What's Really Happening in Southern Thailand?

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In June 2006, I sat in a Yala village chatting to four very ordinary youths who had taken part in some extraordinary events. Early in the morning of 28 April 2004, these unassuming young men – in their late teens and early twenties – had been roused, made their morning prayers, and given some unusual-tasting tea to drink. Carrying kitchen knives they had borrowed from home the previous evening, they set out on motorcycles in small groups. A trusted local Islamic teacher, Ustad So, had told them to attack two nearby security installations and steal some weapons. They were never told what to do with the weapons, or where to meet up after the attacks. Within a few minutes, their leaders and most of their group had been shot dead by armed Thai security personnel. These four had managed to escape; after surrendering to the authorities, they had now returned to relatively normal life in the village. They could give no convincing explanation to why they had joined a war against the Thai state, a war they claimed they never understood. On that same day, 105 fellow "militants" perished in a series of simultaneous attacks, 32 of them when the Thai army stormed the historic Kru-Ze mosque, where they had taken refuge. Ustad So disappeared without trace. A low-intensity civil war is still underway in Southern Thailand, a war about which there remain more questions than answers. Even those who have participated in the violence, like these youths, seem unable to account for it.

A common but troubling reading of the Southern Thai conflict uses the tropes of "Islamic violence" and the global "war on terror" to frame the violence within larger notions of a civilizational clash between Islam and the West.[1] According to this perspective, popularized by terrorism specialists such as Rohan Gunaratne and Zachary Abuza, the Thai conflict forms part of a wider pan-Southeast Asian network of radical Islamic violence. Viewing Thailand as a western-aligned democratic nation, terrorism specialists tend to regard Malay Muslim resistance to the Thai state as animated by a worldwide resurgence of radical Islam aimed at overturning democracy, and instituting some form of caliphate. In a damning indictment, Michael Connors has shown that Gunaratne's writings are riddled with embarrassing errors of fact and interpretation: Connors advocates a "war on error" to counter the ill-informed, sensationalist and muddle-headed work too often published by members of the "insecurity industry."[2] Terrorism experts frequently know very little about the countries on which they write, constructing arguments on the basis of news-clippings, internet sources, and (if they are lucky) confidential briefings from security sources. Outside the United States, a backlash against such work is currently under way;[3] a

new academic journal has been launched, which aims to champion a critical turn in terrorism studies.[4]

As John Sidel has cogently argued, the idea of a coherent and expansionist radical regional Islamist movement is deeply flawed.[5] He advocates a much closer examination of the interplay between Islam, radicalism and violence in Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia and Thailand, to provide a "fully elaborated" understanding of recent developments, one that traces how Islamist political grouping across the region have experienced "demobilization, dissension, disappointment and disentanglement from state power."[6] Radicalization has taken place largely in response to specific setbacks, declines and defeats, often associated with challenges to religious authority and identity. Overall, the strength of radical Islamist movements in Southeast Asia actually declined significantly between 2000 and 2007. The pronouncements and performance of security agencies in Southeast Asia need to be exposed to much greater critical scrutiny.

I would like to root the Southern Thai conflict in Thailand's persistent failure to establish legitimate participatory rule in the Malay-Muslim majority provinces of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat. Thailand's security forces are not as the primary agency for the solution of the conflict, but they are a core component of the problem. Islam is a rhetorical resource selectively invoked by militant groups in the Thai South, rather than the source of their core motivation. Echoing the title of the International Crisis Group's first report on the Southern Thai conflict, I think of the conflict as an insurgency, not a jihad.

But was the war essentially a "separatist" conflict? Previous waves of violence in the South from the 1960s onwards had been perpetrated by clearly defined separatist groups, most notably PULO and BRN, both of which later splintered and assumed new forms. The failure of any group to make public claims of responsibility for the renewed violence led to some initial skepticism that the militants were pursuing explicit political goals. Over time, a consensus has emerged that the violence is animated by demands for an independent state, or at least an autonomous region, in the deep South of Thailand. The nature of the militant movement, however, continues to be a source of controversy: how far is there a clear command structure? Some analysts insist that the movement is essentially a reconfigured version of earlier groups such as BRN Co-ordinate (BRN-C, descended from BRN), while others see the movement as a shadowy and largely *ad hoc* network.

