

Thesis Title : 1949 Coup d'etat and Pridi Banomyong
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ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to study "the problems of modern Thai History" on "1949 Coup d'etat and Pridi Banomyong." The data, material and documents from the National Archives including the work of various authors are collected daily newspapers and magazines are collected. The political conflicts between the Navy and the Army and between Field Marshal P. Phibunsongkram and Mr. Pridi Banomyong are analysed. These conflicts led to the "1949 Coup d'etat which broke out on 26-27 February B.E. 2492 (A.D. 1949) which Mr. Pridi Banomyong was leading the coup. In the following chapters, the effect of the coup d'etat on certain people who involved in the coup d'etat is analysed.

Chapter 1 : Introduction, the objective of the study, its limitation, the process of the research, the perspective benefit gained from the research.

Chapter 2 : The political situation in Thailand before the coup d'etat, the analysis emphasizes on the conflict between the Navy and the Army and the conflict between Field Marshal P. Phibunsongkram and Mr. Pridi Banomyong.

Chapter 3 : The events of the coup d'etat, the conspiracy, premovement of the government towards the coup, the operation to seize power and damages caused by the coup.

Chapter 4 : The impact of the coup d'etat, effects on civilians, the Navy and the coup d'etat members.

Chapter 5 : Conclusion

Appendix : The collection of documents in this appendix is essential to students of history to do research on history of the 1949 Coup d'etat.

The study reveals that the "1949 Coup d'etat" of February 26-27, 1949 was the product of a long simmering, political conflict existing before the event. The political factions involved the Army face to face the Navy and the Field Marshal P. Phibunsongkram versus Mr. Pridi Banomyong.

The conflict manifested itself in apparent political struggle. After World War II drew to its end, civilian groups, getting their from the Navy, tried to eliminate the political role played by Field Marshal P. Phibunsongkram and the Army, bring about a coup d'etat breakout on 8 November, 1947 and subsequent purges on the civilian politicians led by Mr. Pridi Banomyong.

The foregoing conflict and political fight were the determining factor leading to the "1949 Coup d'etat": Mr. Pridi Banomyong prepared for his comeback to Thailand by way of a prearrangement with the Army, the Navy and the Free Thai Movement. The arrangement with the Army represented an attempt on Mr. Pridi Banomyong's part to achieve a peaceful political campaign but was denied, forcing Mr. Pridi Banomyong to resort to seizure of the power by force. Certain group amid the Navy, however, did not content with Mr. Pridi Banomyong despite his having such high-ranking naval officers like Rear Admiral Thahan Khamhiran, the second naval circle commander and acting commanding general of the Marine Division on his side. Mr. Pridi Banomyong was misguided by his misplaced confidence in the absolute support by the Navy that led to his group's ultimate defeat. And as Mr. Pridi Banomyong was busy formulating his plans Field Marshal P. Phibunsongkram got the intelligence and got him self well prepared for the event.

The "1949 Coup d'etat" broke out on 26 February and was brought to an end on 27 February 1949. The analysis of the entire incident reveals that the Navy lent only its half hearted support for Mr. Pridi Banomyong and that the fierce campaign at the Rajprasong battle-front was but an exaggeration of the old resentment each side held between the Navy and the Army and that a negotiated end to the fight was eventually arrived at between the two services where Mr. Pridi Banomyong had accepted defeat and fled the country and his part was not to be seen ever since on Thailand's political scene.

All the above indicates that it was the conflict between the two parties to the conflict that originated the "1949 Coup d'etat" in the first place and not the personality conflict between Field Marshal P. Phibunsongkram and Mr. Pridi Banomyong that triggered the event as once commonly believed.