

Chronology: Thailand House of Representatives Election 2006

Compiled by *Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL)*

August 10, 2006
The Nation

Secret EC polling today

In the secret polling today by 86 judges, candidates will need to win more than half of the total votes, or a minimum of 44.

The Supreme Court normally nominates only five candidates to the Senate. But the legislature cannot form a selection committee because Parliament is not sitting. In the absence of a parliamentary panel the Constitution allows the Supreme Court to nominate all 10 candidates.

August 11, 2006
The Nation

Judges dominate list of nominees

Judges and legal experts dominate a list of 10 nominees for the new Election Commission (EC) chosen by the Supreme Court yesterday.

Only three of the Supreme Court's 86 judges were absent from an eight-hour meeting yesterday in which they cast secret ballots to select the 10 nominees from a list of 42 candidates.

In the secret polling, candidates needed to win more than half of the total votes from the 83 judges. The first five nominees were chosen in the morning session. They were Wicha Mahakhun, Wasan Soipisut, Apichat Sukhakkanon, Udom Fuangfung and Somchai Jungprasert.

The second five, selected in the afternoon, were Prapan Naikowit, Kaewsan Atibhodi, Sodsri Satayathum, Sumet Oupanisakorn and Nam Yimyaem.

August 28, 2006
The Nation

EC nominees rebut allegations of bias

Two nominees for the new Election Commission (EC), regarded as "unfriendly" to the Thai Rak Thai Party, rebutted all arguments made by the public against them

when they faced a Senate panel yesterday vetting their backgrounds.

Former senator Kaewsan Atibhodi said he dismissed all allegations against him, ahead of the Senate's final selection of five of 10 nominees for the EC

August 30, 2006
The Nation

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Former senator Kaewsan Atibhodi said he dismissed all allegations against him, ahead of the Senate's final selection of five of 10 nominees for the EC.

He told the panel that his involvement with the People's Alliance for Democracy - the most forceful anti-government movement - to oust caretaker Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra had nothing to do with his will to work for the EC,

he said.

Another nominee, Nam Yimyaem told the panel he was politically neutral although he recently chaired an EC investigative panel that has asked the Constitution Court to dissolve the Thai Rak Thai Party.

September 5, 2006
The Nation

Subcommittee ends background checks to allow upper house to pick

Senate Speaker Suchon Chaleekrua asked the government yesterday to submit a Royal Decree for a special parliamentary session late this week to select the five election commissioners.

Suchon said he sent a written request to the Cabinet secretariat yesterday for a special Senate session from Friday to Sunday so that senators can select five from the 10 nominees.

He expected the Cabinet to consider the request at its weekly meeting today. Cabinet secretary-general Rongpol Charoenphanthu said yesterday he had received Suchon's request for royal endorsement for two decrees for a special parliamentary session from Friday. The session would close on Sunday. Rongpol said he forwarded the Senate speaker's letter to caretaker Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, who will sign the two decrees seeking royal endorsement. He later informed the Office of His Majesty's Principal Private Secretary about the Senate speaker's request.

September 8, 2006
The Nation

Senate to pick EC members in one day

The Senate will today pick five election commissioners to manage the next general election - the first step towards breaking the ongoing political deadlock that has gripped the Kingdom.

Senate Speaker Suchon Chaleekrua said the Senate would choose five EC members by the end of today although the Royal decree approving the session allowed senators three days to complete the task.

The nominees, picked by the Supreme Court in August, are Wicha Mahakhun, Wasan Soipisut, Apichat Sukhakkanon, Udom Fuangfung, Somchai Jungprasert, Prapan Naikowit Kaewsan Atibhodi, Sodsri Sata-yathum, Sumet Oupanisakorn and Nam Yimyaem.

The session will begin with a report from an investigative panel. The Senate will then have a closed-door session to pick the five EC members, Suchon said. Each nominee needs half of the 187 senators' votes, or 94, to become an EC member. If the first round of voting does not fill the five vacant seats, a second round will be held. The candidates who get the most votes will fill the remaining seats, regardless of the first round's results

September 9, 2006
The Bangkok Post

Senate picks new EC

The Senate picked a new Election Commission yesterday, another step towards a general election that now looks likely to be delayed a month or two. In a closed-door debate, the Upper House selected four judges and a public prosecutor. Most of those chosen said the

polls scheduled for Oct 15 should be postponed.

