

Vicious and paranoid : Thai elites in terminal decline ?

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Two people were recently arrested and charged under the computer crimes act for supposedly “spreading rumours which caused the Bangkok stock market to crash”. Democrat Party politicians and rabid PAD supporters see an international web of Red conspiracy under every bed in the land ! The PAD’s Manager news agency has even called for my arrest as one of the “master minds”. I would like to see them make a case for my arrest in a British court ! It would be a joke only if people weren’t really being arrested and charged inside Thailand under these preposterous charges.

In fact, as we all know, the stock market fall was prompted by real fears about the health of the King, who has been in hospital for a prolonged period. This is a fact, not a rumour. If our parents or grand parents, in their eighties, were admitted to hospital for over a month, we would all wonder whether they would survive. But, as I said to an international news agency recently, the King has every medical resource available to him and is quite capable of surviving for another decade. But we know for a fact that he is frail and in a wheel chair. He failed to make his annual speech last December. Will he miss the event again this year ?

Because of the lack of transparency about the Palace and continuous obtuse announcements made about the King’s “improving health”, there were rumours that he was dying. The royalist government have only themselves to blame for these rumours.

No evidence has been found of any such conspiracy or any profit-taking as a result of the crash in the stock market. The people who were arrested were merely posting explanations on various websites about why the stock market had crashed. Yet Panitan Wattanayagorn, ex-Chulalongkorn University academic and government poodle, claimed that the use of the computer crime law in this case was “necessary in order to protect national security”. Korn Chatikavanij, 2006 coup supporter, Oxford PPE graduate and Finance Minister, also justified the arrests “because the accused had posted comments on anti-government websites”. Perish the thought that there should be such things as anti-government websites in the New Order authoritarian climate created under the Premiership of fellow Oxford PPE graduate, Abhisit.

Let us get down to the facts. What the royalist government and the army were **really** frightened of is not any so-called rumours. They are dead scared about the King dying. This is because for the last half a century these elites have used the King to legitimise every undemocratic act they have ever carried out. The King was also used to justify acts of barbarism like the 6th October 1976 blood bath and executions of government critics under the military dictatorships. The King probably never “ordered” any of these events. But he also never criticised them. He happily accepted his ideological role of propping up the interests of the elites in the face of those who wanted to expand democracy and social justice or modernise society.

What will they do after he dies ? How will the elites justify their privileges and authoritarian rule ? His son or the Queen are hardly likely to be capable of continuing the process of legitimisation. They know that millions of Thais are tired of the Monarchy system because of the 2006 coup. Many say to themselves that they will quietly wait for the old man to die peacefully. But after that they will not

want another king. So this deep fear felt by the elites, as they look over the edge of the cliff into the abyss, is what is fuelling their vicious and paranoid attitude.