The Southern Thai conflict has been a largely invisible war to the outside world, one little reported in the global media. By the end of April 2007, 2200 people had been killed and 3654 injured.[7] There were 1850 incidents in 2004, 2297 in 2005, 1815 in 2006, and 723 in the first four months of 2007. While the large-scale fatalities of April 28 and October 25, 2004 were not been surpassed,[8] from 2005 onwards deaths rarely fell below 40 per month, regularly topped 60, and occasionally exceeded 80. Most people who died were shot in ones or twos; numbers of shootings never dropped below 40 per month in the forty months after January 2004, and often exceeded 80; in seven of these months there were more than a hundred shootings. Bombs, both thrown and remotely triggered, were also commonly used in the conflict: military patrols were often targeted to deadly effect, while bombs were also planted in markets, cafes, government buildings and other commercial locations. However, explosive devices rarely caused large numbers of casualties; their impact was usually more psychological. Co-ordinated attacks, in which as many as sixty targets were hit simultaneously, were staged quite regularly; again, casualties in these attacks were often quite low. Some victims of violence were beheaded after being killed.

While soldiers and members of the security forces regularly topped the casualty lists, in the first six months of 2007 farmers were the largest category of victims, traders the third largest, and factory workers the fifth largest.[9] The war took an increasingly ugly turn, as the violence became less focused and less controlled. Large numbers of teachers and school staff – in many areas, the front-line of the Thai state – were killed and injured in the violence. The conflict was a murky one, since the militant groups involved made no public statements of responsibility, and articulated no demands. Many victims were Muslims, who were fingered as *munafik* (traitors to their religion) because they either worked openly for the Thai side, or were regarded as undercover informers. Most attacks were carried out by small groups of youths who quickly disappeared back into their communities. Some of those who died were killed extra-judicially by the authorities, while others were victims of revenge killings. Other killings were just dry runs: young militants often attacked civilians to test their skills and courage before hitting harder security targets. Some supposedly insurgency-related incidents were actually ordinary crimes motivated by personal conflicts, of the kind that claim many lives across Thailand every day.[10] Just what proportion of incidents were militant violence, extra-judicial violence and ordinary crime was a source of considerable controversy. My own view was that between 70

and 80 per cent of incidents were carried out by militants (almost 2000 killings), between 10 and 20 per cent were linked to the authorities, and around 10 per cent were essentially criminal. During 2006 and 2007, the number of extra-judicial killings seemed actually to be increasing, despite official claims to the contrary.

Partly because foreigners were not targeted in the violence, international media interest was very limited.[11] More than a thousand kilometers from Bangkok, Pattani had no regular foreign correspondents in residence. It was visited mainly by well-intentioned "parachute journalists" writing somewhat predictable stories, typically citing the same well-worn informants favored by local fixers. The Thai authorities were keen to play down the Southern unrest, discouraging diplomats and international organizations from enquiring too deeply into the conflict. Most ambassadors to Thailand never visited the region, ostensibly for security reasons. Following the October 25, 2004 Tak Bai incident, the Foreign Ministry briefed the diplomatic community in Bangkok, far from the tragic events themselves; at the ASEAN summit in Vientiane later that year, Thaksin threatened to walk out if Tak Bai or other abuses in the South was raised by his counterparts. When the Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Professor Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, visited Thailand in 2007, he confined his stay to Bangkok.[12] Thai officials viewed interest in the conflict by ASEAN, the OIC and UN agencies with intense suspicion, fearing that international attention could lead to pressures for Aceh-style autonomy or an East Timor-style independence referendum. They were also concerned that if the scale of the conflict – an average of almost 700 deaths annually from 2004 to 2007 – became widely understood, the lucrative Thai tourist industry, much of it focused around Southern beach resorts such as Phuket, could be adversely affected. As so often, Thais were preoccupied with saving face and presenting a positive image to the outside world, however incomplete or misleading.

