

Independent Study: Burmese Student Movement along
Thai-Burmese Borders and Its Possible
Solution

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ABSTRACT

The Burmese student movement along the Thai-Burmese borders is one of the main problems impacting the relationships between Thailand and Burma. The objectives of this study are to examine the Burmese student movement and to present a possible solution that could result in warmer relations between the two neighboring countries.

The findings of the research are being used to present an approach to resolution. The study includes an examination of the Burmese student movement which is a reaction to the 1988 political uprising in Burma and the student attempts to seek asylum from government suppression in Thailand. It will also look at the movement development in Thailand. Sources for the study include personal interviews and a documentary analysis.

The findings are as follows :

1. The movement of the Burmese students along the Thai-Burmese border has directly affected the good relationship between Thailand and Burma, especially, it was seen that the Thai government encouraged the anti-Burmese government groups by providing them a refuge, and allowing them to use Thailand's soil for political movement. These acts, if true, would certainly be harmful to the Burmese government

In solving this solution, the Thai government by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs must present the truth that its government never encouraged the any anti-Burmese government group to use the Thai territory along Thai-Burmese border as the base for attacking or engaging in any political movement. The Thai government should make itself clear that Thailand is the land of peace, freedom, and democratic country, any kind of political expression is the individual right of that person or groups that can be presented.

Although the Western countries requested the Thai government to use economic sanction against the Burmese government but Thailand could not act accordingly. Due to its geographic setting, Thailand borders with Burma and this position should maintain it as a gateway for outside countries to contact Burma and vice versa. From the Thai sense, it's better to use the so-called "Constructive Engagement" policy with Burma than to isolate them.

2. In solving the problem of Burmese students, the Thai government has set up the "safety house" in Ratchaburi Province, under the control of the Interior Ministry. But most of the Burmese students never come to join it, because they are afraid that the Thai government will send them back to the Burmese government. So the Thai government by the Foreign Affairs and the Interior Ministries must correct this image.

3. In solving this problem in the long term, we have to find out the best way how to strengthen the good relationship between the two countries. The Thai government must support Burma for progress towards its economic and political stability. By pointing out that good economy will bring about development and, thereafter, government stability will certainly follow. In other words, economy leads politics. In this case. Thailand should serve as a model for the Burmese to follow.