnership plays an essential role as a significant agency to an initiative through their security cooperation and extends the area of cooperation. The military in both countries saw the importance of finishing the joint demarcation on their borders. The successful process of demarcation brings development to both countries at present. The joint survey for demarcation enhances

security cooperation for both countries, including the guideline for introducing new infrastructure development along with Thailand – Malaysia border. In detail, there is a primary mechanism called Joint Malaysia – Thailand Land Boundary Committee (LBC) to make progress for both countries. Under the LBC, their technical committees have smoothly worked because of their close cooperation.

Consequently, the joint investigation, reification, and maintenance survey of the Boundary Pillars and Markers along the Thailand – Malaysia international boundary is completed with no conflicts. This result also shows that Thailand and Malaysia have a special status in security cooperation since the past. Hence, Thailand and Malaysia can develop infrastructure projects and create developmental benefits by introducing economic development to the border area directly.

1.2.2 Improvement of the Infrastructure Projects Along the Borderland

Geographically, Thailand and Malaysia share 647 kilometers of borderline, with nine permanent checkpoints, representing the advance development on their borderland. Both countries continue their excellent cooperation in the area of security and economy along the shared border.

Since Thailand and Malaysia have completely settled their borderland after the process of the joint demarcation, the creation of infrastructure projects along the Thailand – Malaysia border is rapidly moved forward with the development of economic and security cooperation. In this study, there are three highlights cases of those projects as the results of successful demarcation process after the Cold War which are: 1) The Construction of Single Barrier in 2001 and 2008 2) The Construction of Bridges across the Golok River in 2007 3) The Construction of the Ban Prakob-Kota Putra Permanent Checkpoint in 2010.

1.3 Peace Dialogue Process

As part of ongoing efforts, the Peace Dialogue Process is one of the main national policies for Thailand to deal with the southern insurgency peacefully. In this part, this study will mainly present the structural factor and agential factor relating to

Thai domestic politics, which differ from the previous cases. This study also demonstrates the different actors under the different political circumstances and structures: Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra (2011 – 2014) and Prime Minister General Prayuth Chan-o-cha (2015 – now), which have both hindered a successful peace deal. The Thai political context became highly centralized under the military after the coup d' état in 2014, and it is an essential reason that the military expects to conduct the Peace Dialogue Process. Malaysia is still supporting Thailand only in the role of a facilitator, and both countries highly respect the non-interference principle in accordance with the ASEAN Charter.

By the time, the changing context of political institutions and the paradox of the problems in the Deep South of Thailand already made the existing mechanisms such as RBC, HLC, and GBC became just only symbolic cooperation in this case. The actors who are implementing these mechanisms moved away from dealing with communist threat during the cold war. Consequently, the existing mechanisms are not directly involved with the Peace Dialogue Process.

As for Thailand, the Peace Dialogue Process in Southern border Provinces (SBPs) is the essential aspect implementing the Thai government's policy; especially, to enhance security and prosperity along with the shared border areas. At the same time, the Malaysian role as a facilitator to Thailand particularly supports the Thai government to deal with the Deep South conflict. The Peace Dialogue has officially begun since 2015. However, the first dialogue occurred in 2013, led by Lt.Gen. Paradorn Pattanabutra, who was former Secretary-General of the National Security Council (NSC), engaged in an exchange during that time. The central theme of the dialogue was to provide opportunities for all stakeholders with different views and opinions to participate in this process.

Today, the security situation in SBPs is under control of the military under the Internal Security Operations Command Region Fourth Forward Command. This is the reason why the army appoints the head of the Peace Dialogue Panel. The violent incidents affect the three provinces of Thailand, which are Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat, as well as the four districts of Songkhla province. The Thai government also concerns about the violent incidents as they create a tremendous effect on the overall economy of the promising areas, for example: Su-Ngai Golok and Tak Bai

district in Narathiwat Provinces. Meanwhile, the Malaysian government also recognized this issue as well.

Even though the successful deal for the peace dialogue has not happened on the negotiating table yet, but the Peace Dialogue Process is the crucial policy of the Thai government needed to solve the Deep South conflict in accordance with international norms and the principles. However, there are still no tangible ways out of the Deep South conflict because of the various actors.

At the same time, this ongoing cooperation represents the mutual benefit among the actors such as Thailand, Malaysia, and other third parties with different views and conditions, particularly the advantage of the Malaysian role as a facilitator. For the Thai side, the end of the conflict will be an advantage to their national security directly. For Malaysia, they not only will get developments along the border area but also gain recognition for their role from Muslim countries and, in the eye of international organizations, especially OIC. For the third parties, they always request for their traditional way of life according to the historical background of the Patani Region.

Structurally, the position of the Thai and Malaysian government is not direct to be the opposing forces in state-to-state conflicts. However, Malaysia will only gain their reward from the essential role in resolving conflicts as a facilitator, which could lead Malaysia to gain benefit from international recognition. Meanwhile, some non-state actors, who are fighting with the Thai military, are part of the factors complicating the task of finding a solution to the Deep South conflict effectively. Therefore, the Peace Dialogue Process will continue to be ongoing cooperation at the national level between Thailand and Malaysia, and this process has not met with a successful outcome yet.

1.4 Literature Review

The literature review divides into three parts focusing on reviewing the work of literature relating to this study. The first part will layout and review Thailand-Malaysia cooperation in security matters from the big picture, which is the central theme in a global society. The second part will review the Deep South conflict in

Thailand, including the Peace Dialogue Process. Then, the final part will review the way of life of Muslim people in the South of Thailand in-depth, which will enhance this study, and fundamentally set up the investigation of why some issues effectively work out, but others do not. While the existing literature has touched various issues, including conflict, nationalism, and Thailand's relations with Malaysia, but there are no publications that study why different aspects of security have succeeded and why some have not. Furthermore, very rarely has anyone employ structure and agency approach in his or her studies, aside from Na Thalang's study. This is the gap identified in the literature that this IS seeks to explore.

1.4.1 Security Cooperation between Thailand and Malaysia

According to *Malaysia's role in two South-East Asian insurgencies: 'an honest broker'?*⁵ Na Thalang, an International Relations scholar, presents the interactions between domestic and international factors, which shaped the process of decision-making with the two cases; Mindanao Philippines and Thailand's southern border provinces, under comparative perspective. Importantly, the mentioned literature will enhance and fulfill the supporting the analysis of the structural factors in this study, which mainly to understand the condition and limit of each agency relating to those structures.

In her publication, she provides a clear conception mutual benefit from security cooperation that both Thailand and Malaysia will gain from implementing the peace deal in which reflects the dependency of both countries to work and manage the Deep South conflict. Her main argument presents the necessity of the Thai government, relying on help from Malaysia because there are Malay Muslims who are suspected of being the insurgents who live in Malaysia and have dual-citizenship.

She also points out that the case of the Deep South Conflict in Thailand demonstrated that the ethnic conflicts could become an international issue because Thailand and Malaysia share common borders as a co-state element of the neighboring countries. If the ethnic problem occurs, it will become extremely more complicated

⁵ Chanintira na Thalang, "Malaysia's Role in Two South-East Asian Insurgencies: 'An Honest Broker'?", *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 71, no. 4 (2017): 389-404.

because the ethnic narrative can be used as a tool of political conflicts. This situation is the challenge of implementing Thailand – Malaysia security cooperation so far.

Na Thalang also points out that it is essential to resolve ethnic conflict while it is still a domestic issue before it develops into an internationalized issue in global politics under globalization. That is why the Thai government has not been able to ignore the cooperation with the Malaysian government as Na Thalang describe,

*"Because they can spill over borders and safer ground. Minority groups with affective links with groups in neighboring countries can muster support and complicate interstate relations. Moreover, globalization can facilitate arms trade and illegal businesses to generate the essential funding for ethnic."*⁶

As a result, she argued that the Thai government could not reject Malaysia's help to deal with the issue of dual-citizenship and many suspected insurgency groups in the Deep South conflict. This reason is very vital to Thailand to cooperate with Malaysia in the Peace Dialogue Process.

One other thing that needs to be recognized from her work is the geographical condition of Thailand that connects into mainland Malaysia. This factor is entirely distinct from Mindanao's conflict in the Philippines, where the islands located far from the mainland of Malaysia. Perhaps, this geographical condition might be an essential factor why the Thai government requested Malaysia for more comprehensive security cooperation. On the other hand, Malaysia concerns that if Thailand cannot provide a peaceful solution to the conflict, it could affect the stability of the physical border in the northern part of Malaysia.

According to ***Malaysian foreign policy orientation and relations in the Post-Mahathir years***,⁷ Khadijah Md Khalid, who works on the Malaysian Foreign Policies, presents the Malaysian's view on the foreign policy orientation and external relations with selected countries, including Thailand. This literature focuses on the foreign policy analysis. Nevertheless, it also points out the beneficial concept of the

⁶ na Thalang.

⁷ Khadijah Md Khalid, "Malaysian Foreign Policy Orientation and Relations in the Post-Mahathir Years," in *Malaysia in Global Perspective*, eds. Hassan Basri and Mitkee H, (Egypt: Cairo University Press, 2010), 306-336.

role of Malaysia in global politics that will enhance the structural and agential analysis of this study. He argued that Malaysia has a vulnerable relationship with the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). Hence, it is essential for Malaysia to have a role in helping the neighboring countries, which will increase the recognition of Malaysia in international politics.

Khadijah Md Khalid also introduces the important ideas on bilateral cooperation of Malaysia for regional peace as follows:

Malaysia will focus on building a relationship with the countries in the Middle East as Muslim Friendship State; especially, through the diplomatic channel of OIC, to promote trade and investment, which is still less than what Malaysia has with ASEAN. The close relationship with the Middle East is crucial for the Malaysian government, mainly to play a role in global politics. Meanwhile, Malaysia's role in tackling regional security among its neighboring countries is a crucial factor in understanding Malaysian's action according to their diplomatic strategy. Especially because their involvement is necessary to not only Thailand but also to the Philippine to dealing with both conflicts, this reason is one important thing to study in bilateral cooperation in the security issue and the role of Malaysia relating to international politics.

1.4.2 The Deep South Conflicts in Thailand

According to *The Southern Thai Conflict Six Years on Insurgency, Not Just Crime*,⁸ Jitpiromsri, and McCargo present the examination of the changing patterns of violence by using the statistical database. It also examines the Thai governments making policy decisions relating to the issue, especially the possibility of increasing the legitimacy power for dealing with the problem through policies of regionalization. This literature has given useful evidence presenting a series of conflict for six years relating to Thai politics as a structure. The domestic political environment is an essential factor that affects the momentum in dealing with the problem, especially

⁸ Srisompob Jitpiromsri and Duncan McCargo, Duncan, "The Southern Thai Conflict Six Years On: Insurgency, Not Just Crime," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 32, no. 2 (2010): 156-183, doi:10.1353/csa.2010.0006.

during the administration of Thaksin Shinawatra, when the peace dialogue was introduced.

Jitpiromsri and McCargo present the developments in the Deep South Conflict of Thailand during 2004 – 2009, which does not only represent the instability of the situation. Jitpiromsri and McCargo, argue that the "*Levels of violence declined somewhat before increasing again.*" Nevertheless, the violent incidents were labeled as "ordinary" crimes by the Thai military. The essence of the conflict in the Deep South is the political struggle, as well as complex and multi-causal strife, which is related to the global Islamic militancy, socio-economic grievances, or tensions among the Bangkok political elites.

In their work, they also examine the changing patterns of violence, through statistic analytical tools to inform the changing of character of the violence during 2004 - 2009. There are 2 phases of a character changing. The first phase is from 2004 to 2007, which the violence represents a higher number of deaths and injuries. The second phase is from July 2007 - 2008, when the situation has changed due to domestic politics leading to the changing tactics. The reason was that Thailand was under the control of the army because of the coup d'état in 2006, following this event, the army deployed more troops for dealing and maintaining the situation against the insurgent and to control the overall situation.

Then, the authors compare the distinction between the Abhisit and Thaksin administration. During the administration of Thaksin Shinawatra (2001- 2006), the authors said that Thaksin created or exacerbated the conflict through a series of policy missteps, for example, the dissolution of the Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre in 2002.

Meanwhile, during the Abhisit in 2008, he showed some hope for a change of direction for resolving the problem. Abhisit declared that he will change the government policy and that politics should take the lead over the military to find out the solution to the Deep South conflict. However, there a significant problem during The Abhisit time as well. That is, his government was facing a massive problem of social divides due to internal politics. The political structure splits between those with pro-Thaksin and anti-Thaksin factions. As of 2009, the government succeeded in dealing with the problem and maintain peace through tactical operations. "The number

of incidents of unrest had tended to decline after late 2007" even when the Thai government did not address the root cause of the violence.

In the Thai textbook *(Patani at the half of the decade)*⁹ by Chaiwat Satha-Anand, he presents the fundamental concept of "Violence" and "Truth" under the framework of political theories. He introduces the notion of Patani as "*political geography*," which is the political arena in terms of cultural dimension relating to the way of life of Muslim people in the Patani, Songkhla, Yala, Narathiwat and Satun Provinces. Theoretically, he also presents how social institutions and structures govern the way of presenting the truth. He suggests that the relationship between "Patani" and "Siam" separately contributes the truth in their way in terms of historical perspective. From my understanding, the truth was presented by various stories. It depends on how those social structures build the truth and choose the way to tell the stories differently.

According to *Islam and Malay nationalism: a case study of the Malay-Muslims of Southern Thailand*¹⁰, Pitsuwan, an iconic scholar, the Deep South conflict presents the significance of the historical background of Patani. He explains that Patani, or the Greater Patani Region, is the central area of the Muslim people for fulfilling their sense of cultural belonging and attachment, and hugely impacts the heartfelt to their historical background. The scholar called Patani as "*The Cradle of Islam*."

At first, the emergence of violence in the Deep South of Thailand can be acknowledged as the conflict of religion and ethnicity, which is the primary cause of the problem. The Malay Muslim people feel that the centralized policy of the Thai State has shifted them away from their expressed Islamic way of life. Since the final attempt to incorporate the Greater Patani Region into the Thai state, the separatist movement has emerged during that time, such as The National Liberation Front of Patani (NLFP), The Liberation Front of Republic Patani (LFRP), and The Patani United Liberation Organization (PULO). Furthermore, the scholar suggests five significant factors relating to the ethnic cause: 1) race 2) language 3) religion 4) customs and 5) the consciousness of separate identity, which became a political issue for the separatist

⁹ Chaiwat Satha-Anan. *Kwam Roon Rang Kub Karn Jatkar* "Kwam Jing": *Pattani Nai Rob Kueng Sattawat* [Title in English] (Pathum Thani: Thammasat University Press, 2008).

¹⁰ Surin Pitsuwan, *Islam and Malay Nationalism: A Case Study of the Malay-Muslims of Southern Thailand* (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1991).

group to oppose the central government policy. For this reason, the root of the cultural distinction has remained traumatic to the Thai State until the present.

1.4.3 The Peace Dialogue Process

According to *Comparing Aceh and Thailand's Southern Border Provinces*,¹¹ Na Thalang and Siraprapasiri present the politics of peace negotiation in two cases; Aceh and Thailand's Southern Border Provinces. This literature compares the two cases through the theoretical framework of structural and agential factors. They also point out the significance of those structural factors such as politics, which directly shape and interact with the outcome of the peace talks, especially the role of the military in dealing and finding to deal with the conflicts. Therefore, this theoretical framework will enhance the analytical content in this study.

Na Thalang and Siraprapasiri argue that the peace process is not only shaped by the relevant actors in the conflict but also by the structure. They also suggest that the structural and agential factors are not oppositional; both factors will explain the Peace Dialogue Process with a different outcome. For example, political stability is more likely to enhance the result of the Peace Dialogue Process.

In their argument, the cause of the shortcoming of the Peace Dialogue Process is related to the Thai Political Structure, which presents the instability at the national level. Even when Thailand needs to continue the momentum in the Peace Dialogue, but the Thai government is unable to share their views on the way out with the third parties effectively due to the limitation from the political conditions. Consequently, they were unable to make any political deal in order to convince the separatists to abandon fighting. Additionally, one of the concerns for the Pace Dialogue Panel is ethnic conflicts, which is the root cause of the Deep South conflicts, and the negotiation on the peace deal is the only way to resolve this problem peacefully.