The conflict was a source of tension between Thailand and Malaysia. An unknown but sizeable number of Malay Muslims in the southern provinces held dual Thai and Malaysian citizenship, and Thailand-based voters undoubtedly helped keep the opposition party PAS in power in neighboring Kelantan. While the UMNO-led Kuala Lumpur government had nothing to gain from violence and instability on Malaysia's borders, most Malaysian Malays felt considerable residual sympathy for Patani Malays, viewing them as a kindred and repressed minority. Thaksin's government – and many officials in the Southern border provinces – tended to believe

that Malaysia was "behind" the southern conflict. Certainly, many members of the old separatist groups were based on the Malaysian side of the border; but this was a far cry from demonstrating the active complicity of the Malaysian state in the ongoing violence. The full story of the conflict's "Malaysian connection" has yet to be written, and is outside the scope of this presentation. But a peaceful resolution of the conflict was strongly desired by elites in both Kuala Lumpur and Singapore, who feared a contagion of Islamic radicalism and irredentism along the Malay peninsula. In this sense, Southern Thailand was a significant regional issue.

In public at least, the United States has adopted a hands-off approach the conflict; former premier Anand Panyarachun, asked by an American journalist what his country could do to help with the conflict, responded "Tell them to stay the hell out of here."[13] Matt Wheeler, after a careful review of the evidence, argues that despite its interventionism in the Middle East, the United States has adopted a measured and restrained stance towards the Southern Thai conflict.[14] But local suspicions concerning American involvement were widespread, and were publicly voiced by figures such as former senators Fakhruddin Boto and Suphon Supapong, and academic-turned-Democrat-MP Perayot Rahimulla. Despite insisting that the conflict was an internal matter, the Americans grew increasingly alarmed by the incoherence and ineptitude of the Bangkok government's responses to the growing crisis. Because of the sensitivity of the issue, almost any moves by the United States on the South were likely to be counter-productive.

Towards an interpretation

In the end, the Southern Thai conflict is a war over legitimacy. For significant numbers of Patani Malays, Thai rule over their region has long lacked legitimacy; over the past century, rebellious leaders and militant groups have periodically sought to nudge legitimacy strain towards legitimacy crisis. In their attempts to fuel uprisings against Thai rule, rebels have been aided and abetted by the inept repression to which Bangkok has regularly resorted. During the second half of the twentieth century, the Thai state sought to manage the provinces largely through the imposition of virtuous monarchical and bureaucratic rule, a mode of legitimacy predicated on the shared shibboleth "Nation, Religion, King." This shibboleth failed to resonate in Patani.

Since the Prem initiatives of the early 1980s, Bangkok has approached the deep South using two simple interlocking strategies: co-opt and control Islamic

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leaders and teachers, and co-opt and control the Malay Muslim political elite. Those who had taken up arms were persuaded instead to buy into a *modus vivendi* with the Thai state. These processes were managed through the use of representative bodies, including provincial Islamic councils, parliamentary seats, and elected sub-district councils. Because Malay Muslims constituted only around a fortieth of Thailand's population, they were structurally doomed to impotence within the country's Buddhist-dominated political order. Bangkok sought to use representative politics to relegate Malay Muslims to permanent marginality within the Thai state, while lionizing the virtuous tokenism of individual leaders such as former interior minister Wan Muhammad Nor Matha. Yet these strategies of co-optation were fraught with danger, since the co-opted elites gradually became alienated from the ordinary people of the region. Prominent Islamic leaders found themselves major beneficiaries of the Thai state, especially those who tapped into the lucrative business of running "private" Islamic schools that lived on public funds. While the Malay Muslim political class emulated their counterparts in the rest of Thailand by building powerful networks of vote-canvassers and *phuak*, these networks were focused on securing periodic and nominal electoral support, rather than on incorporating villagers into wider Thai society. The political space offered by the Thai state turned out to be largely ornamental, rather than providing real opportunities for local popular participation.

As the Prem-era social compact began to unravel, Patani militant groups began to prepare for a fresh attempt to "out" the Thai state as an illegitimate power. When Thaksin Shinawatra became prime minister, the militants were handed new opportunities to foment rebellion. Thaksin ousted the pragmatic accommodationists of the Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre and the Fourth Army who had managed security in the deep South for two decades, and gave a bunch of vicious and incompetent Bangkok police officers what amounted to a license to kill. Mayhem quickly ensued, and during the southern *annus horribilis* of 2004, militant groups staged three major actions designed to humiliate and discredit the Thai state: January 4, April 28, and October 25. The first of these actions demonstrated the complacency and incompetence of the Thai military; the second showed up the excessive eagerness of the infidel Thai authorities to violate the ancient mosque of Kru-Ze; and the third illustrated the cruelty and thirst for vengeance of the security forces. All three actions

were revealing about the scope, depth and determination of the resurgent militant movement.