The five are Praphan Naikowit, deputy attorney-general, Sumeth Upanisakorn, senior judge of the Bangkok South Criminal Court, Apichart Sukhakkhanont, president of the Supreme Court's Environmental Case Division, Somchai Juengprasert, chief justice of the Supreme Court, and Sodsri Sattayatham, chief justice of the Supreme Court. The Senate will forward the list for royal endorsemen

September 11,
2006
The Nation

Bloc-vote' opponents in Senate mull petition

Senators unhappy with colleagues' alleged "bloc voting" during last week's selection of five election commissioners are considering filing a petition with a court to oppose the practice, a Senate source said yesterday.

"We want to tell society there were senators who were unrighteous" in selecting the election commissioners, he said.

Senator Winyu Ularakul yesterday said a group of senators would today discuss whether to file a petition.

Judging from the fact that the selected nominees obtained votes from the same group of senators, he said, it was possible bloc voting took place.

However, Nakhon Ratchasima Senator Sawai Prammani disagreed, saying he believed no one would dare to submit such a petition as it would create more trouble for the country.

September 11,
2006
The Nation

Suchon, new commissioners to meet

On Thursday, Senate Speaker Suchon Chaleekrua is scheduled to meet with the five election commissioners selected by the upper house last week to discuss the selection of the Election Commission chairman.

Suchon will then submit the new EC appointments for royal endorsement.

The new EC members will then hold their first meeting to select the chairman and

outline their tasks and responsibilities and set a new general election date, as the previous date of October 15 looks like being postponed.

The new EC will also have to pick a new secretary-general, a position former senator Kaewsan Atibodhi put himself forward for after failing to secure a post as an election commissioner.

September 12,
2006
The Nation

EC to consider a ballot 'no sooner than November 19

The new election commissioners will be asked to consider recommendations from

Election Commission (EC) staff that a general election be held no sooner than November 19.

EC deputy secretary-general Sathaporn Santibutr would recommend an election date "not sooner than November 19", he said yesterday

September 14,
2006

The Nation

EC insists on vetting of military list

Newly elected member of the Election Commission (EC), Prapan Naikowit, said yesterday the proposed list of military promotions has to be submitted to the EC for vetting.

He was commenting after the caretaker government said it would forward the proposed military reshuffle for royal approval without the EC's involvement.

"It has to follow the Constitution. During [the tenure of] the caretaker government all senior positions must be vetted by the EC," he said.

Prapan said he and his colleagues would consider the proposed list of military promotions after they have been endorsed.

September 15,
2006

Bangkok Post

Local poll panels urged to quit

Apichart Sukhaggonond makes a point after his fellow commissioners-designate elected him as chairman of the Election Commission yesterday.

Provincial election committees have been advised to step down to allow for a shake-up of the Election Commission (EC) _ thought to be vital to ensure clean and fair elections

Mr Apichart is responsible for administration and management of general affairs. Sumeth Upanisakorn is in charge of public participation. Praphan Naikowit oversees election administration, Somchai Juengprasert is responsible for poll fraud investigations and Sodsri Sattayatham is in charge of political party affairs.

September 19,
2006

The Nation

8.00 am Thaksin Shinawatra calls an urgent teleconference with all armed forces' commanders at Government House, but none attends.

Gen Sonthi Boonyaratkarin, the army chief, later says the meeting is hastily called. Rumor then spread around the capital and the stock market that a coup de tat is under way.

12.00 am After finishing the webcamera teleconference with Thaksin, who is New York, several Cabinet members check with reporters if there would really be a coup.

6.30 pm The Army's special forces from Lopburi move into Bangkok. Gen Prem Tinnasulalonda, president of Privy Council, has an audience with HM the

King, reportedly on a meritmaking ceremony for ML Bau Kittiyakala.

6.55 pm Thai News Agency reports that Thaksin will return to Bangkok on Thursday, instead of Friday.

8.00 pm 191 police receive M16 rifles to prepare for an antiriot assignment.

9.00 pm The Army'[s special forces from Lopburi arrive at the Army's Bangkok headquarters.

Web surfers post messages on Pantip.com asking if there is a coup de tat.

9.10 pm The armyowned TV Channel 5's mobile TV broadcast unit arrives at the Army's Bangkok headquarters.

9.30 pm TV channel 5 cancels regular programming and puts on air royallyauthored songs.

Reporters at Government House say situation is normal, but rumour was rife that deputy premier Pol Gen Chidchai Vanasatit and defence minister Gen Thammarak Isarangkun have been under custody.

Panthonghae, Thaksin's son, reportedly has left Thailand for the UK.

9.40 pm Police commandos arrive Baan Chansongra, Thaksin's residence.