1.4.4 Muslim Thai Society

Surin Pitsuwan also describes the ethnic group of the Malay-Muslims in Southern Thailand. The contribution of Muslim society continues with the historical

¹¹ Chaintita na Thalang and Pinn Siraprapasiri, "Comparing Aceh and Thailand's Southern Border Provinces," *Asian Survey* 57, no. 4 (2017): 704, doi:10.1525/as.2017.57.4. 690.

background. Dated back to the Thai historical period when Siam¹² annexed the Sultanate of Patani. Even if the size of the Muslim community in the south is small comparing to the rest of the country, but they are the example of ethnic minorities who strengthens their own identity making them conscious and unique, mainly to promote their rightful place in the political arena.

The main reason is the body of the Muslim Society in the South of Thailand was separated from Malaysia. The way of life within the four provinces that were dominated by the Thai State has always been slightly looked down by the state's bureaucracy system because of their distinct religious, linguistic, and cultural characteristics.

According to *the Muslim Malay Community in Southern Thailand: A 'Small People' Facing Existential Uncertainty*,¹³ Otto VON Feigenblatt, a scholar who studies the Muslim Malay Community in Southern Thailand, introduces the analytical framework of small people who lack the sense of historical past and future. In this literature, he uses the case of the Muslim community in the south of Thailand, to define the characteristics of small people. This community is a robust ethno-national group with a clear historical sense and strong identity.

Even though the Malay Muslims related to the history of the Sultanate of Patani had a clear sense of long historical legacy with their own tradition and background, they are facing the uncertainty of the current social fabric such as the educational system, language, and way of life. All of these are vital things to preserve their own identity. Therefore, the minority of Muslims feel distinct from the central government of the Thai State in Otto's view. In addition, they fear that their unique past will be forgotten.

Meanwhile, the prospect of self-determination is attractive enough; these small people need to promote this idea to preserve their historical background and traditional way of life because The Muslim community does not have a strong feeling

¹² The name of 'Siam' has been changed to 'Thai' on June 24, B.E. 2482. This name is announced by Prime Minister Field Marshal Plaek Pibulsongkram.

¹³ Otto von Feigenblatt, "The Muslim Malay Community in Southern Thailand: A 'Small People' Facing Existential Uncertainty," *Ritsumeikan Journal of Asia Pacific Studies* 27 (2010): 53-63.

of their life under the centralized rule by the Thai State. Otto describes that this is a distinction in terms of "*ethnonational community*."

As a small group, Muslim Thais fear the uncertainty of life in the frame of Nation-State, which usually refers to a unitary ethno nationality of Thai Nationality. Otto VON Feigenblatt described that Muslim Thais face physical threats to their existence, including the prolonged military occupation to control the southern border provinces (SBPs). Regarding their fear of physical annihilation, they need to make sure that an army rule must be respected for their physical safety. Meanwhile, the uncertainty of the incident led them to the gradual internal displacement, forcing them to escape the violence from SBPs to another part of the country.

Otto VON Feigenblatt also describes the function of the Thai government in dealing with the Deep South conflict, which was categorized into two levels; 1) the Thai government and 2) the Thai Military. Technically, the Thai government establishes the leading organization, which directly deals with the conflicts, called the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC). ISOC, which mainly operates and implements a national policy to the southern border provinces (SBPs), is originally from the military side and plays a role as a forward player for the Thai government to deal with the SBPs problem in general.

Significantly, Otto VON Feigenblatt believes that the central Thai policy directly relates to this internal displacement, especially for showing that the uncertainty on a citizen from the Thai-State centralized policy and military operation. These factors could lead them to feel uncomfortable and unsure about their physical safety. Thus, the process of gradual internal displacement begins after they decide to escape the violence from SBPs and relocate to another part of the country.

In summary, Otto VON Feigenblatt presents the primary concern of the Muslim Community, which introduces Muslim society as a small group of people in Southern Thailand. The local people concern about the central policy of the Thai State, which directly affects their way of life. This study presents the Muslim Community in the Deep South of Thailand as a robust ethno-national group, and if the Thai government needs to enforce the policy of single nationality in terms of Nation-State, it might face many challenges to implementation of the policy. From this, the cause of

the social structure in Otto's view directly hit the mark of the Thai state, which concerns security problems along the southern border area.

From my point of view, to implement the national policy according to OTTO's literature, the process of Thailand-Malaysia security cooperation should consider the concept of an ethno-national group of citizenship along their borderland. The sense of belonging relating to the historical past is the crucial element that policymakers have to respect and balance the relationship between the distinctions of nationality and guarantee their right to live.

1.5 The Objective of the Study

1.5.1 To examine and analyze the successful and ongoing security cooperation between Thailand and Malaysia

1.5.2 To offer theoretical explanations to bilateral relations based on the structure and agency approach

1.5.3 To offer policy suggestions for Thai national security agencies

1.6 Research Question

What factors determine the success of security cooperation between Thailand – Malaysia?

1.7 Research Method

This research aims to explore in depth why some security cooperation between Thailand and Malaysia works effectively and why some do not. Qualitative research methods are mainly used in this study. Primary sources include interviews with representatives from various agencies who are involved with bilateral security cooperation such as Joint Press Release between Thailand – Malaysia Bilateral Cooperation as well as the General Border Committee (GBC), High-Level Committee (HLC), Regional Border Committee (RBC), and the Peace Dialogue Panel.

Various secondary sources are also used, such as academic literature, journals, newspapers, and social media network contents.

For the advantage of research studies, I am a government officer who is currently working in a national security agency, getting a great opportunity with working experience as well as familiarity in the area of study. At the same time, I always comply with the legal framework, government regulations, and also adhering to good morality and ethics as well as code of conduct. Therefore, these things are the essential reason that I have to conduct this research with no bias, the primary purpose of studying finding out an answer to the research question.

1.8 Hypothesis

The analysis of structural and agential factors will uncover the reasons for the successful/unsuccessful outcomes of the Thai-Malaysian bilateral cooperation. The different outcomes are the result of the interactions between those structures and agencies relating to security cooperation, which will limit or enable the actions taken by those actors.

1.9 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework, which will contribute content to this study, is '**structure**' and '**agency**.' The two approaches are employed in this study as follows;

Agency is "*the ability of individuals to act independently and to make their own free will without any exterior influence.*"¹⁴ However, the limit of acting independently by each agency will be a bargain or suspend by another agency. Agency will refer to those actors in this study, such as the Thai and the Malaysian government, the military, and the non-state actors including the armed groups such as the CPM, BRN or Mara Patani, playing a role as individuals to act according to their free will to achieve the ultimate goal. The agencies will act by utilizing their resources, for instance, budget and troops to fight to reach their ultimate goal.

From this point, the study will introduce and present how those agencies work on security cooperation, mainly to show the series of movements through those

¹⁴ "Structure Agency Debate," Studocu, accessed August 20, 2019, <https://www.studocu.com/en-gb/document/the-university-of-warwick/introduction-to-politics/lecture-notes/structure-agency-debate/3185757/view>

agencies in the case of Thailand – Malaysia on security cooperation. For example, military cooperation, along with the border areas for dealing with the Deep South conflict.

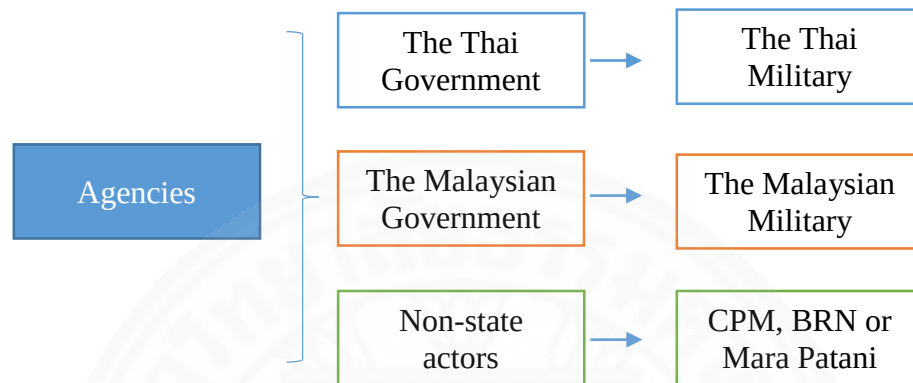


Figure 1.1 The Agencies in the Case of Thailand – Malaysia on Security Cooperation

The structure is the influence or limitation to agents' choice according to the social structuralism.¹⁵ In this case, these structures may include the rule and regulation of those agencies that allows the action of those agencies in that circumstance, and carry out as well as organize their role systematically. For example, the military role under the context of the Thai politics after the coup d' état that gave full power to the military in dealing with the Deep South conflict or the existing mechanisms on security cooperation (RBC, HLC, and GBC), which are the military mechanism. Therefore, the military operation under the existing mechanism will be directly under the command of the military regime. Meanwhile, non-state actors such as Mara Patani and BRN, who act freely to the detriment, achieve their ultimate goal and agenda against the Thai government, might be strained by the religious structure.

1.10 Structure of IS

The first chapter will lay out the big picture of Thailand – Malaysia's security cooperation. To show how they achieve their ultimate goals of maintaining

¹⁵ "Structure Agency."

peace and stability along their border area as well as how they can keep their unique relationship with the all-level security cooperation. The research will introduce the successful/unsuccessful cooperation to answer this research question mainly to find out why some issues work effectively, but others do not.

The second chapter will present a background of Thailand and Malaysia security cooperation, which can be traced back to the Communist insurgency during the Cold War. The chapter will highlight how security challenges at both international and domestic level compelled both countries to cooperate.

The third chapter will highlight the military role under the context of the two structural factors after the end of the Cold War: Economic Development and Thailand's internal politics, demonstrating a significant movement in the development of Thailand – Malaysia on security cooperation. Especially, the military's role in the demarcation and the development of infrastructure projects, which represent great friendship in the highest military partnership.

The fourth chapter will present the Peace Dialogue Process as the ongoing cooperation between Thailand and Malaysia, which was implemented through the unique mechanism called "*The peace dialogue panel.*"

The final chapter will present the conclusion to present the distinction of structural and agential factors which are the major factor determining the outcome of security cooperation between Thailand and Malaysia with the three cases: 1) Communist Insurgency 2) Border Management to develop the border area and 3) The Peace Dialogue Process.

CHAPTER 2

THE COOPERATION AGAINST THE COMMUNIST THREAT

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the author will present a background of Thailand and Malaysia security cooperation, which can be traced back to the Communist threat during the Cold War. The chapter will highlight how security challenges at both the international and domestic level compelled both countries to cooperate. First of all, **the development of security cooperation** represents by the **international political structure**, which divided into two ideologies; American Liberalism and Soviet Communism. During this time, Thailand used to be a critical strategic location to contain the communist influence in South East Asia, as well as **the Thai political structure** under the military regime, grant the benefit to the elimination of communist ideology out of the country.

In addition, Thailand and Malaysia had a solid partnership in security cooperation because both governments have a mutual concern on the rising of communism in the region, as well as balancing the national interest of the two countries in eliminating the communist insurgency. While the Thai government concern with the south separatist groups and they share common concerns about the communist insurgency with the Malaysian government as well. According to this common concern, the military agency between Thailand and Malaysia, which had a leading role protecting the countries against the communist insurgency, allowed the conduct of joint military operation as much as 5 miles deep into the territory both countries, leading to great success for this operation. Another remarkable factor is the role of Major General Kitti Rattanachaya as a facilitator to assist Malaysia in the process of tripartite negotiation before ending the insurgency conflict for Thailand and Malaysia. Notably, the role of Major General Kitti Rattanachaya in the conflict ultimately shows the importance of the military structure.

Consequently, the outcome of security operations against the communist threat established the security mechanism at the national-level, government-level, and operational-level. At this time, the military taking over **security cooperation**,

especially **the military role** in the Regional Border Committee, is vital to the implementation of security affairs under national security policy, which means the security operation will provide initiative from the military side as the key **agencies**.

2.2 Background of the Communist Insurgency in South East Asia

Since the end of the second world war, the Communist forces took control of mainland China late in 1949, and they proclaimed their will to promote armed struggle to extend their power, including into their neighboring countries in Southeast Asia.¹ Conditionally, the bipolar world system under the lead of the United States of America and the Soviet Union during the cold war divided the world into two ideologies 1) American Liberalism and 2) Soviet Communism. Thus, this condition of global politics became an essential context to layout the political structure in South East Asia, particularly the competition between those two ideologies in the region.

In the beginning, the international environment in South East Asia was in favor of Thailand to take sides with the United States of America because of serious concern about national security. At that time, the Thai government was seriously confronted with the two fronts war against communist aggression in the northeastern part by the growing of conflicts in South Vietnam during the Vietnam War and the Laotian Civil War in Laos 1959 – 1961.² These situations created concerns for the Thai government.

Additionally, Thailand located in the principal strategic location, which is in the center of the region; the northern part connects to Laos and Myanmar, the eastern part connects to Cambodia, and the southern part connects to Malaysia. Geographically, Thailand was surrounded by potentially hostile neighbors while the communist threats attempted to gain control of the region. The communist agents need to infiltrate through several neighboring countries around Thailand. This chaotic situation of the post-second world war directly affected Thai national security. Therefore, Thailand feared

¹ Manu Walyapechra, *The Direction of Regional Organization of Southeast Asian States: A Political and Geographic Study* (Ann Arbor: Xerox University Microfilms, 1974).

² Thomas A. Marks, *Making Revolution: The Insurgency of the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) in Structural Perspective* (Thailand: White Lotus, 1994).

that the rising communist threat directly hit the country. The Thai government was expected to drive the communist insurgency out of this region, which would help to preserve not the regional peace and security, as well as to protect the country.

From an academic perspective, the Thai government was forced to implement foreign policy carefully. This external threat was essential to understand the factor shaping Thai foreign policy, to rely on the USA, and to drive domestic political affairs against the communist regime. Importantly, Thailand was unable to confront with another external threat from another part of the country other than the existing two, which means that Thailand had to cooperate with Malaysia in the south with caution.

In consequence, the role of the USA in Thailand was extremely vital to Thailand, mainly to share their prevailing political ideology against the communist. Furthermore, Thailand geographically enhances the USA's power in this region with USA sponsorship.³ This geographical reason was utilized as an outpost covering sea powers and land power, mainly by majors power as the strategic location for controlling the regions of the world.⁴ Meanwhile, the cautious foreign policy toward Malaysia in the south was essential to Thailand, mainly to avoid having another frontline during this chaotic situation, especially when Thailand was allying with America to support fighting communist threat in this region.

As for Malaysia, the British controlled the Malay Peninsula from the 18th to the 20th centuries. At the outbreak of the Second World War, the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) or the Malaya Communist Party (MCP),⁵ was initially set up under the Communist ideology, allied with the British government to counter the Japanese invasion to the Malay Peninsula. There was also the Malayan People's Anti – Japanese Army (MPLA), which is the joint task force of the British government to fight against the Japanese invasion.

After the Japanese lost in the Second World War, the MNLA did not comply with the law and regulation of the British government. They tried to use force

³ David Victor Furman, “Thailand’s Search for Security: The Evolution of Thai Involvement in Selected Regional Organizations since 1945,” master thesis, American University, 1985.

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Thailand – Malaysia Border Coordination Office, the army region 4th as the secretariat of Regional Border Committee (RBC)

to dominate the British government in the Malay Peninsula to reach their ultimate goal of using Communist ideology to govern the country. From this conflict, the Malayan National Liberation Army (MNLA) separated their alliance with the British government and fought against the British government over the Malaysian Peninsula.

The British government declared the state emergency from 1948 – 1960 to control the situation. The MNLA's force escapes from the northern part of Malaysia to the southern part of Thailand. From this point, the MNLA forces locate themselves along the Thai-Malay border and spread their ideology, threatening the national security of Thailand and Malaysia. From then on, both countries decide to cooperate through the national security policy against the CPM in 1948.⁶

Meanwhile, Thailand feared the rising of the communist threat in the region. The Thai government mainly concerns about the internal communist threat that will affect the stability and was not able to afford opening up another frontline in the south with Malaysia due to the chaotic situation in the northeast. Therefore, the Thai government saw the benefit of having security cooperation with Malaysia, mainly to guarantee national security by eliminating communist ideology out of the country. At the same time, the emerging separatist group in the south that was well established since the final attempt to incorporate the Greater Patani Region into the Thai state. This hugely affects the heartfelt to the Muslim people relating to their historical background. Consequently, these internal problems represented the essential drivers for joining with Malaysia to preserve national security. These reasons are the primary condition that persuade Thailand to have security cooperation with Malaysia more closely.

