

## A week of colour



This past week in Thailand saw both the Red Shirts and the Yellow Shirts mobilised. Perhaps it was *déjà vu*. The People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) had its first major gathering this year on 10 March 2012, while the United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship (UDD) had its regular official press conference on 9 March and a concert in Supanburi on 10 March. Interestingly Ajarn Worajade of Nitirat fame was at a round-table at Chiang Mai University speaking on issues of constitutional law and Thai democracy. Here's a recap of an interesting week.

### **PAD (Sonthi Limthongkul, Chamlong Srimong, Pipob Thongchai, Somkiat Pongpaibul)**

- Politicians are still as corrupt as ever
- The military will side with whomever gives them a fat cheque
- We are the only hope for the survival of the monarchy
- PAD is not dead, don't underestimate us
- Nothing has changed since we first convened here in 2005
- We are against amending the 2007 constitution
- We are losing territories
- We can't win this fight without ASTV (we have some 3-5 million viewers, but little financial support)
- The Democrat Party accused me (Sonthi) of taking money from Thaksin
- If Thaksin returns we will squash him

- Time is not yet ripe for a major PAD rally, but be prepared to mobilize
- This revolution will need both the people and the army to come out
- The current political system needs to be dismantled before change can happen

*My take:* Nothing new in terms of rhetoric. The most surprising thing was the PAD turnout -- no official number but from eye-balling the crowd it's over 1,000.

**UDD Red in the Land (Thida Tavornsate, Wang Tojirakarn, Sonwang Assarasri, Pipatchai Paibul, Wiputalaeng Pattanabhumtai, Kwanchai Praipanna)**

- We are moving along with victim compensation
- There are a number of Red Shirt "unofficial" leaders - be careful
- We support doing away with 2007 constitution, but the new one must be for all people not just for the Red Shirts
- We want to amend article 291 without touching the clause regarding the monarchy
- The Democrats don't want to reconcile because they will keep losing in elections
- Where a heck were the ombudsmen in May 2010 and why haven't we made progress in uncovering the truth of the Bloody May?
- The Democrats are the one meddling monarchy in politics, not us

*My take:* The most surprising element is the presence of Kwanchai Praipanna. After heavy criticism from various Red Shirt sub-groups and a rumor that he was breaking away from the UDD, being on stage with other UDD leaders signified him reconciling with them (at least for now).

**Nitirat**

Ajarn Worajade: The new constitution should have a clause on coup d'état and its legal repercussions otherwise we will continue to have Thai-style democracy as we do today.

Other round-table panelists ([excerpts](#) from *Matichon*):

Ajarn Puangtong Pawakapan: The fact that Pheua Thai refused to amend Article 112 allows the Red Shirts to break free and could speed up their political mobilization. It's exciting that the Red Shirts will have more political independence.

Ajarn Somchai Preechasilapakul: Nitirat proposals adversely affect the army's tradition of coups which is why Nitirat gets stuck and can't move forward. Change will take time. There's no such thing as the last war.