10.00 pm Army tanks take position at Bangkok Makkawan Rangsan Bridge and Rajdamnern Avenue.

10.10 pm CNN reports Bangkok situation

10.20 pm Thaksin declares a state of emergency via the phone from New York. He also issues two orders, transferring en Sondhi from the post of army chief to the PM's Office, and naming Gen Rungroj Mahasaranond as the officer in charge of the crisis.

11 pm "The Administrative Reform Council" (ARC) issues a first statement on TV network, saying the armed forces and national police have peacefully seized control of Bangkok and surrounding areas. Soldier seize the Shinawatra Building, iTV television stationand Thaksin's residence.

11.15 pm Soldiers put steel barricades at Sri Ayudha and Rajdamnoen Roads

11.50 pm ARC issues the second statement explaining the reasons for the coup d'etat, citing national disunity and rampant corruption. ARC says it plans to

return power quickly to the people

12.39 am ARC issues third statement, nullifying the constitution, the caretaker Cabinet and the Constitutional Court.

September 20,
2006
The Nation

1: 24 am The ARC issues its fourth announcement saying that while there is no prime minister, the power of the PM will belong to the ARC chief. The statement says where there are no ministers, the permanent secretaries will take charge of their respective ministries.

8:00 am ARC spokesman announces Gen Sonthi will make announcement on TVs at 9 am. The spokesman also announces that TV stations can resume their normal programmes but most continue to relay signals from Channel 5 except iTV, which briefly airs its morning news programme.

8:50 am: Permanent officials and rectors of universities start arriving at the Army headquarters to report themselves to the ARC. Khunying Jaruvan Mainthaka, the auditor-general, flashes a thumb-up to reporters.

9:16 am Sonthi holds a press conference. The first part of his statement is similar to the first statement of the ARC. He says the ARC has to seize power to solve the country's problems caused by the Thaksin administration.

Sonthi appears on TV along with the police chief and commanders of other armed forces in the four-minute announcement.

After Sonthi finishes reading the statement, a spokeswoman announces that the TV pool is disbanded and TV stations resume normal programmes.

9:50 am A source in New York tells a radio programme that Thaksin is considering whether to go to England or not.

10:00 am Sondhi Limthongkul, a decision maker of the People's Alliance for Democracy, announces that the planned rally in the evening is cancelled. Sondhi also praises the army chief for staging the coup.

10:15 am Chamlong Srimuang, a decision maker of the PAD, passes the front of the army head office in a taxi. People give him an applaud as the taxi passes by.

10:40 am A spokesman of the ARC announces its fifth statement on TV pool that AMC invites students to take part in political reform. The spokesman says Gen Sonthi invites students to send suggestions on political reform to the ARC.

10:42 am A spokesman reads the sixth announcement of the ARC that the ARC

realises the problem of farmers and is considering how to help them so they should not demonstrate now.

10:45 am An ARC spokeswoman reads the seventh announcement of the ARC that the political gathering of more than five people is banned.

The ARC spokeswoman also read the ninth announcement of the ARC that the ARC will take drastic action against any trader who hoards goods.

The spokesman announces the ninth statement of the ARC that the ARC will adhere to treaties with the United Nations and other international organisations as well as will promote and maintain good relations with other countries.

10:46 am An ARC reads the tenth announcement of the ARC that the ARC seeks cooperation from the mass media to present accurate news and information to the public.

10:52 am An ARC spokesman reads an order of ARC leader Gen Sonthi for the Information and Communication Technology Ministry to check and censor any type of information dissemination that could affect the works of the ARC.

10:58 am The ARC issues its 11th announcement to appoint members of the council as following:

1 Supreme Commander Gen Ruangroj Mahasarakon becomes chief adviser of the ARC.

2 Army Commander-in-Chief Gen Sonthi Boonyaratglin becomes president of the ARC.

3 Navy Commander-in-Chief Adm Sathiraphan Keyanon becomes first vice president of ARC.

4 Air Force Commander-in-Chief ACM Chalit Pookpasuk becomes second vice president of ARC.

5 Police Commissioner-General Pol Lt Gen Kowit Wattana becomes third vice president of the ARC

6 National Security Council secretary-general Gen Winai Phatthiyakul becomes secretary-general of the ARC.

1:00 pm Chalard Worachat and several other people are arrested for gathering in a group of more than five people.

1:15 pm Former Thai Rak Thai MP Surapol Kiartchaiyakorn is seen taking

away from the Chiang Mai Airport by soldiers on a military vehicle.

1:30 pm Deputy Police Commissioner-General Pol Col Prieuphan Damapong, a brother-in-law of Thaksin Shinawatra, reports himself to the national police chief in line with the coup maker's order.