Significantly, Thailand and Malaysia mutually share the problem of communist threats; the communist insurgency base camps located in the deep south of Thailand and the northern part of Malaysia. The close military cooperation was developed against communist treats during the cold war, and this development defines the beginning era of the Thai-Malaysian relationship on security affairs.

At the same time, Thailand decided to join Malaysia in eliminating the communist treat along the border area because Thailand also gains the benefits of containing the separatist movement in the south. The role of Thailand - Malaysia

⁶ “Thailand – Malaysia Border.”

authorities' impact on national security so far kicked off the development of security cooperation, and succeeded in establishing the security mechanisms to support military cooperation. The result of their relationship also is a crucial factor that makes them stay cooperative in security affairs until now.

2.3 The Development of Security Cooperation

During the time dealing with a communist insurgency, Thailand feared the rising of the communist threat because the potentially hostile neighbors surrounded Thailand, while the communist threats attempted to gain control of the region. Thus, the cautious of foreign policy toward Malaysia was essential to Thailand, mainly not to open the new frontline in the south during the communist aggression in other parts of Thailand. This external threat was an essential factor in shaping and limiting the Thai government restricted to foreign affairs. Also, this condition led to Thailand joining with Malaysia to eliminate the communist threat. Even Thailand had some level of cooperation with Malaysia, but the aftermath of the Vietnam War, which had an enormous impact on shaping Thai foreign policy, forced Thailand to initiate and increase more bilateral cooperation with Malaysia.

Also, Thailand and Malaysia share the mutual benefit of preventing the expansion of communism in their respective countries and the region. Both countries faced the same problem with national security concerns due to international political reasons under the competition of those major powers during the cold war. This is true for Thailand that was extremely concerned with the external threat from communist aggression in the region, which directly affect the country. This perfect match, which was the main structural factor according to global politics in the cold war, agreed with Thailand – Malaysia's demands for security cooperation. The military, both in Thailand and Malaysia, presented its role as the principal actor directly in dealing with the communist problem. After that, the military took the lead controlling security mechanism that enhances the military power for security cooperation. Another reason was that the Thai government was also concerned about the separatist groups in the south. Hence, they adjusted the national security framework to take advantage of the opportunity to assist Malaysia with their communist threat, in return receiving

assistance from Malaysia in containing the separatist groups in the south before it became national security. The analytical part will, therefore, present how those structural factors from the cold war and the military role effectively work out on security cooperation between Thailand and Malaysia as following;

The military role is the most influential factor influencing the Thai political context. Extraordinarily, the administration of Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat, who was the former Thai prime minister, was the key man to promote the relationship with the USA in containing the communist threat in South East Asia during the 1950s. During this time, Thailand gained many benefits from the USA, not only funding to be used in the national interest but also for promoting political ideologies against the communist regime.

Bilateral cooperation between Thailand and Malaysia to fend off security threats began since the 1950s. This came in the form of collaboration along the border area, which allowed the joint task force to operate the mission without needing permission over 5 miles from borderline. However, bilateral cooperation developed further in the aftermath of the Vietnam War. For example, the role of the military, which launched the tripartite negotiation process and the security mechanism to decline the problem of communist insurgency officially. This was mainly to avoid the opening new front line in the south, especially when Thailand was facing other external threats in other parts of the country. Consequently, this perfect match, which was the main structural factor according to global politics in the cold war, agreed with Thailand – Malaysia's demands for security cooperation. This is especially true for the tripartite negotiation process, which was met with a successful outcome in conjunction with the national policies of 66/23 and 66/25 by relabeling "**enemy**" to "**co-developer**" in 1980 under the administration of General Prem Tinsulanonda. Finally, this international environment was in favor of the military to launch and lead the tripartite negotiation process in the south of Thailand with Malaysia, mainly to end the communist insurgency in the south of Thailand.

This political condition from the cold war shows a significant result, which represents the outstanding relationship between Thailand and Malaysia. This relationship condition contrasts with Thailand's relations with other neighboring countries. In contemporary times, Thailand has clashed with other neighboring

countries. This is partly because other countries were on the opposing side during the Cold War, with the exception of Burma/Myanmar that isolated itself during this time. In other words, the lack of mutual interests meant that relations with other neighboring countries did not develop as well as Thailand's bilateral relations with Malaysia.

One other factor that is a significant condition that makes Thailand – Malaysia's relationship different from other neighboring countries is the **comprehensive mechanism** of security cooperation at all levels. These Thailand – Malaysia's security mechanisms, which have established after the successful operation against the communist threat, still until today effectively respond to the national policy on security cooperation. This development of security cooperation is the most crucial part of the Thailand – Malaysia relationship especially, the role of the military in constructing their role in RBC as well as building a structural model in the Thai National Security Framework with other countries.⁷ Therefore, this reason makes Thailand and Malaysia have accumulated enough conditions to accept and implement security cooperation in accordance with their political ideology. For Malaysia, the country was initially colonized by Great Britain, which is the crucial alliance of the USA during the cold war. Consequently, Thailand and Malaysia were in the same camp of American Liberalism. This mutual political ideology that could make both countries can share the national interest against external threats resulted in the practical outcome against the communist insurgency.

Table 2.1

Internal Function of the Security Mechanisms between Thailand and Malaysia

	Thailand – Malaysia Mechanism	Responsibility
Policy Level (Military)	General Border Committee (GBC)	Department of Border Affairs, Royal Thai Armed Forces
Policy Level (Military)	High-Level Committee (HLC)	Department of Border Affairs, Royal Thai Armed Forces

⁷ Directorate of Security Strategy and Border Affairs, Office of the National Security Council, Thailand

	Thailand – Malaysia Mechanism	Responsibility
Operational Level (Military)	Regional Border Committee (RBC)	Royal Thai Army Region 4
Operational Level (Military)	6 Sub -working groups under RBC	Royal Thai Army Region 4
National Level (Government)	Joint Working Committee on Security Cooperation (JWC)	Office of the National Security Council
National Level (Government)	Land Boundaries Committee (LBC)	Department of Survey, Royal Thai Armed Forces Office of the National Security Council Ministry of Foreign Affairs

2.4 The Thai Political Context

This study will highlight the two key Prime Minister who represented the critical role leading to Thai foreign policy against the Communist threat. Firstly, Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat (1959 – 1963), who faced the situation of the Vietnam War, which was the war to resist against the United States of America (USA), and directly impacted to Thailand. Secondly, General Prem Tinsulanondas (1980 – 1989), who effectively succeeded in dealing with internal communist threat through the tripartite negotiation. However, the Thai government under Gen. Prem remained to confront the external communist threat, especially from the Cambodian-Vietnamese War, which forced Thai armed forces to be involved in many clashes and severe confrontation in the northeast part. This external problem made an enormous impact on Thailand and was an essential factor in shaping Thai foreign policy, of relying on the US, as well as to guide the domestic political affairs against the communist regime. Under this condition, Thailand was unable to confront another external threat from another part of the country, which meant that this condition led Thailand had to cooperate with Malaysia in the southern part carefully.

After that, Thailand and Malaysia have established security mechanisms. These mechanisms also present the internal factor of the Thai political context, which

was stabilized and rule by the military government and support Malaysia militarily in dealing with the communist insurgency. The political structure of Thailand influences by the military that meets with the mutual benefits of security cooperation, particularly in dealing with the Communist threat.

Under the military regime, the Thai government gains the benefit if they can eliminate the communist ideology out of the country. This condition also makes Thailand – Malaysia's relationship more exclusive. This is because the Thai government mainly feared that the communist threat would affect the stability of the government. There was a significant event relating to the administration by each Prime Minister of Thailand dated back to the Thai political history. Remarkably, to point out why the Thai political structure provides an appropriate condition and enhances the action taken to cooperate with the Malaysian government against the communist insurgency.

During Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat's administration (1959 – 1963), Thailand and the United States of America were alliances in the strategic partnership in the Cold War, partly because of the mutual benefit from fighting the Vietnam War against the communist threat. Another reason was because of the geopolitical significance of Thailand, which was located in the strategic position to contain the communist influence in South East Asia.

Under this context, Thailand gained not only the benefits from taking sides with the USA to avoid communist domination, but also the USA also helped Sarit himself to rule the country through the military regime with absolute power. The Thai political system under Sarit was the political heritage of the military coup d'etat in 1958 and 1959. At that time, Thai domestic politics was facing many pressing political issues. The students' uprising against the military regime dominated the political landscape of Thailand. However, because of the global political context, standing up against the military power seems to be a curse, because the government used the anti-communist sentiment as a political tool to calumniate political opponents, such as during the student massacre of October 6, 1976.

At that time, the national security cooperation against the communist threat was the priority of the Thai government. The communist threat, which was an immense concern of the Thai government, was an encumbrance to safeguarding national security, not only an external threat but also an internal threat. Meanwhile, the international

political structure enables the military regime to strive and gained benefits from stability under Sarit's administration. This was possible due to security operations at the international level as the result of Thailand allying with the USA, especially the purpose of protection from the communist threat.

After Sarit died in late-1963, Thai politics remained unstable on the road of democratization. Thai political scene rapidly changed with many faces of the Prime Ministers. This was because of the internal problems, especially the uprising against the military regime, which was defined as a political heritage from the Sarit administration. For the external political environment, Thailand remained to confront the communist threat as the impact of the Cambodian-Vietnamese War, which was the aftermath of the Vietnam war. This situation forced Thai armed forces to clash or in the severe confrontation with opposing forces in the northeastern part. Therefore, Thailand was careful to avoid clash another clash in the south with Malaysia.

Consequently, in the 1970s, Thailand and Malaysia significantly strengthened this practical cooperation relating to the communist threat, according to Malaysia's request. There was an informal security dialogue between the Prime Minister Mom Rajawongse Seni Pramoj of Thailand, and the Prime Minister Hussein Onn of Malaysia to find a solution in 1977. The Malaysian side acknowledged well that Mom Rajawongse Seni Pramoj, who had a great relationship with the USA, can support the Malaysian government in dealing with the communist insurgency. After this covert dialogue, Thailand and Malaysia reaffirmed this security cooperation by officially starts jointly dealing with the communist insurgency. Therefore, this security dialogue continuously shows the cycle of bilateral talk as well as the joint security dialogue between Thailand and Malaysia for mutually finding the way out of the problem.

During General Prem Tinsulanondas' administration (1980 – 1989), who was the most influential person in the military, brought the significant turning point in changing the situation of the Communist threat, his government promulgated the national policies of 66/23 and 66/25 by relabeling "**enemy**" to become "**co-developer**," in 1980. Consequently, General Prem Tinsulanonda, who had credited as a person for providing a way out of the communist problem, gave amnesty to those communist insurgencies in the country, then brought the members of the communist insurgency who were fighting from the forest back to the city as co-developer including

the special well-fare with the reasonable degree of accommodation. The members of the insurgency group in Thailand were provided accommodation in the Rattana Kiri Village (Peace Village), and the Chulabhorn Pattana Village to support their living by the Thai government according to the national policy on 66/23 and 66/25.⁸

Under the framework of "**bring people back to the city**," the outcome of this policy finally is a gentle way out for those insurgencies, and significantly changed the situation, not only for the political stability in Thailand but also for the international affairs to the Malaysian government. The outcome of the policy effectively worked like killing two birds with one stone because this shot taken benefitted to the Malaysian government as well.

2.4.1 The Role of the Military

As explained earlier, Thailand cannot afford to open a new frontline in the south. Thailand and Malaysia were in the same situation with mutual interest that is the need to suppress the communist threat, so both countries will gain benefits from this cooperation to protect their national security. The experience from the development of the Regional Border Committee (RBC) by the military, which is the fundamental mechanism for dealing with the communist insurgency, allows the military agency to take the lead into the security cooperation in dealing with the communist insurgency.

In the beginning, both countries also implement their operational plan by using the local officers to implement the national policy. After that, the military agency completely took over security cooperation and established the security mechanism after the end of the communist threat. Functionally, the military agency represents two-levels. Firstly, the operational level, there is the mechanism called the Regional Border Committee (RBC) directly responsible for the command area in the Southern Part of Thailand and the Northern Part of Malaysia. Secondly, the national level, there is a mechanism called the General Border Committee (GBC) directly responsible for national level issues as well as pushing forward the security policy to be implemented. Furthermore, this cooperation between Thailand and Malaysia also aligned with the

⁸ Chanintira na Thalang and Pinn Siraprasiri, "Comparing Aceh and Thailand's Southern Border Provinces," *Asian Survey* 57, no. 4 (2017): 690–715, doi: 10.1525/as.2017.57.4.690

Thai government alliance with the United States of America (USA) to oppose the spread of communism. This close relationship to the hegemony country is noticeable in the Thai political system.

During this time, the establishment of RBC is to eliminate the rebel group Malayan National Liberation Army (MNLA). It is the first mechanism representing the beginning period of the cooperation in security issues, as it officially implements the cooperation along the border area, including their joint task force by the military. The Development of RBC presents Thailand – Malaysia cooperation on security as the following details;

- Between 1949 – 1952, there was the commitment between the commander from Royal Thai Police and Malaya Police to jointly cooperate to suppress the rebel group in the Thailand – Malaysia's territory, as well as exchange and share their intelligence at the operational level in supporting to the RBC's tasks.
- In 1953, there was official cooperation between Thai and Malaysian police to launch a joint operation of the Special Branch Police in Songkhla Province, Thailand.
- In 1955, Thailand and Malaysia governments committed to having joint operations against insurgency groups along the border area, particularly to eliminate the rebel base camps. For the Thai side, the operation unit based at Betong District, Yala Province, and for the Malaysian side, the operation unit based at Keroh District, Perak. This was the first government level activity.
- In 1965, Thailand and Malaysia decided to reorganize the operation along the border area. They officially elevate the existing cooperation from 1949 - 1955 into the national level by adopting the agreement on Border Cooperation between Thailand and Malaysia on March 13, 1965. This agreement is the official paper setting up security mechanisms;
 - 1) General Committee of Thailand – Malaysia (GBC): directly responsible for national level cooperation as well as driving the implementation of the security policy

- 2) The Regional Border Committee of Thailand and Malaysia (RBC):
the mechanism to cooperate on security matters, and allowing the military agency took over the leading role.

Until now, the agreement of 1965 allows the military agency to take the lead. This period is the official starting point of the military agency taking over the security mechanism and extending the scope of cooperation. Technically, the GBC is responsible for the overall implementation at the policy-level, including translating the policy into the operation-level plan. The RBC is directly responsible in the area of the Southern Part in Thailand and the Northern Part in Malaysia.

In the RBC, the military also has the authority to call other units or relevant agencies; the Royal Thai Police and the Malaya Police, to join the cooperation against the insurgency. The military's power was rising during this time; the single command structure empowered the military on the operation. Therefore, the system of Thailand – Malaysia security cooperation started from this tradition, and it is the fundamental norm to coordinate covert mission through the military channel rather than the diplomatic channel, which belongs to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁹ This function represented by the role of Major Gen Kitti Rattanachaya as a facilitator for the Thai government in the Tripartite Negotiation Process before Thailand and Malaysia successfully agreed on the deal to end the conflict.

Furthermore, the vital thing about this agreement is the outstanding commitment showing the development cooperation on a military operation that transgressed the issue of sovereignty, that is, Thailand and Malaysia agreed to allow their officers to cross the border without permission over **5 miles from borderline** when conducting an operation. Consequently, both armies were successful in dealing with the insurgency through their joint operation, also they were able to form friendship and partnership for the military agency by both countries.

Since then, the military has total control of the operation. Moreover, the military has the leading role in these mechanisms (GBC and RBC) and expanded the area of cooperation by creating other mechanisms such as: the High-level Committee

⁹ The author interviews the high-officer in the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2019 while working in the Royal Thai Embassy in Kuala Lumpur.

(HLC) and the Land Boundaries Committee (LBC). The representative of the army was appointed as the co-chairs for GBC and RBC as well.¹⁰

2.5 The Tripartite Negotiation Process

Even Thai politics was changed rapidly since the time of Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat to the time General Prem Tinsulanondas, but the military still maintains a vital role in fighting with communist threat. This enabled the military to have such a prominent voice through many military regimes throughout Thai political history, which were faced with a long period of the communist problem in South East Asia.

However, Thailand and Malaysia, comprehensive cooperation on security operation were like the light at the end of the tunnel, marked by the tripartite negotiation in the late-1980s. This process, which involved Malaysia, the representative of the MNLA forces, and Thailand, was launched and became a final solution, by having a fair and balanced negotiation. In practice, the Thai government was also pushing forward its national policies by bringing people back to the city, transforming them from "**enemy**" to "**co-developer**", which worked effectively. Not only this was an effective political move against the communist threat to Thailand, but it also offers mutual benefit to the Malaysian government and the communist insurgency as well.

