Thaksin's freedom: The price of royalist-military dominance?

New Mandala regular Pavin Chachavalpongpun, recently appointed as Associate Professor at the Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, has penned a new analysis of the evolving relationship between deposed former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and Thailand's other elite political players.

Pavin maks a provocative argument:

> ...if Thaksin does indeed return to Thailand, it could only mean one thing: The success of his enemies in preserving the integrity of the military and the monarchy in exchange for his freedom.

This sounds plausible to me. But there is also no doubt that arrangements of this style, especially where there is a history of such bad-blood, can become dangerously unstable. The unravelling of a deal like the one Pavin proposes could be incredibly destructive.

Yesterday I asked whether it was either a royal pardon for Thaksin or a coup for the king? Pavin reminds us that if Thaksin returns to Thailand factions in the military, and the palace, will have extracted a price.

But I still wonder: Can any such deal last, especially after King Bhumibol Adulyadej is no longer on the throne?