2:00 pm ARC leader Gen Sonthi told foreign diplomats an hour ago that a civilian government would be appointed to run the country within two weeks.

2:30 pm Thawee Kraikupti, former Thai Rak Thai MP, protest against the coup at the Democracy Monument. He is later taken away by soldiers.

3:00 pm A military source say 15 trucks of fully-armed soldiers from the Pawai Camp head to Bangkok.

Sonthi answers reporters' questions at a press conference. He tells reporters that an interim constitution will be drafted in two weeks. After which a Cabinet will be formed to spend another year to draft a new constitution.

Sonthi says the new Election Commission has been dissolved along with the abolition of the Constitution.

4:55 pm ARC issues an announcement that government agencies, state enterprises, schools, banks and the Stock Exchange of Thailand would be open on Thursday.

6:00 pm About 100 soldiers from the 26th Cavalry Battalion in Phechabun arrive at Pathum Thani in ten trucks and ten military trucks. They travel on Rangsit-Nakhon Nayok Road and reach a road check point in Pathum Thani manned by seven tanks. after briefly talking to offices at the checkpoints, the 10 tanks and 10 trucks move on to Bangkok.

7:00 pm A spokesman announces that His Majesty the King has issued a royal command to appoint Sonthi as the ARC president.

7: 04 pm The ARC issues its seventh order to divide itself into four divisions as part of responsibility sharing. The four divisions are the ARC, the secretariat, the advisory division and special affairs division.

7:10 pm The ARC issues an order to maintain the status of Khunying Jaruvan Maintaka as the auditor-general.

The order removes the State Audit Commission but maintains Jaruvan's status as well as maintaining the provision of the SAC Act.

7:29 pm A spokesman of the ARC announces that the ARC has not imposed

curfew and the people can live their life as usual.

9:45 pm The ARC announces an order for former Natural Resource and Environment Minister Yongyuth Tiyaipairat and former PM's Office Minister Newin Chidchop to report themselves at the army head office at noon on Thursday.

10 pm The ARC issues its 13th statement to maintain the status of the new Election Commission. The ARC statement says the EC ACT would continue to be effective so that the new EC could organize election of local administrations and councils.

September 21,
2006
The Nation

9:11 am AFP reports from Singapore that the Thai baht opens stronger in Asian trade, recovering much of the ground lost Wednesday. The baht was at 37.5150 to the dollar, up sharply from 37.68 on Wednesday.

10:35 am Soldiers arrive at the house of former natural resources and environment minister Yongyuth Tiyaipairaj in Chiang Rai's Mae Chan district to try to locate him. But the house is closed and he is not found there.

11:00 am The People's Alliance for Democracy announces it ceases to exist after its goal to see the Thaksin regime toppled has been accomplished.

11:45 am Former PM's Office Minister Newin Chichob reports himself to the Administrative Reform Council. He arrives at the Army headquarters in a car and lowers his car's window to greet reporters but he is greeted back with boos by people there.

People shouts "Dictator" and "Corruptor".

1:00 pm former natural resources and environment minister Yongyuth Tiyaipairat reports himself to ARC.

1:40 pm Newin's car speeds out of the Army head office but it is not known whether Newin is inside the car or not.

2:00 pm Newin confirms with a Nation reporter on mobile phone that he has been detained by the ARC.

2:25 pm Ousted deputy prime minister Somkid Jatusripitak returns from France. He tells reporters that he has not yet decided about his political future.

3:40pm Former deputy prime minister Wissanu Krea-ngam arrives at the head office of the coup makers, which now call itself official in English as the

Council for Democratic Reform under Constitutional Monarchy (CDRM).

3:45 pm Cabinet secretary-general Borwornsak Uwanno comes to the CDRM head office at the Army headquarters.

4:00 pm Ousted deputy prime minister Surakiart Sathirathai returns from the United States. He thanks CDRM for still supporting him for the post of UN secretary-general.

4:20 pm The CDRM issues its 14th announcement to maintain status of the Parliament ombudsmen by reviving the Parliament Ombudsmen Act.

The CDRM also issues its 15th announcement to maintain the status of the Political Parties Act. The announcement adds that new political parties could be registered until further announcement by the council.

The announcement states that current political parties will not be dissolved but they cannot hold any political activity until further announcement by the CDRM.

7:50 pm CDRM issues its 16th announcement to give itself parliament role. It says it will function as parliament while there are no House of Representatives and Senate.

