

# Thailand: The Lingering Spectre of US Colour Revolutions

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*Thailand's opposition is openly backed by powerful foreign interests, particularly those in Washington. As the opposition attempts to secure power and help serve as a vector for Western special interests, the spectre of a Western-sponsored "colour revolution" increasingly looms over Thailand's future.*

Thailand is a key Southeast Asian nation, with the second largest economy in the ASEAN regional bloc and a key regional partner for China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). By disrupting Thailand's political status quo, Washington hopes to introduce complications to China's regional and global rise.

## Taking to the Streets

In early December Thai opposition party "Future Forward" took to the streets with several hundred protesters, obstructing pedestrian bridges and sidewalks in downtown Bangkok.

While Future Forward's defacto leader, billionaire Thanathorn Juangroongruangkit, claimed he clogged Bangkok's downtown shopping district with followers to fight for "democracy" and "freedom," it was abundantly clear the mob he assembled was a direct reaction to recent court cases leveled against him and his party for repeated and blatant violations of Thai election laws.

This included Thanathorn's holding of media shares while campaigning which is illegal under Thai law. It also includes a supposed "loan" Thanathorn made worth tens of millions of Thai baht to his own party, a loan the party itself has no means of ever paying back, meaning that it was in fact a donation and therefore absolutely illegal under Thai election laws.

Rather than face justice, Thanathorn has assembled a street mob as a means of hanging the threat of eventual violence over the head of Thailand's courts in hopes of either reversing case decisions or reducing the penalties resulting from various court rulings.

Should nations like the US aid and abet Thanathorn's street politics, the potential for widespread violence may allow Thanathorn and his political machine to exercise further leverage not only to circumvent justice, but to assume the power and influence his party failed to render from general elections earlier this year. Future Forward came in distant 3rd.

## The Spectre of Malign Foreign Interference

The most troubling aspect of Thanathorn's recent foray into street politics is his open and deep ties to fellow billionaire and now fugitive Thaksin Shinawatra and his own use of violent

street politics to divide Thai society and to pressure Thailand's institutions into making concessions.

Thaksin, like Thanathorn, is likewise backed by large foreign special interests, particularly in Washington. For years he has secured the largest and most powerful lobbying firms in Washington to help shape Western media narratives favourably around his and his foreign sponsors' agenda of tipping Thailand back West and away from its growing ties with Beijing.

In 2009 Thaksin's street mobs disrupted the annual ASEAN summit held in southern Thailand while rioting across Bangkok, carrying out arson and killing two shopkeepers while looting local businesses.

In 2010, Thaksin augmented his street mobs with hundreds of heavily armed terrorists. With the use of war weapons, nearly 100 would die with the violence ending in a day of citywide arson causing billions in damages.

While many have attempted to write Thaksin off as a fading power and introduce Thanathorn as "new blood," the fact is that Thanathorn is little more than a nominee who represents Thaksin and his still dangerous political machine. Thanathorn's Future Forward Party headquarters is next door to Thaksin's Pheu Thai Party headquarters with both parties sharing resources, conducting joint press conferences and adopting a singular political agenda aimed at ousting the current government and assuming power.

Just as the US has done in other nations around the globe, it has selected and is backing political forces in Thailand it hopes can either one day assume power and serve as a vector for US interests, or at the very least render Thailand divided and weakened and "unavailable" to aid in and benefit from China's regional and global rise.

Thanathorn has already visibly enjoyed the benefits of US support. The US has marshalled its own embassy and the embassies of Western US allies [to come out in displays of support for Thanathorn](#) when summoned to face criminal charges.

The US also openly funds a small army of supposed "nongovernmental organisations" (NGOs) that not only support Thanathorn and his Future Forward Party, but also have supplied employees to Future Forward as founding members.

Under the guise of advocating for "human rights" and "democracy," US-funded NGOs use their resources and influence to shield Future Forward from justice by claiming criminal charges are politically-motivated or that Future Forward's conduct is merely "freedom of expression."

## Forward into a Dark Future

Thanathorn and his Future Forward Party claim they do not seek to replicate the violence of 2009 and 2010, despite openly serving Thaksin who was responsible for that violence. Thanathorn also claims he and his party do not seek to replicate the violence that has rocked Hong Kong recently, despite Thanathorn travelling to Hong Kong and openly supporting the US-funded and backed leaders of that violence.

It is clear that Thanathorn is merely attempting to hide what is otherwise an obvious agenda with an obvious and lingering conclusion; that of violence once again spilling into the

streets as a means for Thanathorn and the interests he represents to pressure the current Thai political order and exact concessions from them.

It is a dark future Thailand is being led into and one that will have a further negative impact on China as it seeks to compensate for US sanctions and targeted meddling by building ties with nations like Thailand. China cannot build constructive ties with Thailand if Thailand itself is consumed by political conflict and/or violence. Instability in Thailand and in China will produce synergistic benefits for Washington and its foreign policy of meddling, dividing and weakening its opponents, particularly in Asia where the US desperately seeks to reassert itself as a hegemon.

Understanding, exposing and resisting US foreign policy by denying Washington and its proxies the cover of “pro-democracy” or “pro-human rights” narratives is the first step to not only disrupting attempts to destabilise Thailand politically, but also to deny Washington the use of this tactic anywhere else.

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