When these disasters struck, the Malay-Muslim elites on whom the Thai state had been relying to manage the region's population were nowhere to be seen. Islamic leaders had precious little to say about the violence, and Wan Nor and his fellow Wadah group politicians were so compromised that they failed effectively either to represent the fury of the South to Bangkok, or to communicate Bangkok's position to the South. The Thaksin government even tried to blame the Wadah group for what had happened, putting MP Najmuddin Umar on trial for treason, in a tragic-comic attempt to teach Wadah a lesson. In the February 2005 elections, all the Malay Muslims who stood in border province constituencies for Thaksin's Thai Rak Thai Party lost their seats. Unhappy with the failure of the provincial Islamic councils to toe Bangkok's line and condemn the violence, Thaksin loyalists, elements of network monarchy and the military joined forces to try and manipulate the outcomes of the November 2005 Islamic council elections. They had limited success.

Meanwhile the violence continued unabated. There were no more incidents on the scale of Kru-Ze or Tak Bai, but daily killings increasingly targeted civilians and Muslims rather than members of the security forces. Antisystem violence began to take on a cruel logic of its own, as the militants deployed the idiom of Islam to justify beheadings, killings of monks, and other grotesque actions that fed upon themselves. The security forces adopted a more outwardly conciliatory posture, trying to prevent any major confrontations that would attract critical international coverage. Nevertheless, an informal policy of selective extra-judicial killings still operated in certain areas, and both Muslim and Buddhist communities were rife with rumor and fear. Adopting muddled royal-speech-derived notions of the need to distinguish between "good" and "bad" Muslims, the security forces made matters on the ground worse with a range of ill-conceived schemes. The worst of these was the "surrender program," which forced thousands of innocent men to spend time undergoing nationalist indoctrination in Army camps in central Thailand. The security forces proved terminally incompetent in their day-to-day operations, and persistently failed to grasp that most Malay Muslims were neither "good" nor "bad," but simply trying to survive in a murky environment where they feared antagonizing either the state authorities or the burgeoning militant movement.

During his last months in office, Thaksin lost all interest in the South as he concentrated on trying to shore up his own flagging legitimacy as prime minister. The National Reconciliation Commission he had created under pressure from his liberal and royalist critics published a rather mild report in June 2006, which defined the Southern conflict largely in terms of justice issues, and failed to acknowledge either the strength of the militant movement, or the essentially political nature of their cause. Following an aborted April 2006 snap election and interventions by the King and Prem, Thaksin was finally ousted in the September 19, 2006 military coup. The loyal monarchists who staged the coup and led the interim government hoped that their restoration of virtuous rule would lay the foundations for a return to peace in the deep South. But the cat was out of the bag: militant cells had been established across much of the three provinces, and the Surayud Chulanont government had nothing new to offer the mainly young fighters who had increasingly grown angry and bloodthirsty. Stuck in a strategic time-warp, the government talked of offering the militants an amnesty – failing to understand that concessions used to neutralize the Communist Party of Thailand and an earlier incarnation of the Southern militants twenty-five years earlier were no longer appropriate.

The militants were now in the ascendant. Ultimately, the fighters are defined by their actions, not by formal designations. While some militant actions are co-ordinated, this does not imply that all the fighters are subject to central control. Much of the violence is being carried on the basis of local initiatives, sometimes opportunistically or for purposes of revenge. Fighters are supported by a much larger community of sympathizers who can be mobilized for protests and other support activities. In some areas, movement sympathizers constitute more than half or two-thirds of the population, though some of these are passive sympathizers who are playing along largely as a survival strategy. In many parts of the three provinces, the Thai state has little real authority: local leaders such as village headmen must live in constant fear of the movement, with which they sometimes also sympathize. Evidence that the movement is trying to develop administrative structures parallel to the state is patchy, and this argument has probably been overblown by security officials.