Finally, the Tripartite Negotiation process officially started with the facilitation of the Thai government. The role of Major General Kitti Rattanachaya as a facilitator represents the influence of the Thai military. This process brought the Malaysian government and the communist insurgency to talk, finding the way out. This cooperation was also is a remarkable development in Thailand – Malaysia security cooperation.

In the Tripartite Negotiation, Major General Kitti Rattanachaya, who was assigned by the high-level officer in the army, led the implementation of the peace process for resolving the conflict. At the same time, his role in the 4th Army Region responsible for the southern provinces of Thailand, facilitated the border operations in the area, in accordance with the function of the Regional Border Committee (RBC).¹¹

¹⁰ "Thailand – Malaysia Border."

¹¹ Ibid

Meaning that the military still had the permission to carried out their operation for over 5 miles beyond the shared bored, putting some pressure on the insurgency while having Tripartite Negotiation Process.¹²

His role as the five-time facilitator,¹³ for the Tripartite Negotiation meeting, is vital to the Tripartite Negotiation Process. He effectively implements the national policy to become on ground operational, not only thought the Regional Border Committee (RBC) but also through his role as the facilitator.

For the Malaysian government, the Prime Minister of Malaysia (Dr. Mahatir) assigned Datuk Rahim Noor, Commander of the Malaysian Police Special Branch. Datuk Rahim Noor was the counterpart of Maj. Gen. Kitti in all five Tripartite Negotiation meetings. He admired Maj. Gen. Kitti for his dedication and his pure heart to resolve the problem with Malaysia.¹⁴ Datuk Rahim Noor, who was directly assigned by the Prime Minister of Malaysia, was also crucial for dealing with the problem. His appointment as the representative of the Malaysian government cooperated closely with the Thai government, not only through the Regional Border Committee but also for the peace agreement of Tripartite Negotiation meetings.

For the communist insurgency, Ong Boon Hua Chin Peng, who was born in Sitiawan, Perak, Malaysia, was a key man of the MNLA, and he was able to provide the final decision on the Tripartite Agreement. In the past, he was part of the joint operation with the British called "Force 36," fighting against the Japanese invasion in the Malaysian Peninsula during the Second World War. The final peace agreement by the Tripartite Negotiation Process was almost complete when he met with Major General Kitti Rattanachaya to discuss the detail before entering into the peace negotiation on October 27, 1989.¹⁵

The detail proposed by the communist side was as follows:

1. Abolish the State of Emergency declared by the British government.

¹² "Thailand – Malaysia Border."

¹³ The official report by Major General Kitti Rattanachaya, Thailand – Malaysia Border Coordination Office, the army region 4th as the secretariat of the Regional Border Committee (RBC)

¹⁴ The author interviews the military officer as the secretariat of the Regional Border Committee.

¹⁵ Gen Kitti operated the secret mission to pick up Chin Peng at the Don Mueng International Airport to discuss the final agreement to end the conflict.

2. Recognize the status of the Communist Party of Malaya and the sub-branch of CPM, which fights against Malaysia.
3. Amnesty to communist members
4. Provide an identification card to the member of the communist insurgency and guarantee the rights to live in Malaysia.
5. Recognize the previous action of CPM, fighting for independence against the Japanese.

As a result, the MNLA and the other branch of CPM decided to end the armed operation on December 2, 1989, and finally entered into a peace process with the Malaysian government, which was facilitated by the Thai government at Lee Gardens Hotel, Hat Yai District, Songkhla Provinces. Meanwhile, in Thailand, those insurgent members, who decided to become a co-developer in Thailand according to the policies of 66/23 and 66/25, were provided accommodation in the Rattana Kiri Village (Peace Village), and the Chulabhorn Pattana Village and their livelihood were supported by the Thai government.

2.6 Examination the Successful of Security Cooperation

The outcome of Thailand – Malaysia security cooperation against the communist threat was successful because of the three following factors;

1) **The International political structure**, which was divided into two ideologies; American Liberalism and Soviet Communism. In this global political structure, Thailand and Malaysia jointly stood against the communist ideology

2) **The Thai political structure** under the military regime, grant the benefit to eliminate the communist ideology out of the country. The Junta Government was so immensely concerned about the communists, which threaten the stability of Thai politics. Therefore, they adjust the national security framework as the Prime Minister's Order 66/23, 66/25, bringing the communist members back to the cities as the co-developer. As a result. The Thai government met with a successful outcome and found out the solution of Communist threats along the border area. That was a pivotal event representing the era of Thailand - Malaysia's development of security cooperation.

3) **The active role of the military agency**, the Regional Border Committee, which was the first mechanism, implemented security policies along with the southern border areas. RBC played a crucial role in security cooperation from the beginning, especially on countering the communist threat to help Malaysia and block the rebel of the MNLA at the operational level. At the same time, the RBC is the connecting bridge between Thailand and Malaysia, particularly for sharing the joint operation for dealing with the communist problem. Notably, the joint operation across Thailand-Malaysia territory within 5 miles beyond the borderline was a critical thing to pressure and limit the movement of insurgency in the area. As a result, the RBC gave an excellent outcome in dealing with the problem.

From an academic perspective, the military agency played a key influential role in the Tripartite Negotiation Process, through the RBC, and the role of Major Gen Kitti Rattanachaya as a facilitator from the Thai government in the tripartite negotiation process. This was in line with the operations under the national policy, including political agenda to oppose the communist regime. These negotiation processes convinced the communist insurgency to accept and comply with the policies of 66/23 and 66/25. The Thai government implemented politics using the military as well as the negotiations to deal with the insurgency group.

In this sense, the RBC mechanism, combined with the role of Major General Kitti, helped the cooperation become more successful as well as promoted the best practice of international cooperation for both countries. Then they effectively maintained the mutual benefits by using this diplomatic relation to achieve their objectives. Furthermore, the National Policies Prime Minister's order 66/23 and 66/25 and the policy of "politics leading military" by the Thai government are the essential factors guiding the military role within the RBC, concerning communist insurgency to create a win-win situation and **not focusing only on the military operation**. Without these conditions, the operation joint military operation beyond Thailand – Malaysia that went beyond Thailand – Malaysia border for up to 5 miles was not enough to solve the problem.

Finally, the conflicts ended when the Tripartite Negotiation meeting facilitated by the Thai government was finalized on December 2, 1989. The Malaysian

government and Chin Peng, the representative of the Communist Party mutually agreed and signed the peace agreement at Lee Garden Plaza, Hatyai, Songkhla.

2.7 Summary

The condition of global politics became an essential context to layout the political structure in South East Asia as well as to make Thailand and Malaysia jointly tackled with the Communist insurgency. A solid partnership in security cooperation after the successful operation against the communist threat represents the **military agency**, which is the principal actor in dealing with the problems. From this cooperation, Thailand also gains more benefits to contain the south separatist, which also one of the national security agenda. In this cooperation the role of Major General Kitti Rattanachaya as a facilitator, as well as the permission to both military to carry out operation under the RBC 5 miles beyond Thailand – Malaysia border is a crucial factor in promoting the best practice of this security cooperation, bringing the successful outcome to the shared border area.

Conditionally, **the international political structure** makes Thailand and Malaysia stand on the same side against the communist regime. **The Thai political structure**, which provides a suitable condition to enhances and finds the way out of the communist insurgency with the Malaysian government, particularly the national policies and political agenda, to eliminate the communist threats. All these conditions in different levels of political structures came together in support of the military agency to find the solution in dealing with the communist threat effectively and successfully in the end.

CHAPTER 3

BORDER MANAGEMENT FOR DEVELOPING THE BORDER AREA

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will highlight how international and domestic structures after the Cold War stimulated actors on both sides to realize that the cooperation was in the best interests of both Thailand and Malaysia. After the Cold War, **Economic Development and the Domestic Political Environment between the two countries** demonstrated significant activities in the development of Thailand – Malaysia security cooperation. In consequence, the military saw the importance of the demarcation of borders and the development of infrastructure projects, both of which represent a great friendship from the highest military partnership leading to initiatives in their security cooperation and that extend into other areas of cooperation.

After Thailand and Malaysia ultimately saw the successful outcome of the cooperation against issue communist threat, the military agency has gained a prominent role taking over security cooperation by establishing security mechanisms and also strengthening their sincere cooperation. At this point, the military agency uses this opportunity to create another successful outcome for other security cooperation, which is based on the excellent relationship dating from the Cold War period. The practical outcome includes the development along the border area such as the Joint Detail Survey for Demarcation between Thailand – Malaysia, and the other infrastructure construction at the border area. In the following sections, this chapter will examine how Thailand and Malaysia continued their excellent cooperation after the Cold War, including the operational mission along the shared border.

3.2 Structural Factors: The Shift from Hard Security to Economic Security in the Post-Cold War Era

In the previous chapter, this IS showed how Thailand and Malaysia shared a common threat, which is the communist insurgency, including the intention of the

Thai government to contain those separatists in the south. This combination of factors makes both countries solidly stay together during that time. The continued excellent cooperation between Thailand and Malaysia still go on after the Cold War, including the operational mission along the shared border.

With the common ideology after the cold war, Thailand and Malaysia have developed to coordinate closely with one another as collectives. Significantly, the focus on economic cooperation, which is the new road to development, was introduced by the global trend.³¹ The international structural factor that enhances the cooperation between Thailand - Malaysia was the growing economic development. The case of Thailand – Malaysia was an example for other countries on how can they strengthen the spirit of cooperation under the regional organization such as ASEAN. Then, Thailand and Malaysia have successfully contributed greater security awareness and the principle non-intervention³² which in turn had promoted stability and socio-economic integration along with maintaining security along with their border areas.

Regarding ASEAN members, Malaysia is the largest trade partner of Thailand.³³ The advancement in development between Thailand and Malaysia rapidly grow after the end of the Cold War due to economic incentives. In their spirit of cooperation, both governments drive the national policy to focus on economic interest and security matters. The economic approach is introduced as the new platform for promoting Thailand – Malaysia relationship. The bilateral relation has extended to cover more areas of cooperation as well as the establishment of the new mechanism relating to social and economic development. This progress is the principal model for other countries in the region.

On February 21, 1992, at the 36th GBC meeting, Thailand and Malaysia revised the agreement to keep with the upcoming situation. Thailand and Malaysia have reviewed the previous border cooperation at this meeting and decided to maintain and promote their security cooperation. They agreed to extend the area of security

³¹ George Friedman, “Beyond the Post-Cold War World,” last modified April 2, 2013, <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/beyond-post-cold-war-world>.

³² M.L. Pinitbhand Paribatra, “Thailand's Relationship with Its Neighbors: A Study of Border Conflict from 1973 to 2011” (PhD diss., Northern Illinois University, 2013).

³³ “Thailand Trading Report System,” accessed June 29, 2020, <http://tradereport.moc.go.th/devices/EngIndex.html>

cooperation in the establishment of the High-Level Committee (HLC), which includes the highest military commander in both countries, meaning that the military will be involved in all levels of Thailand - Malaysia security cooperation from this time on.

Finally, the military authority in dealing with the security threat remains mainly to maintain security in the border area as well as promoting economic development. Thailand – Malaysia's relationship during this time still prioritizes security cooperation, but the new focus on economic development requires both countries to work comprehensively together, especially the joint detail survey on demarcation. The process of the Joint Detail Survey for Demarcation is the primary process that Thailand and Malaysia must share an agreement before implementing the joint development plan. Consequently, this process completed with no conflicts, making Thailand's relations with Malaysia distinct from that with its other neighboring countries.

3.3 The Domestic Political Environment

As for the Malaysian government, Mahathir's government (1981 - 2003) drove the country with the long-term policy at the national level. His policy aimed at rapidly developing the economy by industrializing and guiding a core of the Malaysian business sector.³⁴ In particular, the development of the northern part of Malaysia in Kedah, and Perlis state, bordering Thailand. He also helped elevate the country's economic foundation and the country's per capita income from 1990 – 1996. Consequently, Malaysia achieved a long-term goal as he planned, and the economy remains stable and robust.³⁵

Under the tenure of Mahathir, he promoted The Look East and The Vision 2020 policies, which mainly to develop the country, including cooperating with other countries. Domestically, Mahatir started privatizing government enterprises, utilities including the development of infrastructure along the border area. Particularly to meet the qualification of developing the country and cooperating with neighboring countries,

³⁴ Manjurul Reza and Nilufar Yasmin, "Development of Malaysia under the Leadership of Mahatir Mohamad: Turned Malaysia into a Rich Country. People: International Journal of Social Sciences 5, no. 1 (2019): 498-506, doi:10.20319/pijss.2019.51.498506.

³⁵ Ibid

which has only two countries: Singapore in the south and Thailand in the north. Hence, the close cooperation with Thailand will enhance the development of Malaysia according to the expectation of Mahatir.

As for Thailand, the Thai political situation was unstable during this time. The plan of economic development was one of the essential tasks to the Thai government under the administration of Gen. Prem. He needed to carry it out simultaneously with a security matter. Meanwhile, the internal structure of Thai politics showed that it was stabilized through military power, which means that security cooperation remains under the responsibility of the military. From this point, the cooperation between Thailand and Malaysia, including the security mechanism established after resolving the communist insurgency, represents the role of military agency. The role of the military is crucial actions to understand the development of security cooperation so far. Particularly, to initiate master projects to develop the country.

Additionally, the cooperation against communism during the cold war had also been strengthened through the relationship between Prime Minister Mahathir of Malaysia and Prime Minister General Prem Tinsulanondas of Thailand. It turned Mahathir's vision towards the Thai government because they used to work together in addressing the communist insurgency; and since Mahathir's government was re-installed in 2018, Thailand was prioritized as the main destination of his official visit, highly expecting to prolong his friendship with General Prem.



Figure 3.1: On October 25, 2018, Gen. Prem welcomed Mahatir, the Prime Minister of Malaysia, while he paid an official visit to Thailand after back in power again in 2018.

Source: “ป๋าเปรมต้อนรับมหาเธร์ ดีใจได้พบเพื่อนเก่าในรอบ30ปี (ประมวลภาพ) [Gen. Prem welcomed Mahatir]” *Naewna*, October 25, 2018. <https://www.naewna.com/politic/372563>.

The great friendship between Gen. Prem and Mahatir positively impacted the diplomatic relationship between Thailand and Malaysia, including the development of the pilot projects along with their border area, including the nine permanent border checkpoints with custom houses constructing after the cold war to promote the border trade. Primarily, the import/export through the permanent checkpoint of the Sadao and Bukit Kayu Hitam Custom House, where show the highest in value in every fiscal year or 53.4 percent³⁶ from the total trade value of the nine permanent checkpoints, representing the significance of their trade partner status.

As for the Malaysian government, Mahathir promoted the New Economic Policy (NEP) to reduce the gap of economic inequality between the Malay citizen after the communist era. The NEP is a fundamental idea for the National Development Policy (NDP) of 1991 – 2000 and the National Vision Policy (NVP) of 2001 – 2010.³⁷ Also, the fact that Thailand needs to depend on the Malaysian port in Penang to export raw materials to the third countries enhances both countries cooperation by focusing on the

³⁶ “สถานการณ์การค้าผ่านด่านศุลกากรชายแดนระหว่างไทยกับมาเลเซีย ปี 2560 [The Situation of Thailand – Malaysia’s Border Trade in 2017],” accessed June 24, 2020, <https://www.bot.or.th/Thai/MonetaryPolicy/Southern/ResearchPaper/SBorderY2560.pdf>.

³⁷ Takashi Torii, “The Mechanism for State-Led Creation of Malaysia’s Middle Classes,” *The Developing Economies* 41, no. 2 (2003): 221–242, doi:10.1111/j.1746-1049.2003.tb00939.x.

development of their infrastructure along their border, including upgrading to link with another international transportation route, that why the border trade between the two countries is vital and be a role model in the region.

For Thailand, the military remains in control of the political direction even after the communist insurgency. Thailand has yet to become a democratized country because of the coup by the military.³⁸ However, under Gen. Prem's administration (1980 – 1988), he was shifting the country incrementally from having semi-democracy toward full democracy. Gen. Prem also had the ability to give guidance to the military agency to develop the South of Thailand as well as support the cooperation with the Mahathir's Government. Due to this mutual interest, this period was a significant era for the development of Thailand – Malaysia's economy.

