

Thailand's triple threat



New Mandala's co-founder Nicholas Farrelly has a new paper out with the Lowy Institute for International Affairs, under the title *Thailand's Triple Threat*.

The gist of the paper is conveyed by the Executive Summary:

King Vajiralongkorn's elevation to the Chakri throne comes after decades of whispers that he is an unsuitable king for Thailand. Despite these concerns, the military leadership has swung behind their new monarch. But the potential for future turbulence under the government led by General Prayuth Chan-ocha is high. The fluid situation in Bangkok is complicated by the potential escalation and expansion of separatist violence in southern Thailand. The question is how will Thailand respond to the triple threat of King Vajiralongkorn's ascension, the entrenchment of military rule, and the potential escalation of separatist violence emanating from the southern provinces?

The most likely future for Thailand is one in which the authoritarian instincts of the military and the monarchy reinforce their mutual survival pact. Nevertheless, at the core of Thailand's triple threat is the possibility that the untested nexus between the new king and

the powerbrokers in the military will prove insufficiently strong. Even if everything goes according to plan, today's authoritarian establishment in Bangkok risks inspiring new challengers to its interests. And if everything goes bad at the same time, Thailand would struggle to maintain its position as one of Southeast Asia's most successful societies.

You can read the full paper [over at the Lowy Institute's website](#).

Ahead of its publication Nich joined fellow ANU experts Tyrell Haberkorn and John Blaxland, together with Sunai Phasuk of Human Rights Watch, for a panel discussion on the paper's themes. The audio of that event [was recorded by the Lowy Institute and is available here](#).

The paper should provoke debate and we'd be happy to host responses that extend or criticise its analysis at *New Mandala*. Get in touch with our day-to-day editor Liam Gammon (firstname dot lastname at anu dot edu dot au) if you'd like to weigh in.