

The Soap Opera about Amnesty in Thailand

Friday 8 November 2013, by [UNGPAKORN Giles Ji](#) (Date first published: 7 November 2013).

Thailand is being subjected to a sickening “soap opera” over the Amnesty Bill which sought to white-wash the crimes of the military and the Democrat Party and to allow Taksin to return while leaving the lese majeste prisoners in jail.

In the first scene the red shirt UDD leadership asked for a “divorce” from the Pua Thai governing party because of a dispute about TV coverage. This little tantrum was useful in indulging red shirts who were unhappy with the Amnesty Bill. But we need to listen carefully to what the UDD failed to say. They never said they would mobilise red shirts to oppose the Pua Thai government and call for generals Prayut and Anupong and Democrat Party politicians Abhisit and Sutep to be punished for killing unarmed civilians. They remained silent as usual about lese majeste and the lese majeste political prisoners who are in jail. In fact they actually said that they would protect the government. All in all, the UDD’s opposition to the Amnesty Bill was merely creating an image.

In the second scene Pua Thai announced that they were going to withdraw the Amnesty Bill if the senate rejected it. But there was no mention of bringing Prayut, Anupong, Abhisit and Sutep to justice. In fact Pua Thai and their partners in the UDD leadership stopped talking about the crimes of the military since 2011. They only talked about Abhisit and Sutep, but failed to help send them to the international criminal court. This is despite the fact that the military staged a coup in 2006, appointed the Abhisit government and then went on to murder pro-democracy demonstrators in 2010. Pua Thai also failed to promise that they would oppose any white-wash amnesty bill proposed by others in future.

In the third scene, the plot took a small diversion. Taksin came out to say all the fuss about the Amnesty Bill was “just about me”... Me! Me! Me! He said how much he had suffered while never mentioning the lese majeste prisoners. But millionaires like Taksin have an easy time wherever they are in the world, unlike prisoners in Thai jails or other exiles. Taksin also had the audacity to ask everyone to “swallow a little blood for peace”. The fact is that many red shirts already swallowed large quantities of blood when they were gunned down by the army.

The forth scene turned towards a ghost story. UDD leaders, and those who uncritically support the Pua Thai government, started raising the spectre of a “coup”. They always do this to pull dissenting red shirts into line. But there is absolutely no danger of a coup at this moment. The military don’t want to be brought to justice and they have a nice little pact with Taksin and Pua Thai anyway. Since 2011 Yingluck has been seen smiling in the company of the generals. Talk of a coup is just like the little boy crying “Wolf!!” We must not be fooled by this nonsense.

In another part of town various yellow shirt reactionaries, along with Democrat Party politicians, all of whom supported the 2006 military coup and the atrocities against the red shirts, have been gathering to oppose the Amnesty Bill. But they do this for one single reason. They hate Taksin. They don’t give a fig for human rights or democracy. Yet this is a problem created by the fact that Pua Thai wanted to give amnesty to Taksin. Pua Thai and the UDD are now opposing democracy and human rights, just like the yellow shirts, because they want to make sure that state murderers once again go free while protecting the draconian lese majeste law.

In the fifth scene the UDD leadership and the Pua Thai government kiss and make up. Apparently the UDD were just playing “hard to get”.

Those who believe in democracy and human rights should not be diverted by this ridiculous soap opera. The basic issues are that state murderers should be punished, the lese majeste law must be scrapped and the lese majeste political prisoners released.

Giles Ji Ungpakorn