However, Thai politics remained to confront with an internal problem. Gen. Prem decided to dissolve the parliament and call for an election. After that, Prime Minister Chatchai Choonhavan, who was a senior military officer and business elite in Thailand, won a general election in 1988. Consequently, he became a crucial player in the political system, especially in foreign policy. He was the prime minister who promoted the economic expansion regionally; including the cooperation to develop the infrastructure to Thailand's neighboring countries.³⁹ As a result, the successful outcome of this cooperation effectively maintains Thailand – Malaysia cooperation for both countries' upcoming governments, using it to enhance the relationship even further.

Thailand and Malaysia also reviewed the existing mechanisms again in the 40th GBC meeting on May 18, 2000. They agreed to continue their security cooperation and revise some issues of the previous agreement to be more suitable for the current situation, including extending the economic perspective of the mechanism. Finally, this agreement was the first agreement that both countries approved the implementation of security cooperation up into the cabinet-level, particularly to strengthen their cooperation continuously.

³⁸ Gary Alan Harber, "Thailand in Southeast Asia: An Analysis of Thailand's Regional/Subregional Goals and Objectives" (PhD diss., University of Louisville, 1996).

³⁹ Ibid.



Figure 3.2 Mr. Chuan Leekpai, Prime Minister and Minister of Defense with Mohammad Najib bin Abdul Razak, Minister of Defense signed the agreement at the 40th GBC meeting held in Bangkok on May 18, 2000.

Source: Thailand – Malaysia Border Coordination Office as the secretariat of Regional Border Committee

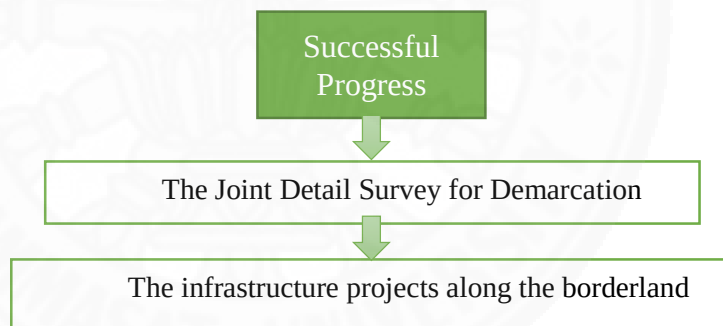


Figure 3.1: *The Practical Development after Resolving the Communist Insurgency*

3.4 Increased Bilateral Cooperation

Under the context of economic development, Thailand and Malaysia focused on the development along their border area at the National Level.⁴⁰ Initially, there are only two primary security mechanisms (GBC, RBC), which was driven by the military agency. After that, both countries agreed to extend their scope of cooperation,

⁴⁰ Directorate of strategy and neighboring countries, Office of the National Security Council

including social and economic development in the border area. And more importantly, to establish another mechanism to cover all related issues, as follows;

Table 3.1

Military Agencies in the Security Mechanisms⁴¹

Mechanisms	Role	Agencies
GBC	Exchange ministerial visits and conducts the security policy relating to the Ministry of Defense and other military operations.	Ministry of Defense
HLC	Exchange visits for senior officers and conduct the military operation based on each working group under RBC in the Southern Area of Thailand and the northern Area for Malaysia.	- Royal Thai Armed Forces - Malaysian Armed Forces
RBC	Exchange visits for local officers and responsible for the sub-working group, to conduct military operation along with the border areas.	- Royal Thai Army (4 th Army Area) - Malaysian Army (West Part)
LBC	- The process of Thailand – Malaysia Joint Demarcation - Draft of the Memorandum of Understanding relating to the border post or any related issue - The relating issue about territory	- Department of Survey, Royal Thai Armed forces - Department of Treaties and Legal Affairs, Ministry of Foreign affairs

3.4.1 The Joint Detail Survey for Demarcation

The Joint Detail Survey for Demarcation is the fundamental process of determining the land and sea boundaries of Thailand and Malaysia before allowing

⁴¹ Thailand – Malaysia Border Coordinator Office (TMBC), The army region four, Thailand (Secretariat of RBC)

investment and construction of the infrastructure along the border area. The outcome of demarcation is the driving force to enhance security cooperation for both countries; especially, it extends the opportunity for promoting border trade and regional trade. This development started consequently after both countries commonly agreed with the joint detail survey and constructed the border posts without any dispute.

After both countries have accepted the agreement, another factor contributing to the success of this process was the joint patrol of both armies along with Thailand – Malaysia's border. For the Thai government, the central agency for implementing this process is the Department of Survey, Royal Thai Armed Forces, the same as the Malaysians.

Usually, Thailand and Malaysia maintained their relationship in terms of military cooperation under the Regional Border Committee (RBC). The primary purpose of this operation also enhances the joint Detail Survey for Demarcation as well. The Joint Border Patrol called "**LAND EX THAMAL**" in the mainland is a highlight to foster a good relationship between the two forces by enhancing their interoperability. Meanwhile, the coordinated maritime patrol called "**SEA EX THAMAL**" was carried out in the area of Narathiwat Province/Kelantan State, Satun Province/Perlis State, and Golok River, which is the longest water-boundary between both countries.

As a result, Thailand and Malaysia can use this opportunity to implement their national policy, including the development plan, which related to enhancing security cooperation without any conflict. This made a huge impact and contributed to Thailand – Malaysia's solid partnership on security cooperation, which extended to include development projects on their borderland.

For the current cooperation, Thailand and Malaysia establish a specialized mechanism called Land Boundaries Committee (LBC) Thailand – Malaysia. The role of LBC is to conduct the Joint Detail Survey for Demarcation and continues to take care of all the border posts before building the infrastructure along with Thailand – Malaysia's border. For the Thai government, the military still took the lead over the technical process, supported by the relevant agencies (Department of treaties and legal affairs, Ministry of Foreign affairs and the Office of the National Security Council).

The practical progress of LBC between Thailand and Malaysia is the joint investigation, reification, and maintenance survey of the Boundary Pillars and Markers

along the Thailand – Malaysia international boundary, which was completed with no conflict, making Thailand's relations with Malaysia distinct to that with its other neighboring countries. Significantly, this thing is the essential factor in the progress and development along with Thailand – Malaysia border. The successful process of demarcation brings development to both countries until today, especially the infrastructure projects that bring the development outcome by promoting economics to the border area directly.

3.4.2 Improvement of the Infrastructure Projects along the Borderland

Geographically, Thailand and Malaysia share 647 kilometers of their border, with nine permanent checkpoints, contributing to the development of the regional economy.⁴² Since the agreement on May 18, 2000, which truly promotes the critical mechanism for security cooperation (GBC, HLC, and RBC). Consequently, both countries continued their excellent cooperation, including security and economy along their shared border. The progression of those infrastructure projects along the Thailand – Malaysia border is rapidly pushed forward, with the development of economic and security cooperation. Currently, there are many highlights of those projects to show the success of these cooperations, as follows;

3.4.2.1 The Construction of Single Barrier in 2001 and 2018

For another practical progress of this area of cooperation, which shows the best outcome for Thailand – Malaysia cooperation on their territory is the construction of the Single Barrier. The construction of the Single Barrier divides into two parts. The first part locates in Padang Besar Songkhla Province/Perlis State, which covers the territory of approximately 5.3 kilometers. The second part locates in the Sadao, Songkhla Province/Bukit Kayu Hitam, Kedah, for another 11 kilometers. The latest part was constructed after Thailand and Malaysia agreed to sign a Memorandum of Understanding to extend the Single Barrier on August 2, 2018, which included maintenance of this Single Barrier as well.

⁴² Directorate of strategy and neighboring countries, Office of the National Security Council



Figure 3.4: The single barrier at Padang Besar Songkhla Province/Perlis State
Source: Land Boundaries Committee (LBC) Thailand – Malaysia)

The Land Boundaries Committee (LBC) Thailand – Malaysia is responsible for taking care of the construction of The Single Barrier. The significance of this Single Barrier is to confirm that Thailand and Malaysia have commonly agreed on a permanent border post, meaning that there is no dispute and conflict relating to their territory anymore. Hence, both countries can enhance and strengthen all development plans into the area directly.

3.4.2.2 The Construction of Bridges Across the Golok River in

2007

This new infrastructure, which joined Narathiwat Province on the Thai side with Kelantan State on Malay side, was officially opened on December 21, 2007, by both prime ministers during that time (Gen Surayud Chulanont and Abdullah Ahmad Badawi). Both sides believe that this project is crucial for developing local economies and for maintaining peace in the southern part of Thailand.



Figure 3.5: On February 20, 2019. The author visited Sungai Golok Custom House, and Rantau Panjang Custom House, where locates the existing bridge across the Golok River
 Source: Personal Photo

3.4.2.3 The Construction of the Ban Prakob – Kota Putra

Permanent Check Point in 2010

Even today, Thailand – Malaysia still intensively continues the joint border patrol. The purpose is to decrease the smuggling of goods coming across both countries illegally. However, their intensive border patrol also created the possibility to extend border cooperation, especially promoting the border trade. Development also maintains security and enhances socio-economic integration. This development within the border area can give a direct benefit to the border community. Therefore, the newest Thai – Malaysian Border Checkpoint at Songkhla Province/Kedah State is officially opened on January 20, 2010, to create opportunities for border trades as well as to guarantee that their rural areas will now be jointly developed.

3.4.2.4 The Construction of the New Sadao and Bukit Kayu

Hitam Permanent Check Point in 2019

Thailand and Malaysia expressed their satisfaction with the outcome of the construction of the New Sadao and Bukit Kayu Hitam checkpoints. They

reaffirmed their commitment to working closely together to implement this initiative fully as agreed upon by the Prime Ministers of the two countries because these permanent checkpoints give the most high-value trades in terms of goods. For Thailand, the Sadao check point is the main gate for distributing rubber products globally, and it also promotes the large quantity of border trade as well as for the regional economy. Therefore, both countries are satisfied with the biggest and the highest value in every fiscal year from this extending construction. Consequently, the decision to initiate the trial period for the extension of the operation for the Sadao and Bukit Kayu Hitam checkpoints to become 24 hours, which started on June 17, 2018, until June 16, 2020, confirmed the excellent cooperation between Thailand and Malaysia.



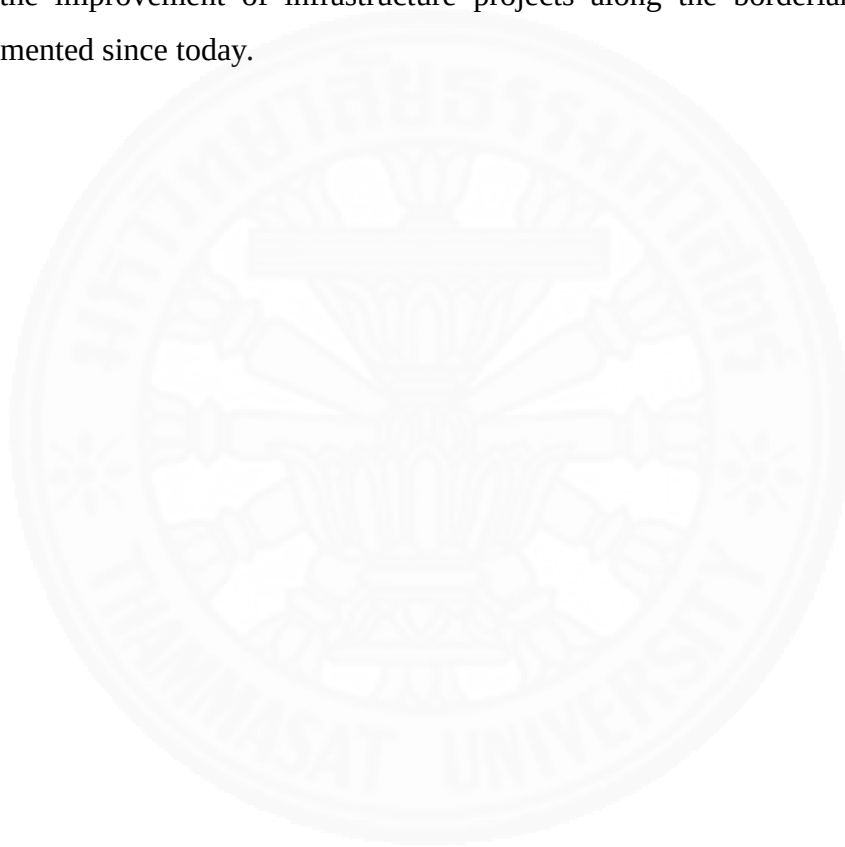
Figure 3.6: On 17 June 2019, at 23.00 hrs. H.E. Mr. Chaisiri Anamarn, Advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand and Dato' Marzuki Yahya, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia, co-officiated the Launching Ceremony of the 24-hour Operation of Sadao Customs, Immigration and Quarantine (CIQ) checkpoint in Songkhla province, Thailand and Bukit Kayu Hitam Immigration, Customs, Quarantine and Security (ICQS) checkpoint in Kedah state, Malaysia.”

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “The Launching Ceremony of the 24-hour Operation of CIQ Sadao – ICQS Bukit Kayu Checkpoints,” [Press release], accessed June 24, 2020, <http://www.mfa.go.th/main/en/news3/6886/104995-The-Launching-Ceremony-of-the-24-hour-Operation-of.html>

3.5 Summary

Good bilateral cooperation came as a result of the successful elimination of the communist threat during the Cold War, which continuously developed after the Cold War and prompted increased cooperation in security for Thailand – Malaysia. The

change in the international security environment and the domestic structures meant that both sides were inclined to develop joint border projects that would boost economic cooperation. This structural factor is a starting point that brings a great outcome to Thailand and Malaysia, which enabled them to develop many aspects along the common border area, especially the joint detail survey for demarcation. This development presents the great friendship in the highest military partnership to an initiative through their security cooperation and extends the area of cooperation. After that, the improvement of infrastructure projects along the borderland has widely implemented since today.



CHAPTER 4

THE PEACE DIALOGUE PROCESS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will analyze the ongoing cooperation between Thailand and Malaysia in the area of conflict resolution in Thailand's southern border provinces by exploring the structural and agential factors that have influenced the Peace Dialogue Process at various junctures. Therefore, the existing security mechanisms, such as GBC, HLC, and RBC, will not be taken into account in this chapter. The Peace Dialogue Process involves the belligerents, between the Thai government and the opposing group, primarily the influential BRN, and are being facilitated by the Malaysian government.

This chapter will examine both structural and agential factors, especially those relating to Thai domestic politics, which differ from the previous chapter. Because of the principle of non-interference, which is well-guarded among ASEAN members, Thai structural and agential factors have been most influential in shaping the outcome of the matter. Meanwhile, Malaysia's role is confined only to facilitate the Peace Dialogue Process. Thus, this chapter will place a special focus on Thai agents and structures. While talks between the insurgents and Thai officials are nothing new and have taken place in numerous locations in the past, this IS only concentrates on the peace process facilitated by Malaysia because Malaysia can help Thailand deal with the violent attack by insurgents holding dual-citizenship, who are using Malaysia as their sanctuary. This conflict in the southern part of Thailand can spill over to the northern part of Malaysia if they do not have a role.

In consequence, this chapter focuses on the Peace Dialogue Process officially launched by the Office of the National Security Council (NSC) under Yingluck's government, as well as the Thai government permitting a significant role to the military relating to national security. For the opposing groups, the BRN appointed Hassan Taib to represent the BRN joining the Peace Dialogue Process with NSC in 2013. This action of the BRN represents a significant point in showing the influence of agential factors in this process. In addition, this chapter also demonstrates the different

actors under the different political circumstances and structures, which are during the time of Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra (2011 – 2014) and Prime Minister General Prayuth Chan-o-cha (2015 – now), both having a hindered successful peace deal. The fact that Thai politics became highly centralized under the military after the coup d'état in 2014 is the critical reason why the military is having a leading role in the Peace Dialogue Process. This condition is the biggest challenge to the role of the military to resolve the conflict in the Deep South effectively.

4.2 The Historical Background: Separatism in the Deep South of Thailand

Historically, Patani, or the Greater Patani Region, geographically located in the south of Thailand, is central for the identity of local Muslim people fulfilling their sense of belonging and cultural attachment. These contexts hugely impact the heartfelt of their historical background. The beginning of the violence in the Deep South of Thailand can be acknowledged as the conflict of religion and ethnicity, which is the primary cause of the problem. The Malay Muslim people feel that the centralized policy by the Thai State has shifted them away from their expressed their Islamic way of life. There are five significant factors relating to the ethnic cause: “1) *race* 2) *language* 3) *religion* 4) *customs* and 5) *the consciousness of separate identity*,”¹ These causes became a political issue for the separatist group to oppose the central government policy.