Their incompetence and lack of stomach for fighting exposed, the Thai military sought to subcontract and privatize the conflict, delegating front-line security duties to rangers, volunteers and militias wherever possible. By 2007, there were signs that communal violence was beginning: attacks on mosques and Islamic schools

bore all the hallmarks of actions by rogue militias or revengeful Buddhists. The government wanted to negotiate, and self-proclaimed leaders based in Sweden and elsewhere professed themselves ready to talk. But there was little evidence that anyone could stop the militant violence. The movement was no longer a reconfigured version of old groups such as BRN-Co-ordinate, whatever the Thai authorities preferred to believe. Rather, it was a liminal lattice, not so much an organization as a set of intangible connections that grew more liminal and less lattice-like as time went on. Despite occasional co-ordinated attacks, most of the incidents were conducted by self-managed violence franchises. The fighters had gone feral. There were no real masterminds.

Under these circumstances, a solution is extremely elusive. Some have argued for an Iraq-style "surge" in the Thai south, the creation of a "security grid" that would dramatically curtail levels of violence and limit militant activity. But given the terrible limitations of the Thai security forces, boosting troop numbers would probably make matters worse, and any grid would surely prove completely useless. Since the conflict is essentially about the perceived illegitimacy of the Thai state in the deep South, any solution needs to focus primarily on the legitimacy crisis. Thai-style virtuous legitimacy will not wash in Patani, while representative legitimacy on Thai terms has been tested and discredited. The only way forward is to try some form of participatory legitimacy: to give Malay Muslims substantial control over their own affairs, whilst retaining the border region as part of Thailand. In other words, substantive autonomy – probably called something else – is probably the only long-term solution that might satisfy most parties to the conflict. To broker this settlement, to ensure the peace, and to marginalize the extremists who would seek to subvert it, new political and security arrangements will be needed. Some kind of peace-keeping force might be a way forward. Understandably, most Thais would not welcome such developments. But it has come to this. The militant movement is unlikely to overpower the Thai state by military means in the foreseeable future. The question for Bangkok is a simple one: preserve nominal Thai rule in the southern provinces at the price of potentially indefinite daily killings and bombings, or seriously consider some very unpalatable alternatives? Peace will likely only be restored in the South of Thailand when political legitimacy has been firmly established.

Cookie-cutter readings of "ethnic conflicts" based on troubling tropes such as "Islamic violence" and "international terrorism" fail to account for developments in

Southern Thailand. Like Muslims in many other countries, Patani Muslims do not rebel because of deep-rooted socio-economic or psychological grievances, and nor are they primarily animated by jihadist ideologies. Their cause is a political one which centers on local questions of legitimacy; they want to regain control of territory they believe to be theirs, and doing so involves violently rejecting the claims of the Thai state upon that territory. Understanding such conflicts involves a central focus on political process and opportunities, for which Islam serves simply as a mobilizing resource, and a means of framing increasingly shrill justifications for the anticivilian violence that all too often develops a chilling momentum of its own.

For some, the most striking features of my arguments may be two "negative findings." First of all, the Southern Thai conflict is not centrally about Islam. It is certainly true that the militants have capitalized on the way the religious elite have suffered a loss of authority, and that the Thai state has exacerbated matters by meddling with Islamic provincial councils and conspicuously co-opting the owners of private Islamic schools. This loss of authority by older imam and school owners has created a gap into which younger, more aggressive men have stepped. It is equally true that pondok teachers and ustadz have played pivotal roles in recruiting young men to militant activity. In addition, much of the recruitment and training has employed Islamic rhetoric: swearing ceremonies, magic rituals, and talk of jihad. This talk of jihad spills over into some of the anonymous leaflets and public discourse of the movement. But none of this makes the Patani conflict a religious conflict. The primary emphasis of the militants is on historical and political grievances, not religious ones. Islam has something to do with it, but the conflict is not about Islam.

Second, the Southern Thai conflict is not really part of a global conflict, a global jihad, or a global war on terror. In any case, the Islam underlying the Southern Thai conflict is local, "traditionalist" Islam, not Islam of the Salafi-Wahhabi variety. And while the insurgency has regional connotations – especially in relation to Thailand's border with Malaysia – nor is the Patani conflict a regional one. Yes, some ustadz in the deep South have trained abroad, in Pakistan, the Middle East, and Indonesia. Yes, there is some traffic between the Thai South and places such as Cambodia and Aceh. Yes, many Malay Muslims in Southern Thailand have dual Malaysian citizenship, and many more have spent time working, legally or illegally, in Malaysia. Militant groups undoubtedly have cells in Malaysia, and some leaders of the old "armed groups" are based there. But the prime movers in the recent fighting

are firmly based in Southern Thailand itself. Engaged in a fiercely nationalist struggle, they do not solicit much support from outsiders. This is a conflict between Patani and Bangkok. In that sense, it differs greatly from better known, more internationalized and more explicitly "Islamist" conflicts such as those in Afghanistan and Iraq; a familiarity with these conflicts may not always help to explain what is happening in Southern Thailand. However, many elements of the Patani conflict have strong parallels with other "Muslim rebellions" across the world. The story of the Southern Thai conflict is replete with resonances: a legitimacy deficit and some ham-fisted repression can all too readily fuel a backlash against unpopular rule.