9:45 pm CDRM issues its 11th order to transfer four senior officers to inactive posts at PM's Ministry Office.

They are Pol General Jumphol Manmai, chief of National Intelligence Agency, Pol Maj General Peeraphan Premputi, permanent secretary of the PM's Office, Pol General Phreophan Damapongse, a deputy national police chief and a brother-in-law of Thaksin, and Pol Lt General Chalor Choowong, an assistant national police chief.

10:00pm CDRM issues its 12th order to appoint Lt Gen Waipoj Srinual, commander of the Internal Security Operations Command, as director of the National Intelligence Agency.

10:33 pm AFP reports that The United States is reviewing its aid to Thailand due to the coup.

September 22,
2006
The Nation

00:30 pm Sonthi enters a ceremony to receive a royal command to be officially endorsed as the president of the Council for Democratic Reform under Constitutional Monarchy. The ceremony is broadcast on TV pool at noon.

1:10 pm CDRM issues its order No 17 to delegate power over police affairs

from the prime minister to the police commissioner-general.

1:30 pm CDRM issues order No 18 to amend the National Police Act to rid of politicians of the police professional regulating body.

The order appoints the police commissioner-general as chairman of the Police Civil Services Commission, instead of the prime minister.

2:30 pm Thaksin's brother, Phayup Shinawatra, is taken away from the Chiang Mai International Airport once he arrives from Bangkok. He is believed to be taken to the Kawila Army Camp in Chiang Mai.

3:50 pm CDRM appoints a new National Counter Corruption Commission (NCCC) by issuing its announcement No 19 which also maintain status of the NCCC Act and the Criminal Procedural Code for the Criminal Tribunal for Police Office Holders.

September 23,
2006
The Nation

3:00 pm CDRM issues its 13th order to assign Cabinet secretary-general Rongphol Charoenphan to concurrently become permanent secretary for PM's Office.

September 24,
2006
The Nation

2:30 pm Sudarat Keyuraphan, ousted agriculture minister, returns from Germany Sunday afternoon. She says she would halt political activities and would provide full cooperation to the CDRM.

3:00 pm CDRM issues its 21st announcement to ban wiretapping. The announcement imposes five years jail term and or Bt100,000 fine on anyone who eavesdrop on conversations through telephones or other ways of communications. Persons who abuse information or disclose information from such eavesdropping will also be liable to the same penalties.

The announcement also subjects anyone who is informed of information from wiretapping to the same penalties if he or she relay the information or makes use of it.

The announcement says the masterminds behind the wiretapping will be subjected to two-fold penalties.

It says if the wrongdoers are concessionaires of any type of telecom services, the concession will terminated.

4:00 pm CDRM issues its 22nd announcement to ban activities of local politicians of tambon administrative organizations and provincial administrative organisations as well as other organisations from carrying out their political

activities either in support or opposition to the CDRM for fear that they could lead to problems causing further rifts in the society.

23:20 pm CDRM issues its 23rd decree to set up an assets investigation panel to review all projects approved by the Thaksin government.

The eight-member committee is chaired by Sawat Chotephanich and has seven other members - the auditor-general, the attorney-general, the secretary-general of the National Counter Corruption Commission, the secretary-general of the Anti-Money Laundering Office, the secretary-general of Securities and Exchange Commission, the central bank governor and the judge advocate-general.

September 25,
2006

The Nation

1:00 am Thaksin's wife, Pojaman, leaves Thailand on a flight to London.

September 26,
2006

The Nation

7:00 pm CDRM appoints four advisory committees on economics, foreign affairs, ethics and good governance, and social reconciliation and justice. Dozens of prominent civilians are appointed as members of the advisory panels.

MR Pridiyathorn Devakula, the Bank of Thailand governor, who is named as chairman of the advisory council on economics.

Vitaya Vejajiva, a former permanent secretary of the Foreign Ministry, has been appointed as chairman of the advisory council on foreign affairs.

Associate Professor Churee Vichitvadha-karn, who chairs Thailand's Transparency Inter-national and who teaches at the National Institute of Development Administration, is named as chairwoman of the advisory council on ethics, governance and prevention of corruption and abuse of power.

Phaiboon Wattanasiritham is appointed to chair an advisory council on reconciliation and social justice.

September 30,
2006

The Nation

8:15 pm The CDR issues a new announcement to appoint a new Assets Examination Committee.

October 1, 2006
The Nation

9:29 am A royal command is announced to enact the interim Constitution.

5 pm Gen Surayud Chulanont, former army chief and ex-privy councillor, is appointed Thailand's 24th prime minister.