Since the latest attempt to incorporate the Greater Patani Region into Thailand, social dissatisfaction created by the government destabilizes the national security of Thailand. Then, the separatist movements emerged during the 1960s, such as The Barisan Nasional Pembebasan Patani (National Patani Liberation Front, BNPP), The Patani United Liberation Organization (PULO) and the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (National Revolutionary Front, BRN), mainly to fight against the Thai State. The idealistic goal of the separatist movement varied according to their ideology. Significantly, the fight for independence and reclaiming the Greater Patani Region is the most concerned by the Thai State, as it is the most difficult to accept. In response,

¹ Surin Pitsuwan, *Islam and Malay Nationalism: A Case Study of the Malay-Muslims of Southern Thailand* (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1991).

the Thai government continues to promote close cooperation with Muslim countries and international Islamic organizations to create a correct understanding, resolving the situation on the ground in the Deep South.

Regarding the initial resistance, these separatist groups did not have an enormous impact on national security, until the critical event attacking Narathiwat Province's army camp when a group of insurgents got away with a cache of heavy weapons in 2004. This event is the turning point, bringing the Deep South conflict to become one of the national security concerns. This problematic situation emerged during the time of Thaksin Shinawatra (in office 2001-2006), who was dealing with the situation in the Deep South with “*heavy-handed*” measures.²

*“Thaksin’s excessive use of force played into the hands of the insurgents and became a justification for the fight against Thai rule. These hawkish measures continued until Thaksin was removed as prime minister in a coup in 2006.”*³

4.3 The Structural Factors That Have Influenced the Peace Dialogue Process

From an academic perspective, the Thai political structure allows the military to play as the main actor in the national security issues, primarily dealing with the problem. This political norm is essential to understand the political structure governing the action of each agency. As in the previous chapter, the author mentioned the enormous practical outcome in developing the Thailand – Malaysia border area through security mechanisms, which, mainly drive by the military agency, is the best practice of border management in terms of security cooperation.

On the other hand, this chapter will provide the analytical content showing the military agency, which currently is playing a vital role in dealing with the Deep South conflict under the context of Thai political structure. The Thai political structure dramatically changed, relating to political incidents. The changing of political context

² Chanintira na Thalang and Pinn Siraprapasiri, “Comparing Aceh and Thailand’s Southern Border Provinces,” *Asian Survey* 57, no. 4 (2017): 704. <https://doi.org/10.1525/as.2017.57.4.690>.

³ Ibid

also affected the Deep South Conflict, particularly the implementation of the Peace Dialogue Process that became more complex. The struggle of the Peace Dialogue Process is that it has to be restructured in relation with changing political situations such as a coup d'état. The changing members in the Peace Dialogue Panel depend on the different political parties in the government, forcing the process to repeat itself, again and again, making it difficult to build trust between those stakeholders. In contrast, the relationship between Thailand and Malaysia is stable, especially the partnership on security cooperation.⁴

In this case, the structural factor refers to the Thai domestic context, especially political instability, which directly affects the Peace Dialogue Process. This study will introduce the Peace Dialogue Process since the commencement of the Langkawi Process and divide the period of the peace dialogue according to the different political contexts, which are: 1) Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra and 2) Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-o-cha. The study will start with Yingluck's government, the Peace Dialogue Process officially launched under her time and ended by a military coup. Afterward, it is the General Prayuth's since his rise to power and has to deal with the Deep South conflict, including current the Peace Dialogue Process. As a result of the coup, the Thai government gains more political advantage to conduct the political deal with the separatist groups. **The military has become a strong agency in making a peace deal** because the Thai government does not feel comfortable in resolving the conflict by offering special administration or self-determination.

1) **Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra's administration**, the political instability at the national level, is the main structural factor of the unsuccessful Peace Dialogue Process. Yingluck's government faced the political conflict by having the political agenda of passing an amnesty bill, bringing her brother, former Prime Minister Thaksin, back into the country after spending many years in self-imposed exile. Afterward, the uprising against the government organized by the People's Democratic Reform Committee, an anti-government protest group emerged during her time. Yingluck's government ended by the military coup in 2014, which consequently drove

⁴ A diplomat who used to work in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, interview by author. Kuala Lumpur, August 28, 2019.

military officers related to her government out of the peace dialogue. Therefore, this political instability is the structural cause that makes the Peace Dialogue Process under her government did not meet with the successful outcome.

2) **Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-o-cha's administration**, who came to power via a coup d'état, remove Yingluck's government on May 22, 2014. Significantly, this structural factor is the stabilized political power under Gen Prayuth's government, which is distinct from Yingluck's government. With this condition, the government can set up the extreme power for dealing with the Deep South conflict and can guide the direction of the Peace Dialogue Process, including deploying the military to control the situation on the ground. Nevertheless, Gen Prayuth's government is unable to have a successful outcome in the Peace Dialogue Process, neither.

Table 4.1

The Head of the Peace Dialogue Panel

Head of the Peace Dialogue Panel Thailand	Duration	Prime Minister
Lt. Gen. Paradon Pattanatabut	2013 – 2015	Yingluck Shinawatra
Gen. Aksra Kerdphol	2015 – 2018	Gen prayut chan-o-cha
Gen. Udomchai Thammasarorat	2018 – 2019	Gen prayut chan-o-cha
Gen. Wanlop Rugsanoh	2019 – now	Gen prayut chan-o-cha

For the international politics, the peace dialogue mostly discusses in private and facilitate by the Malaysian government. Meanwhile, this partnership on security cooperation from Malaysia is also essential to Thailand. The role of Malaysia as a facilitator is essential for the Thai government in dealing with the conflict. Even though there is some request from the southern separatist movement to the Malaysian government to go beyond being just a facilitator, but the diplomatic protocols between Thailand and Malaysia remain firm in the status of a great partnership, complying with the ASEAN charter on non-interference.

Understanding the role of Malaysia, the Malaysian government pays attention to the Deep South conflict, because Malaysia highly acknowledges that if they are unable to control this conflict, the Malaysian government will indirectly face the

impact of insecurity along with the northern border areas. This problem also related to the rising of the Islamic State (ISIS). Since global politics have been facing the rising of Islamic State, Malaysia is one of the attractive destinations of the ISIS warriors, especially when ISIS is a challenge to all Muslim countries, as they claim religious authority over all Muslims. The world population from Muslim countries decided to join ISIS as foreign fighters.⁵ This fact shows a crucial reason why both countries coordinate in the security cooperation with one another and help us understand why Malaysia and Thailand have been, once again, discussing their security cooperation recently.⁶

4.4 The Domestic Political Environment

The idea of peace talk has been introduced to the situation for a very long time. In addition, different actors depending on the political context, but the official Peace Dialogue Process was launched under Yingluck's administration, facilitated it. This process is an on going on security cooperation, which is facilitated by Malaysia to assist Thailand at present. The period of the Peace Dialogue in this study can be categorized as follows;

4.4.1 The Langkawi Process during Thaksin Shinawatra's Government (2001 – 2005)

The peace process was the idea, which was introduced for a long-time, and was facilitated by different facilitators such as: NGOs or Indonesia. However, it was revived again in the Langkawi Process initiated by Mahathir Mohamad, while Thai politics was under Thaksin Shinawatra's administration (2001 – 2005).⁷ Nevertheless, this process was unable to move forward at that time because Thaksin, who was the former elected Thai Prime Minister and came into power under the democratic

⁵ Jonathan Weintraub, "Factors Influencing the Movement of Southeast Asian Fighters to ISIS: A Comparison of Indonesia and Malaysia" (Master's Thesis, Cornell University, 2017).

⁶ During 2008 – 2009, Thailand and Malaysia discussed these related issues three times in the bilateral meeting.

⁷ Duncan McCargo, "Understanding the Southern Thai Peace Talks," Asia Peacebuilding Initiatives, last modified June 27, 2003, <http://peacebuilding.asia/understanding-the-southern-thai-peace-talks/>

constitution of 1997, was ignorant of this idea. However, the Peace Dialogue Process started officially under his political successor, Yingluck Shinawatra administration (2011 – 2014).

The Langkawi Process started with an unofficial channel for the peace negotiation, attempting to seek the solution in the Deep South conflict, monitored by two prominent people: General Wipoj Srinuan, the Director of Armed Forces Security Center of Royal Thai Armed Force, and General Winai Phattiyakul, the Secretary-General of the National Security Council (NSC). However, it was unable to move forward consistently because of the ignorance of Thaksin, preferring a more aggressive approach in dealing with the Deep South conflict instead.

Thaksin won the general election as the Prime Minister and remained in power under the democratic constitution of 1997. This political legitimacy and stability in the political institution, allowed him to be heavy-handed in handling the Deep South conflict. Even Thaksin was highly successful in developing the rural area and promoting the quality of life to the citizen.⁸ However, he instigates the Deep South to become more serious and more widely known. The Deep South conflict was not only a domestic affair but also known internationally after incidents like the Tak Bai incident in 2004 when many people lost their life under Thaksin's administration. He also accused Malaysian of the media of molycoddling those insurgents. Furthermore, the Deep South conflict was not a priority at the national policy and became ineffective because Thaksin was facing the political crisis as the Yellow Shirt protest are forming up and accused him of corruption. After that, the coup d'état by the military in 2016 overthrown him from power and make him self-exiled aboard.

In conclusion, the diplomatic relationship between Thailand – Malaysia did not contribute to the success of the Peace Dialogue Process during Thaksin's time. Additionally, the political factor; the uprising against Thaksin, obstructed the momentum of the Langkawi Process. It could be implied that even if the Langkawi Process was well structured, whether, in its policy or practical level, the supreme decision was upon the Prime Minister Thaksin, and he did not agree to join Malaysia in the process.

⁸ Antika Preeyanon, "The Village Fund Project and Changes in the Dynamics of Local Power in Rural Thailand" (PhD diss., University of Leeds, 2007).

4.4.2 The Administration of Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra (2011-2014)

Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra got the lesson-learn from her brother (Thaksin) when he dealt with the Deep South conflict aggressively. The coup d'état in 2006 cited the over the use of power in the Deep South during the Thaksin's administration as one of the reason. Therefore, for the electoral campaign, Yingluck introduced the idea of the special administrative area, the same as Pattaya and Bangkok.⁹ Nevertheless, this idea from the election campaign was denied while she was in power.

For the Yingluck's administration, she was distrusted by the army in the Peace Dialogue Process. The political campaign to decentralize to the south makes the army concerned about national security. At the same time, she was seen as the legacy of Thaksin politics, which is the main source of distrust for her in the Peace Dialogue Process. In conjunction with the fact that the military agency is vital to controlling the situation on the ground, the relationship between Yingluck's Government and the army represented an essential component dictating the Deep South conflict. General Prayuth Chan-o-cha, who was the coup leader in 2014, removing Yingluck was the army commander under Yingluck's administration.

⁹ "Government's About-face on Decentralization a Setback for Southerners' Aspiration," Isranews Agency, last modified August 30, 2001, <https://isranews.org/content-page/67/3361-Government%E2%80%99s-about-face-on-decentralization-a-setback-for-southerners%E2%80%99-aspiration.html>.



Figure 4.1: General Prayuth was in Office as the Army Commander during the Yingluck's Administration

Source: “ประยุทธ์ปิดตอบถึงลักษณะ กท.” [Prayuth doesn't answer the role of Yingluck as the Ministry of defense], *Post Today*, June 16, 2012, <https://www.posttoday.com/politic/news/160210>

However, Yingluck was able to move forward the Peace Dialogue Process even with the help of the newly appointed Secretary-General, the National Security Council (NSC) Lieutenant General Paradorn, who was a military officer close to Yingluck. At the same time, she was facing another problem caused by her decision to remove Tawin Preansri, who was the former Secretary-General of the NSC from his position. Since then, the NSC was tangled in the political battles in the Yingluck's administration until the coup d'état in May 2014. This situation exemplifies the level of distrustfulness against the Yingluck Government among the national agencies, including the Peace Dialogue Process under her time.

After the launching the process, Lieutenant General Paradorn played an essential role at the beginning of the negotiation with the separatist groups, including the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN), particularly by purposing to establish a unique mechanism as “the Peace Dialogue Panel” to look for the way forward in solving the situation peacefully. This process, which was facilitated by Malaysia, represents the mutual understanding of all stakeholders, particularly the understanding that demands from both sides must be balanced. Nevertheless, the Thai government remained unsure whether or not they are engaging with the real authority who can control the use of force on the ground, especially the role of Hassan Taib, who claims to be a BRN leader.

The military was concerned that the multiple actors of the separatist group was remained uninvolved and could make this problem become complicated.

“It remains unclear that Hassan Taib, the lone BRN ‘leader’ who signed the agreement, has the standing, connections, or authority to negotiate, let alone to deliver any sort of settlement. Founded in 1960, the BRN long since split into three different groups, and while the 6-member BRN team has been reorganized since the beginning of the talks, major players in the organization remain in the wings, rather than around the negotiating table.”¹⁰

Practically, there are several actors were involved in the Peace Dialogue Process, including the military and the opposing groups. The Barisan Revolusi Nasional (National Revolutionary Front, BRN) is highlighted as the main actor for the opposing groups because the numerous violent incidents on the ground were attributed to be of the BRN in recent years.

Hassan Taib, who claims to be the chief of the BRN liaison, was in a position to join the peace dialogue with the Thai authority after the first dialogue was launched in 2013. Lt. Gen. Paradorn Pattanatabut, who was a former Secretary-General of the National Security Council, was the representative of the Thai government, engaged in the peace dialogue with only the BRN for discussing terms of reference on the way forward of this peaceful approach.¹¹ The peace dialogue has been afflicted by various factors. One of the main concerns of the Thai government is how to control the situation on the ground and preserve national security. Therefore, the idealistic goal of the separatist movement for independence and reclaiming the Greater Patani Region is the most serious concern of the Thai State and must be denied. These conflicting views and conditions of each agency were unable to be compromised and make into a political deal.

Too many actors are also involved in the Deep South conflict peace process. The Malaysian government tried to facilitate all stakeholders to share their

¹⁰ McCargo, “Understanding the Southern Thai.”

¹¹ Peace Dialogue Panel, *The Peace Dialogue Process in Southern Border Provinces* (Bangkok: Office of the Peace Panel Secretariat, Internal Security Operations Command, 2017).

views on the demands, especially the BRN, who is the main group, pressuring the Thai government with the unlawful violence. The BRN's main request was that Thai governments to recognize the existence and the sovereignty of the Patani Malay Nation. Nevertheless, the demands of BRN were not accepted by the Thai government in every detail, especially the idealistic purpose of self-determination. This issue is still in need of a compromise in order to make progress on the dialogue.¹² Even though the establishment of the peace dialogue shows a great way to move forward in the peaceful approach, but the violence incidents still occur in the area.

Also, the role of Lieutenant General Paradorn, including his military team Lieutenant General Nakrob Bunbuathong, effectively worked, in engaging with the influential person in the dialogue, who respectively convince the local people to trust the Peace Dialogue Process. Because, in practice, Lieutenant General Nakrob was a senior military officer in the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC), the military agency directly responsible for the Deep South situation. He uses this military position to extend the connection supporting the peace process, especially those religious leaders or influencers in the south who can convince the local people. However, later he was dismissed from the peace dialogue after Yingluck's administration and the Pheu Thai's Government was overthrown.

Even if the peace dialogue in Yingluck's administration was officially launched, it was suspended with the removal of Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra in the coup d'état on May 22, 2014. This coup was the consequence of the protest against the government order to push forward an amnesty bill by the People's Democratic Reform Committee, an anti-government protest group. The agenda on this act is helping Thaksin getting back to the country. This political incident consequently drove all military officers related to Yingluck's Government out of the Peace Dialogue Process.

After the military coup ended the role of Lieutenant General Nakrob, who used to handle the situation by working closely with opposing groups, which is also crucial to maintaining the network for the peace dialogue. This reason relates to the structural factor assuming that the role of military agency always changes depending

¹² Peace Dialogue Panel, *The Peace Dialogue Process*.

on the political side. An unpublicized source reviews that the military agency also organizes and manages by the trustworthy persons in the peace dialogue panel, which is a sensitive issue to the national security¹³

4.4.3 Summarize the Peace Dialogue Process under Yingluck's Administration

The cause of the unsuccessful Peace Dialogue Process under Yingluck's administration can clarify as following;

1) **The political instability at the national level** is the main reason that makes the Peace Dialogue Process cannot meet with the successful outcome. In politics, the removal of Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra in the coup d'état on May 22, 2014, present the rift between political factors and the military agency. This structure also is a crucial component to understand the cycle of the Peace Dialogue Process under Yingluck's government. Significantly, the linkages between political context as the structural factor and the army as the agency were not conformed to the same way. The Yingluck's Government lack of trust by the army that played an essential role in dealing with the Deep South conflict. She introduced the idea of decentralizing the south, which was denied by the military. Moreover, her government also represents the image of Thaksin, who was removed by the military in 2006. Today, the current panel set up by the Thai government appointed the high ranking officers in the army who are on the opposite side of Thaksin's Pheu Thai Party. Because of the very least, the military needs to make sure that the process will proceed in the hand of the army.