These two conclusions – that this is not a jihad, and it is not regional or global – may disappoint those who are hoping for neater and more satisfying explanations, explanations that allow them to frame the Southern Thai conflict more readily and conveniently. But this is a messy, awkward, in-your-face conflict – not the type favored by generic experts. The conflict in Thailand's Southern border provinces is unlikely to be readily resolved by any post-coup government. A return to relative political normalcy in Bangkok – whatever that may mean – is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the beginnings of a solution. But thinking towards a solution will involve a realistic understanding that the war in the South cannot be won by military means, especially if the Thai security forces remain inept at best, and abusive at worst. Nor will soft Thai language about "justice" and "reconciliation" convince ordinary Malay Muslims, if not backed up by real changes to the culture of impunity, and real proposals for establishing participatory rule and participatory bureaucracy in the deep South. Southern militants thrive because the Thai state lacks legitimacy: to defeat them, that legitimacy must first be restored.

Author Note

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Notes

1 For a critical view of the way Islam and terrorism are commonly conflated and confused in academic literature and beyond, see Richard Jackson, "Constructing Enemies: Islamic terrorism in Political and Academic Discourse," Government and Opposition, 42, 3 (2007): 394–426.

2 Michael Connors, "War on Error and the Southern Fire: How Terrorism Analysts get it Wrong," in Rethinking Thailand's Southern Violence, ed. Duncan McCargo (Singapore: NUS Press, 2007), 145–64 (also in Critical Asian Studies 38, 1 (2006)).

3 See Natasha Hamilton-Hart, "Terrorism in Southeast Asia: Expert Analysis, Myopia and Fantasy," The Pacific Review 18, 3 (2005): 303–26.

4 The new journal is Critical Studies on Terrorism. See Jeroen Gunning, "A Case for Critical Terrorism Studies?" Government and Opposition 42, 3 (2007): 363–393, 2007.

5 John T. Sidel, The Islamist Threat in Southeast Asia: A Reassessment (Washington DC: East-West Center, Policy Studies 37, 2007), 3.

6 Sidel, Islamist Threat, 3–4.

7 ศรีสมภพ จิตร์ภิรมย์ศรี 40 เดือนความรุนแรง: สุดปลายขอบการใช้เหตุผลและสมานฉันท์ ? [Srisompob Jitpiromsri, 40 Months of Violence: Reaching the Edge of Rationality and Reconciliation?] June 4, 2007. This and other invaluable Thai-language reports on the violence may be found by visiting http://www.deepsouthwatch.org and clicking on the box with Srisompob's name.

8 More than a hundred men died on April 28, 2004, and over eighty on October 25.

9 Srisompob Jitpiromsri, ข้อมูลเชิงประจักษ์ภาคประชาสังคม สถานการณ์ชายแดนใต้ "ดีขึ้น" จริงหรือ? ["Empirical Data from Civil Society: Has the Southern Border Situation Really 'Improved?'"], August 11, 2007, http://www.deepsouthwatch.org/.

10 Thailand is a violent society, with the highest homicide rate in Southeast Asia and the second highest in Asia (8.47 per 100,000 in 2000), well above the United States (5.5), and far more than most developed countries (typically between 2 and 3). See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_homicide_rate

11 Two tourists, one Malaysian and one Canadian, were killed in bomb incidents in Sungai Kolok and Hat Yai.

12 A lower-level OIC delegation did visit the South in June 2005.

13 I witnessed this exchange (cited by Wheeler) in Pattani on November 11, 2005.

14 Matthew Wheeler, "US and Southern Thailand Conflict", unpublished paper presented at seminar on "Southern Violence and the Thai State" organized by Chaiwat Satha-Anand, Sirindhorn Anthropology Centre, Bangkok, August 18–19, 2006.