

## **Country seems fated to live within a politically charged climate in 2010**

Sunday 3 January 2010, by [ROJANAPHRUK Pravit](#) (Date first published: 1 January 2010).

What is certain about the upcoming major political protest by the red-shirt Democratic Alliance Against Dictatorship (DAAD) members is the political uncertainty it will engender. Their announced goal is to finally dislodge from power the Abhisit Vejjajiva government, which they deem as not legitimate, after their failed major attempt in April 2009. Asking top DAAD leaders about the likelihood of achieving their objective this time is not likely to gain accurate answers as whatever they say will be premeditated and calculated.

Relying on the mouthpiece-media of the anti-Thaksin People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD), such as the ASTV-Manager newspaper, isn't much more scientific. The December 26 to January 1 issue of the magazine relied on two "famous" fortune-tellers predicting the political future for 2010, concluding in its editorial that either a dissolution of the House or a military coup would occur.

"This is not superstition but meant to be for consideration and examination in order to assess the future situation with preparedness..." said the PAD media's editorial, defending its method of choice.

Back in the real world, factors like the upcoming decision on the fate of Thaksin Shinawatra's Bt76 billion in assets seized by the Supreme Court will likely be an important factor in speeding up and accelerating the protest. The ousted and convicted former premier seems to be working hard to energise a new wave of major protest, suggesting this week that red shirts might like to pay a visit to some "biased" media outlets. Other factors include how much more volatility Thai people are willing to accept politically and economically as the protracted conflict seems trapped in a tunnel with no light visible at the end.

Also, the alleged irregularity in political funds received by the ruling Democrat Party is another potential hot potato. Then there's the military, some of whom are red and supporting Pheu Thai Party chairman General Chavalit Yongchaiyud. There's also speculation about the jockeying and realignment within the political elite to suit a new political landscape.

One well-educated red-shirt protester, who played a key role in taking over of the Din Daeng delta area in April, said the movement has not lost its steam since that failed attempt to dislodge the government and will not wait until next April - probably mounting a major offensive in January. "We won't wait until Songkran," said the source, who asked not to be named because she is a government official. The source is confident an attempt by the DAAD to politically educate people about the evils of an elite monopoly over politics will help make the upcoming protest bigger and possibly decisive.

Not so, said key red-shirt member Sombat Boonngam-anong, who is known to be openly critical of the red-shirt movement. Sombat said although support among red shirts is not falling, both red shirts and PAD yellow shirts are having a hard time winning new converts. Sombat believes the course of politics next year will be decided by the majority of the populace who are neither red nor yellow shirts.

“The game is now up to those in the middle to determine,” said Sombat, who is opposed to any military intervention and the possible launching of barriers against media outlets they see as biased. “Street fights will only serve as a way to apply [political] pressure - but I don’t believe that victory will be achieved on the streets. As long as the military does not intervene and politics is left inside parliament it will be up to a new election.”

Because too many variables are involved, it is not possible to make any prediction and much of the situation is in a state of flux. But if the red shirts have things their way, there’s no reason why they should not want to see the government dislodged by street protests or by calling for a snap election.

All sides must try to do what they can to avoid street violence or military intervention while people continue to live with this state of prolonged political conflict.

---

**P.S.**

From Prachatai.

<http://www.prachatai.com/english/node/1559>