2) **For the agency's causes**, the multiple actors involved in the Peace Dialogue Process, especially the representative of the BRN cannot show that they are the real people who can command the insurgency groups on the ground, and the violence attack still occurs in the south. This can be the vital sign that the violence might still continue even if the area is to be decentralized but eventually denied by the military. Furthermore, the military does not feel comfortable supporting the demand of the opposing group, just in case that the military might not be able to control the situation on the ground. Therefore, the peace dialogue during this time also lacked

¹³ A person who used to work as a secretariat of the Peace Dialogue Panel, interview by author. Yala, Thailand, December 20, 2019.

support from the military. Even if the process has not met with a successful outcome, it represents the possibility of decreasing violence in the Deep South conflict with this peaceful approach.

From the above conclusion, the Peace Dialogue Process in Yingluck's administration faced political instability at the national level, the process, also did not involve and engage all stakeholders in the dialogue because of the failure to push forward the idea of decentralization. Consequently, the political instability under Yingluck's government made it unable to make a political deal to convince the insurgency to decline the unlawful attack. In addition, the military saw that the various opponent groups related to this conflict are problematic to the control of the situation on the ground. All these things relating to structural factors and agential factors made the Peace Dialogue Process become sophisticated. It seems that the peaceful process requires a long-term commitment in operating the peace dialogue, particularly trust-building from each side of the panel before making a political deal.¹⁴

4.4.4 The Administration of Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-o-cha (2014 – Now)

The Junta government that has ruled the country since the coup in 2014 gave the power into the hand of the army, setting up the operation to control the situation on the ground by the military agency, which is called the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC) mainly to tackle the Deep South conflict.

Under Gen. Prayuth, the national security concern of the military is followed by a strong sense of power usage. The political structure after military coup created the power imbalance between those agencies: the military and the opposing groups. Even if Gen. Prayuth's government is implementing the Southern Border Provinces Administration and Development Policy 2017 – 2019, which is the national master plan involving all key stakeholders to play a significant role in driving the process for building a mutual understanding to stop the violence in the area, it was still not a success.

¹⁴ The senior officer who are working related to the issue, interview by author. Bangkok, Thailand, December 23, 2019.

In a personal interview, the pro-military officer believes that this absolute political power will effectively work on in the Deep South conflict. The army operates by using force to protect against violence at all levels in the south, including the declaration of “The State of Emergency,” which needs to be renewed every three months. Hence, the primary concern of the military is all about national security.

For the Peace Dialogue Process, the issue of power usage is the main concern during this time. The pro-military officials share the conservative view regarding those insurgency groups that they are not suitable for the peace negotiation.¹⁵ The reason is related to the issue of dual – citizenship, which makes the army seriously concerns about those people who are moving freely across the border. Therefore, sealing the border to prevent further attacks is the priority in the view of the pro-military side. On the other hand, the use of forces publicly is eroding the image of the army, who are taking the lead on the Peace Dialogue Panel, as well as the credibility of the Thai government. Nevertheless, the strengths of the political structure after the coup in 2014, remains in support of the military agency in the operational mission in the Deep South, including to guide the way forward for the Peace Dialogue Panel.

The considerable challenge to the military is the approach is to respect the way of life of the local people, which should be the priority for the military agency before implementing the policy in the south because it can help create creditability in the role of the military who is taking the lead in the Peace Dialogue Panel. Moreover, by having full power, makes the army became the center of attention regarding the Peace Dialogue Process.

At the beginning of peace dialogue, the Junta government appointed General Aksra Kerdphol as the head of the Peace Dialogue Panel in 2015. This provided the opportunity for all stakeholders with different views to participate in this process. Even during Yingluck’s administration, the military felt uncomfortable with the idea of the peace dialogue. However, later under Gen. Prayuth’s Government, the military took control of all aspects dealing with the conflict. In this sense, the army can appoint people they felt trustworthy persons taking the lead the peace dialogue panel, which

¹⁵ The pro-military is the people, who are involve in the Deep South situation, share the conservative idea to use of military force in tackle the problem.

mainly prioritizes national security. At the same time, the ISOC is also under military command and has the duty of maintaining the overall situation in the area.

The progress made by the military was the establishment of a “safe zone” where citizens can live peacefully within a multicultural society, including the introduction of the “Thung Yang Daeng Model,” which security agencies can conduct security operation without facing violent opposition. This safe zone is a practical outcome under the military regime according to a peaceful approach, which is a compelling way to find a way out of the conflicts by rejecting all violence. This was the positive signal to convince the separatist to engage with the government finding a peaceful solution, especially to stop using violence and talk with the Peace Dialogue Panel.

Furthermore, the process met with an important development when the belligerents came to the table during 19 - 21 December 2016 in Melaka, Malaysia, which is unusual for the circumstance. Gen. Aksara ultimately talked while keeping in mind the condition under the Thai constitution that is *"the territory of Thailand cannot be separate."* This condition is extremely significant for the Thai government and governs its action regarding the Peace Dialogue Process.

After this meeting, they agreed to allow their technical teams to push forward the initiative to establish a pilot safety zone in 2017. The "Safety Zone" concept is a practical outcome that all belligerents agreed to implement it in some area of the south. It was essential to the progress of the Peace Dialogue Process at this time. The safety zone refers to the areas where all people can live their lives peacefully and safely without and types of harm in that area. This project was one of the activities aimed to lessen the violent incidents in the area, which has the following details:

Table 4.2*Objectives of Safety Zone*

Objectives of Safety Zone ¹⁶
To cease violence from all sides
To be a confidence-building measure
To enable people to take part in area management and enhancing the quality of life
To ensure that people from all religious are involved
To be a pilot area for resolving other secondary threats such as drug, corruption, illegal activities, crime, and terrorism.

In 2017-2019, Gen. Prayuth's Government introduced the Southern Border Provinces Administration and Development Policy 2017-2019, which was adopted by the Office of the National Security Council (NSC). It was the national master plan involving all key stakeholders to play a significant role in driving the Peace Dialogue Process.

In detail, the fourth section of the Southern Border, Provinces Administration Act B.E. 2553 (2010) presented the primary purpose of the policy. That is to reaffirm that the society in the southern border provinces must be safe and free from any harm, must respect the way of life the local people, as well as enhancing the sustainable peacebuilding process within a multicultural society. This master plan guarantees that the Deep South conflict a national agenda of the Thai government, to find the way out of the problem.

Under the military regime, the national level agencies complied with the policy as a guideline in dealing with the Deep South conflicts. The Thai government expects that this master plan could support the Peace Dialogue Process, as well as enhance the development and security cooperation into the area of conflict. This was to ensure that the peace dialogue is the mechanism finding a way out the problem in the Deep South conflicts as a part of the Thai National Agenda. The significance of this plan was to allow stakeholders to participate in the drafting process, such as the public sector, local and central scholars, religious leaders, and civil sectors. Significantly, the

¹⁶ Peace Dialogue Panel, *The Peace Dialogue Process*.

Southern Border Provinces Administration and Development Policy 2017-2019 also reaffirmed the principle of human rights, legal state, the rule of law, and comply with the international covenants.

Unfortunately, the situation in the south remains in contrast to the purpose of the Southern Border Provinces Administration and Development Policy 2017-2019, which ideally requires the implementation by all parties involved to adhere to the principles of human rights, the rule of law, and international covenants. The precise direction of the Southern Border Provinces Administration and Development Policy, adhere to the peaceful problem-solving approach by transforming violence to peaceful solutions mainly through policies based on the idea of a multicultural society.

In 2018-2019, the Thai government appointed General Udomchai Thammasarorat as the third Head of the Peace Dialogue Panel. During that time, the Peace Dialogue Process was mostly conducted behind the closed door. However, the talk happened not so often due to the fact that the government is preparing for its first general election since the coup d'état in 2014.

The race between the Pheu Thai party and the Palang Pracharath party, which was established in favor of the coup leader General Prayuth Chan-o-cha, came neck and neck on the result. Nevertheless, the 250 members of the senate, which mostly was appointed by the junta, supported Gen. Prayuth to become the Prime Minister. At this point, General Wanlop Rugsanoh was appointed as the fourth Head of the Peace Dialogue Panel after this general election in 2019.

The Southern Border Provinces Administration and Development Policy 2017-2019 is the national master plan involving all key stakeholders to play a significant role in driving the Peace Dialogue Process that becomes a crucial policy of the Thai government. This gave the Thai government has a strong political institution to settle peace in the Deep South. However, the security structure under the process is incompatible with the existing structure of Mara Patani, which is the central organization to participate in the Peace Dialogue Process, and consists of various militant groups and factions in the area. Hence, Thai officials were unable to identify who really has the main control over the situation, which continues to be violent.

Furthermore, the four main opposing groups joined the annual meeting of Mara Patani in November 2019 at Kelantan Malaysia including, 1) The Barisan

Revolusi Nasional or the Patani Malayu National Revolutionary Front (BRN), 2) The Patani United Liberation Organization (PULO), 3) The Barisan Islam Pembebasan Patani (BIPP), and 4) Gerakan Mujahidin Islam Patani (GMIP). The representatives of each opposing group mutually agreed that the chairperson of Mara Patani should be appointed from the BRN, while the Head of the Peace Dialogue Panel should be a respected figure entrusted to facilitate the various groups within the Mara Patani.

At this point, the Mara Patani became a pan-belligerents group engaging with the Thai government in the dialogue. Nevertheless, their role and behavior in the Peace Dialogue Process made it difficult to identify who can control the separatist militant on the ground.¹⁷

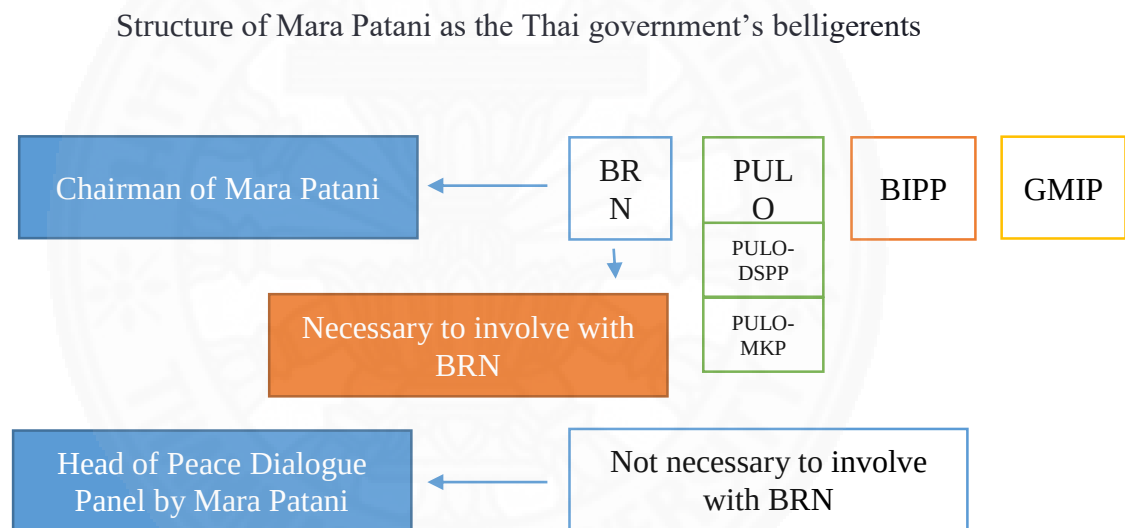


Figure 4.2: *The Structure of Opponent Groups*

The important information about this meeting is that the BRN will take the lead on steering the Mara Pattani.¹⁸ However, for other groups and factions, they have various incentives and expectations when joining Mara Patani to talk with the Thai government. Moreover, for some groups, when they decided to join the Peace Dialogue Process, they were accused of taking the side with the Thai government. From an academic perspective, the uncompromising position of the Thai State became an

¹⁷ The senior officer who are working related to the issue, interview by author, Bangkok, Thailand, January 10, 2020.

¹⁸ Confidential Interview by author, Songkhla, Thailand, February 4, 2020.

important reason for those insurgency to drop their weapon and getting into the Peace Dialogue Process.

Even Mara Patani was seen as a central organization helping the belligerents to engage with the Thai state in the dialogue. It was also believed that this organization was a channel to allow BRN, who needs a way to communicate, to seek a political solution with the Thai government.¹⁹ This was because a large number of violent incidents that happened on the ground were contributed to the BRN, showing their significance in the process.

4.4.5 The Current Progress on the Peace Dialogue Process

Recently, the Thai government has rebalanced the implementation of the peace dialogue, which was still led by the military. This process becomes more gentle and sincere. Structurally, the Thai political institutions are strong enough to back up the Peace Dialogue Process, including building trust and international awareness.

At the international level, the Thailand-Malaysia relationship is excellent in term of their diplomatic relationships, but for the Deep South issue, it faced a challenge on how to manage multiple actors in the Peace Dialogue Process in accordance with the Master Plan of 2017-2019, which allow all stakeholders to participate in the peace process. Usually, there is an implementation gap between the Thai military agency and those opposing groups in the Peace Dialogue Process. At the same time, the local people were also concerned about the activities of the military, which represents the Thai State, as they felt that those activities might take away their culture, tradition, and history.

On the other hand, the military, which is having total authority, concerns about the dual-citizenship issue. Some insurgents use this loophole to gain an advantage in setting up a violent attack in the south. Moreover, some members of the opposing group also hold dual-citizenship and trying to promote the idea of self-determination. This conflicting situation also affects the peace dialogue panel continuously. Thus, the military is not comfortable letting go of their control in the south. This is the reason why the Thai government needs to consider the demands of the opposing group very

¹⁹ Abu Hafez Al-Hakim, "What is Mara Patani?" Deep South Watch, last modified May 26, 2015, <https://deepsouthwatch.org/en/node/7211>.

carefully, especially to make sure that it complies with the Thai constitution, making the idea of self-determination become impossible.

Considering the political context, the Thai government is still in control of the political institution and the resolution of the Deep South situation with the strong power of the military. Moreover, the Thai government is also closely supported by the Malaysian government, as we can from the new mechanism called the Joint Working Committee on Security Cooperation (JWCSC) established in 2018 during the time of General Wanlop Rugsanoh, while he was a former secretary-general of the NSC. This cooperation ultimately reaffirms the high-level partnership on security cooperation between Thailand and Malaysia.

Even when there are big questions about the role of the military in the situation in the Deep South, the Thai government practically held an international conference in Bangkok on November 30, 2019, to answers some of the questions. In this conference, General Wanlop Rugsanoh, who was the newly appointed Head of the Peace Dialogue Panel, gave an opening remark about the way forward of the panel. He also pointed out that the Deep South conflict is an internal problem that occurs due to various factors. He also mentioned that the Peace Dialogue Process has not ended, but was trying to engage with groups that have an influence on the ground. He also expected the role of Malaysia in this process.

Gen. Wanlop reaffirmed that for the Thai government, the Peace Dialogue Process is implemented in the south through these mechanisms;

1) **Thai National Strategy** – the Southern Border Provinces Administration and Development Policy 2017 – 2019

2) **The Peace Dialogue Panel** – This mechanism is the heart of this process. The role of this mechanism is to acknowledge the feedback from the opposing group. This panel aims to listen to the voice of who stand opposed to the Thai State. Representatives from Thai national agencies are the members of this panel, including representatives from the National Security Council, the National Intelligence Agency, the Police Special Branch, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Justice.

3) **The local governmental agencies** – This role of local agencies such as the military will bring the policy into implementation in the area effectively. Importantly, this process will allow civil societies to participate in the process as well.

Under the convenience of the political context, the Thai government has more political advantages than the opponent groups. This condition allows the Thai government to steer the direction of the Peace Dialogue Process. With the help of Malaysia, the Thai government expects that the many of the opposing groups will be included, according to the Master Plan 2017-2019, which will allow all stakeholders to participate in the Peace Dialogue Process. The process also needs to adhere to the principles of human rights, the rule of law, and international covenants even if the violent situation is continuing.

4.4.6 Summarize the Peace Dialogue Process under Gen. Prayuth's Administration

The cause of the failed the Peace Dialogue Process under Gen. Prayuth's administration can be explained as the following;

Firstly, the political context, especially when power is in the hand of the military after the coup d' état that ousted Yingluck's government on May 22, 2014, meant that there is political stability at the national level. The military has become a strong agency in the making of a peace deal because the Thai government does not feel comfortable to give the opportunity of special administration or self-determination to those insurgencies, which diminished the likelihood of a win-win situation.

Significantly, since after the coup in 2014, the strong political institution remains in support of the military agency. This political context allows the military to carry out the Peace Dialogue Process under Gen. Prayuth's Government. With this condition, the military prioritizes controlling the situation with its power for national security. Even in 2017, they were successful in establishing safety zones, but it does not lead to the decline of violence in all areas. Perhaps, while the military has strong authority, Thailand might not be able to come up with an attractive peace deal.

From an academic perspective, there is a massive concern about the role of the military in the Deep South operation particularly, to respect the way of life of local people. However, the Thai government still owns the Southern Border Provinces Administration and Development Policy 2017-2019, which reaffirms the principle of human rights, the rule of law, and compliance with the international covenants.

Even though Gen. Prayuth's Government is unable to resolve the conflict, which is quite problematic to consider using the power against the violence, having total power, means that the government will be expected to have a successful outcome. The stability of the government will be compromised if they cannot find an effective solution to this long-term conflict.

Secondly, Gen. Prayuth implements the Peace Dialogue Process, which involves **multiple actors** in the peace dialogue. This is one of the causes of an unsuccessful outcome. The Thai government remains unsure who is in command of the opposing group in the peace dialogue. This also affects the mutual understanding that would lead to the cease of violence in the south.

Mara Patani is suspicious about the Peace Dialogue Process, especially in the hands of military agencies of the Thai government. Consequently, the Thai government needs to adapt the plan to cope with the situation, including Malaysian's help to further negotiation until it reaches the desirable outcome.

The uncompromising position makes the Thai government and the opponent groups remain at an impasse in the process due to the different conditions and demands by each side. Some of the insurgent group gains the benefit of having violent attacks in the south and promote the idea of self-determination. Other than that, the Thai government is still in control of the political institution steering the resolution of the Deep South situation with the strong power of the military, which operates under the condition given by the Thai Constitution that "the Thai territory cannot be separated." This completely diminished the possibility of self-determination.

Even though the Peace Dialogue Process has not met with the successful outcome, but all stakeholders should see that the decrease in violent attack is also one of the desirable outcomes, which is one crucial steppingstone toward peaceful conflict resolution.

4.5 Malaysia as the Facilitator

According to the role of Malaysia, the peace dialogue mostly discusses in private and facilitate by the Malaysian government. In other words, the role of Malaysia as a facilitator is essential for the Thai government in dealing with the conflict. Even

though there is some request from the south separatist for the Malaysian government to go beyond just a facilitator, but the diplomatic protocol between Thailand and Malaysia is still complying with the ASEAN charter on non-interference. This relationship is also essential to the Thailand-Malaysia partnership on security cooperation.

At the same time, the Malaysian government also pays attention to the Deep South conflict because the conflict in the South of Thailand can geographically spill over to the Northern Part of Malaysia if they did not support Thailand, as we can realize from the previous chapter that both countries need to enhance and strengthen their border management intensively. The Malaysian role as the facilitator to Thailand is very crucial to the Thai government, mainly to convince the belligerents and other opposing groups to engage with the Thai government in dealing with the Deep South conflicts peacefully.

Additionally, this study also summarizes the outcome of the facilitating role in the peace dialogue by the Malaysian government, which is a crucial reason that can contribute directly to Malaysia's security, not only the domestic affair but also the international affairs. Significantly, Malaysia gains the experience and recognition for the international role in global politics, particularly the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Malaysia always propounds taking action in international affairs by approaching moderate Muslims. Not only will Malaysia gain benefit from the development along their border, but they will also be recognized by Muslim countries and in the eye of international organizations, especially the OIC. The Malaysian government ultimately prioritizes the role in the OIC.

4.6 Summary

Under the Thai political context, **the political instability at the national level** is the main reason that makes the Peace Dialogue Process cannot meet with the successful outcome. The removal of Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra in the coup d'état on May 22, 2014, represent the relation between political factors and the military agency. This structure also is a crucial component to understand the cycle of the Peace Dialogue Process under Yingluck's government. Consequently, the Peace Dialogue Process under **Yingluck's Government lack of trust by the army** as she introduced

the idea of decentralizing the south in her political campaign, which was denied by the military. Her government also represents the image of Thaksin, who was removed by the military in 2006. While Gen. **Prayuth's administration mainly conducts the Peace Dialogue Process through the military agency**, which still has an essential role in the Peace Dialogue Panel under the context of political institutions after the removal of Yingluck by the coup d'état in 2014.

Consequently, **the military has become a strong agency in making a peace deal** because the Thai government does not feel comfortable to provide an idealistic offer relating to special administration or self-determination to those insurgencies. The military mainly concerns national security leading through a strong sense of power usage. This political condition presents the implementation gap in the peace process between the Thai military agency and those insurgencies group. The power in the hand of the military allows the Thai government to steer the direction of the Peace Dialogue Process with more power to stabilize national security. Moreover, at the operational level, the agency in charge of controlling the situation on the ground is the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC), which is a military agency.

As for the opposing groups, the **Thai government has more political advantages than they do**. This condition allows the Thai government to steer the direction of the Peace Dialogue Process. **The uncompromising position makes the Thai government and the opponent groups remain at an impasse** due to different conditions and demands by each side. Some of the insurgency set up a violent attack and vocalize the idea of self-determination against the Thai State. At the same time, Mara Patani, as a central organization, cannot control the situation on the ground. Hence, the Thai government remains in control the of the political institution and finding the way forward of the Deep South situation with the strong power of the military, with the attitude to comply with the Thai Constitution "the Thai territory cannot be separated" that completely diminished the idea of self-determination.

In foreign affairs, the Malaysian government is still assisting the Thai government in the role of the facilitator, which mainly to convince the opposing group to join the peace dialogue with the Thai government. This process can enhance the opportunity of dialogue continually. Meanwhile, the Deep South conflict is different from other issues. Malaysia still remains supporting Thailand only in the role of the

facilitator, because both countries still adhere to the concept of non-interference to comply with the ASEAN Charter. Importantly, the Thai government cannot deny assistance from Malaysia, even if it also benefits the Malaysian government, especially the recognition of their role in conflict resolution from the global perspective.



CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

According to Thailand – Malaysia security cooperation in this study: 1) The background of Communist Insurgency 2) Border Management to develop the border area and 3) The Peace Dialogue Process, which represents the distinction of structural factors, have an immense effect on the outcome. In the big picture, Thailand and Malaysia have a great partnership with security cooperation. There is no problem when both countries share a mutual benefit. However, the Deep South conflict is an exception because of the need to find a compromise among the various actors involved. The comparison of the cases are shown as follows;

Table 5.1

Case Study Summary

	Communist Insurgency	Border Management to develop the border area	The Peace Dialogue Process
Structural Factor	1) Thailand and Malaysia mutually opposed communist ideology. 2) The Thai political structure under the military regime, grant the benefit to eliminate the communist ideology out of the country	Economic Development and the Domestic Political Environment are the structural factors that make both countries cooperate closely after the Cold War period.	1) Yingluck's government <u>The Thai political instability at the national level</u> is the main reason that makes the Peace Dialogue Process cannot meet with the successful outcome. 2) Prayuth's government <u>The political is stable at the national level.</u> The structural factors are in favor of the Thai State for

	Communist Insurgency	Border Management to develop the border area	The Peace Dialogue Process
			fixing the problem, but the different views and conditions of each agency are unbalanced, making it difficult to compromise and make a political deal.
Key Agencies	Military Agencies	Military Agencies and another related mechanism	Military Agencies and the opposing group to the Thai State
Outcome	Succeeded	Succeeded	On-going

5.1 Thailand – Malaysia Security Cooperation Against the Communist Threat

During this time, the international political structure makes Thailand and Malaysia stand on the same side opposing the communist regime. The Thai political structure provides a suitable condition for dealing with communist insurgency with the Malaysian government, particularly the national policies. The Thai political agenda represented the same circumstance as well as the prevailing condition to eliminate communist threats. All these conditions at political structures level come together in the same way, mainly to support the military agency to find out the solution in dealing with the communist threat effectively and successfully.

5.2 Border Management to Develop the Border Area

The success in dealing with communist insurgency during the Cold War continuously contributed to Thailand – Malaysia's security cooperation. The role of the military under the context of the two structural factors: economic development and Thailand's internal politics plays an essential role in the military taking over in the security. This structural factor is the starting point that brings a great outcome to

Thailand and Malaysia, encouraging them to initiate more cooperation, especially the Joint Detail Survey for Demarcation mechanism. These developments represent the great friendship at the highest military partnership through their security cooperation, which extended into other areas of cooperation. After that, the development of infrastructure projects along the border areas represents the best practice on cooperation to the national level.

5.3 Thailand and Malaysia on the Peace Dialogue Process

The Deep South conflict is different from previous cases. Malaysia is supporting Thailand only in the role of a facilitator, and both countries highly comply with the non-interference principle under the ASEAN Charter. In addition, the Thai government cannot deny assistance from Malaysia, even if the Malaysian government gains an indirect benefit, especially the recognition of involving in a conflict resolution from the global perspective.

The study shows the causes of the unsuccessful the Peace Dialogue Process, are due to different political contexts between the two governments as follows;

1) **Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra:** The Thai political instability at the national level is the main reason that makes the Peace Dialogue Process cannot meet with the successful outcome.

2) **Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-o-cha:** The political context which gave the military the power after the coup d' état that ousted Yingluck's government on May 22, 2014, made **Thai politics is stable at the national level**. This allows the military to become a strong agency, playing a role in the Peace Dialogue Process.

Under the convenience of the political context, The Thai government has a robust military agency in dealing with the problem and in control of the peace dialogue process under the political institutions established after the coup d'etat in 2014. This condition seems to let the Thai government have more political advantages than the opposing group and allows the Thai government to steer the direction of the Peace Dialogue Process. At the national level, the Thai government expects that the issue of disunity among the parties in the opposing group can be resolved by the Master Plan 2017 – 2019, which allows all stakeholders to participate in the Peace Dialogue Process.

For the agencies, there are multiple actors in the Peace Dialogue Process. Even after Mara Patani became a central organization of pan-belligerents engaging the Thai government, nevertheless, their role and behavior made it difficult to identify whether or not they have the control over the situation on the ground. Moreover, some of the delegations from the opposing group joining the process have dual-citizenship and trying to promote the idea of self-determination. This is one of the main concerns and continues to effects the Peace Dialogue Process.

In summary, the Peace Dialogue Process for building mutual understanding and stopping the use of violence is still not a success. The military mainly concerns national security leading to a strong sense of power usage. There is a gap of imbalance between the agencies: the military side and the opposing groups to the Thai State. Therefore, the Peace Dialogue Process is unable to stop violence, and the uncompromising positions make the Thai government and the opposing groups facing an impasse in the process due to the different conditions and demands made by each side.

5.3.1 Discussion of This Study

The result of this study found that the distinction between structural and agential factors is the major cause of the outcome in Thailand – Malaysia security cooperation. Historically, the convenience of the political context during the Cold War makes Thailand and Malaysia stand on the same side to eliminate the communist threat successfully. At this point, both countries show a great friendship at the highest military through their security mechanisms. Their collaboration ultimately plays an essential role in strengthening security cooperation. This strong partnership is also proved by crucial evidence, that is, the Thailand - Malaysia military enjoying a special relationship, which makes both countries never go to war or have any serious disputes along their border area.

However, the case of the Peace Dialogue Process is different from the success case in the previous era. The development of international politics has set up an international organization, which meant that each state has to comply with the international norm. In this case, the non-interference was introduced to Thailand and Malaysia by the ASEAN Charter. Even when the notion of Nation-State has built up a

strong sense of Thai State, the central policies by the Thai government still create insecurity in the life of the local people, as well as the uncomfortable sense of belonging for the people in the south.

Consequently, domestic politics in Thailand allow the authority to prioritize preserving national security. Meanwhile, the political context during different government leads them to manage the conflict differently. Therefore, this reason is essential to understand the significance of the structural factors that will directly shape how the agency to carry out its activities.

As explained earlier, the unsuccessful Peace Dialogue Process present different political contexts between the two governments; the political circumstances and structures facing Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra (2011-2014) and Prime Minister General Prayuth Chan-o-cha (2015-now) have both hindered a successful peace deal. The Thai political context that became highly centralized under the military after the coup d' état in 2014 is the critical reason allowing the military to conduct the Peace Dialogue Process. In the eyes of the military, their main concern is national security, which is their priority to make decision-making. On the other hand, the separatist groups feel uncomfortable with the power of the military. This reason presents the imbalance making difficult the political deal to stop the violence in the Deep South.

5.3.2 Policy Orientation on Security Cooperation

At the international level, the role of Malaysia in helping Thailand remains essential, not only on supporting Thailand's as a facilitator in the Peace Dialogue Process, which is the heart of finding peaceful solutions but also in dealing with a violent attack by insurgents holding dual-citizenship, who use Malaysia as a sanctuary. Furthermore, the diplomatic channel between both countries is appropriated to support Thailand in this issue because of their excellent friendship status.

At the national level, the interactions of structural and agential factors shaped the process of decision-making and presented to the outcome differently. The military, which is the principal agency, has to comply with the national security and the constitution that diminished the idea of self-determination. On the other hand, they also received political attention to their role in the Peace Dialogue Process, especially their

role in maintaining security on the ground. From my point of view, the Master Plan 2017-2019, which will allow the involvement of all stakeholders in the peace process, can help rebrand the image of the military in dealing with the conflict to become more positive. However, the implementation of this plan is to limit to the relevant agencies. In contrast, the insurgents with dual-citizenship who are involved with the violence attack remain the concerns of the military. Therefore, the short-term option for the military is to control the situation on the ground, in conjunction with the implementation through the diplomatic channel, asking Malaysia to help with insurgents with dual-citizenship on a case-by-case basis. This option will be acceptable to all sides, which might decrease the role of the military on the ground, minimizing the chance to violate human rights in the Deep South.

5.3.3 Policy Suggestion on Thailand – Malaysia Security Cooperation

1. Thailand should consider cooperating with Malaysia in dealing with the Deep South conflict because Malaysia can help Thailand not only as a facilitator of the Peace Dialogue Process but also in dealing with the violent attack by that insurgent holding dual-citizenship who uses Malaysia as a sanctuary. Furthermore, this conflict can geographically spill over to the Northern Part of Malaysia if they do not support Thailand.

2. The Peace Dialogue Process

- 2.1 In the short-term, the peace process should be prioritized as the key mechanism to reduce the violent attack on the ground.

- 2.2 In the long-term, the implementation of a long-term operation is required, especially for trust-building, before making any commitment on the way forward for the Peace Dialogue Process. This is because the different views and conditions of each agency are unbalanced, making it difficult to compromise and become an attractive political deal.

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APPENDICES



APPENDIX A

PERSONS INTERVIEWED

No.	Current Position	Date	Location
1.	Senior Diplomat (retired)	August 28, 2019	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
2.	Military Officer	December 20, 2019	Yala, Thailand
3.	Military Officer	December 23, 2019	Bangkok Thailand
4.	Government Officer	January 10, 2020	Bangkok Thailand
5.	Diplomat	January 08, 2020	Penang, Malaysia
6.	Senior Diplomat	January 10, 2020	Bangkok Thailand
7.	Government Officer	February 04, 2020	Songkhla, Thailand
8.	Senior Military Officer	February 04, 2020	Songkhla Thailand

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Please describe the role of the military in the Deep South conflict. What is the major obstacle to the problems? How can this problem be resolved?
2. What is the main concern from the local people in the Deep South conflict?
3. What is the major obstacle to the Peace Dialogue Process?
4. What are the strong/weak points in the national policy relating to the Peace Dialogue Process?
5. Does political situation affect the Peace Dialogue Process?
6. Please describe the diplomatic relationship between Thailand and Malaysia.
7. What is the main problem of Thailand – Malaysia on security cooperation?
How does the National Agencies handle it?
8. How does the security cooperation between Thailand and Malaysia after the Cold War enhance current cooperation?

BIOGRAPHY

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