

and his deputy, have managed to avoid certain death sentences by preemptively committing suicide.

The scope of the Gorbachov purges in Uzbekistan has exceeded anything witnessed in Central Asia, even under Stalin. When the Uzbekistan Party Congress ended in early February, only 34 of the 177 full Central Committee members in Uzbekistan survived the sweep. The Republic of Uzbekistan was also removed from even the nominal trappings of "home rule" on local matters. The newly elected Uzbekistan Politburo contains only 6 Uzbeks among its 13 members, with the majority now consisting of 6 Russians and 1 Russified Kazakh.

A similar total elimination of the old Brezhnev-era leadership "Mafias" has occurred in every other Central Asian Muslim Republic.

The show-trials spotlight will soon move to Moscow. Last Christmas, Gorbachov convened a special meeting of the Moscow City Party to expel Viktor Grishin, Moscow party boss since June 1967, from both his key Moscow post, and from the Soviet Politburo. Since Grishin's expulsion, over 130 Moscow functionaries and managers have been arrested and will soon appear in a big "anti-corruption" show trial. Other spectacular show trials are scheduled to start soon in Leningrad, in the Volga industrial and war production center of Kuibyshev, and in Kishinev, the capital of the Moldavian Republic (the former Romanian province of Bessarabia).

The bloodier secret executions

The "anti-corruption" public trials and publicly reported executions are only the tip of the iceberg of what actually goes in the Soviet Union. Mass executions, which are never even hinted at publicly, also have been occurring. One especially brutal example of this has just been reported by the authoritative Swiss defense publication, *International Defense Review*, published in Geneva. In October 1985, Muslim Tadjik troops stationed in Afghanistan with the Red Army contingent there, mutinied. Russian troops were called in to put down the mutiny, and in the ensuing fighting, over 70 soldiers were killed on both sides. All the hundreds of surviving Tadjik mutineers were then summarily executed.

The same issue of *International Defense Review* also reports that at the beginning of January, a large explosion caused extensive damage at a Soviet missile plant in the town of Biysk, in Western Siberia. The plant produces the 8,300-kilometer range SS-N-20 missile, the missile fired by the 25,000-ton Typhoon Class missile submarines, the most modern in the Soviet navy and the largest submarines in the world. As in all cases of military- and defense-related "accidents" in Russia, a secret investigating commission was constituted. Mistakes and negligence among responsible figures in such cases almost automatically lead to the imposition of death sentences for de facto sabotage of critical war production.

Asia

Political cards reshuffled in Thailand

by Sophie Tanapura

The dissolution of the parliament by the government of Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanonda on the night of May 1 really came as no surprise to those who have been closely watching Thai politics for the past months. Some politicians with a certain foresight had already been preparing their constituency since January for early elections this year.

After a year and a half of repeated failures of the Prem government to correct the accelerated course of economic decline that Thailand has taken since the International Monetary Fund-instigated devaluation of the baht in November 1984, a majority in the lower House of Representatives was reached to defeat a government decree which, if passed, would have increased registration fees for vehicles powered by diesel fuel and liquified natural gas. Thus challenged, Prime Minister Prem had no other choice but to dissolve the parliament and to call for new elections within three months as a last attempt to reshuffle political cards in his favor.

Politicians in Bangkok have noted that the dissolution of the parliament came a little earlier than expected, and will create a favorable situation for the Democrat Party, whose political machine is among the oldest and the most experienced. Unlike other political forces, the Democrat Party still remains relatively intact. It is generally expected that Democrat candidates are likely to supplant many of the incumbents of the Thai Citizens Party (Prachakorn Thai Party of Communications Minister Samak Sundaravej) in metropolitan Bangkok. Deputy Prime Minister and Democrat Party Secretary-General Bichai Rattakul has asked General Prem to run in the elections under the banner of the party. If Prime Minister Prem decides to make a political come-back with increased legitimacy, it is mooted that he might choose to run in Songkhla, his home town in the south of Thailand. To date, Prem has not made his intentions clear.

On all other political fronts, a major realignment of forces

is taking place amid total disarray reigning in most parties. The Social Action Party (SAP) has been whittled down considerably with the departure of former Deputy Prime Minister Boontheng Thongsawasdi and some 40 dissident members of parliament from the party. An "amnesty" call to the dissidents was launched in vain by Air Chief Marshal Siddhi Savetsila, current head of the SAP. Siddhi is also the deputy prime minister and foreign minister of the Prem government.

The existing rifts within the SAP were exacerbated when M. R.

ment against the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in June 1985. The international financial institutions were accused by Kukrit of violating the national sovereignty of Thailand. Kukrit then picked up the fight against IMF-World Bank stooges such as the prime minister's economic adviser, Dr. Virabhongsa Ramangkura, whom Kukrit labeled a "technocratic bitch." The Bangkok *EIR* office was the first to reveal that in order to please the IMF and World Bank, Dr. Virabhongsa was advised by his economics professor, Lawrence Klein of the Wharton School, to devalue the baht by 17% on Nov. 2, 1984. By December 1985, Boonchu Rojanastien, a founding member of the SAP and former deputy prime minister in charge of economic affairs, triggered yet another political shock wave against the IMF when he keynoted an *EIR* economic conference in Bangkok on that theme. He did not mince his words. The IMF was characterized as "the modern-day Shylock" by Boonchu.

That fall, a ferocious fight broke out between Commerce Minister Kosol Krairiksh (SAP) and Dr. Virabhongsa over the question of whether or not the government should maintain the rice price-support program, guaranteeing rice at 3,000 baht per ton. Bangkok Fusion Energy Foundation representative Pakdee Tanapura launched a media campaign in favor of the rice support program as stipulated by the Thai Constitution. In the end, Minister Kosol lost to free-trade advocate Dr. Virabhongsa, and was subsequently forced to resign from the cabinet. However, the free-trade policy of non-intervention of the state drove the price of rice down to approximately 1,700 baht per ton, way below production costs resulting in the bankruptcy of many Thai farmers, the traditional base of the Social Action Party.

U.S. intervention

By this time, the anti-IMF/World Bank trend was building up dangerously, too dangerously for certain vested financial interests. The U.S. embassy reportedly moved swiftly to crack the opposition to its policies within the SAP, the major coalition partner of the Prem government. To muster support for General Prem, U.S. Ambassador William Brown convinced M. R. Kukrit to resign from the party chairmanship and to catapult Foreign Minister Siddhi Savetsila into the leadership position. A relative newcomer in the SAP, Air Chief Marshal Siddhi was sent into the party as a "Prem

mole" in the first place. Air Chief Marshal Siddhi enjoys the support of the Thai Coca-Cola king, Pong Sarasin, whose son Ken is the major shareholder in Jardine Services (Thailand), a company related to the British Dope, Inc. firm of Jardine Matheson. Siddhi is known to get along very well with Henry Kissinger.

Socialist Action dissidents led by Boontheng Thongsawasdi are presently negotiating a merger with the Community Action Party (Kitprachakom), newly founded by Boonchu Rojanastien. Socialist Action defectors have set a condition

The issue in the coming election is whether an economic development program will be put together or whether the austerity policies of the IMF/World Bank will continue to bankrupt the country.

for their affiliation with the CAP: inclusion of the agricultural crop price lifting scheme and protection of national industry in the platform of the party. There will also be an attempt to form an alliance between the CAP and other political parties and groups, namely the Siam Democracy Party (SDP) led by Thavich Klinprathum and Col. Phon Rerngprasertvit, the National Democracy Party of former Prime Minister Gen. Kriangsak Chamonan, the mass party of dissident Democrat Police Capt. Chalerm Yoobamrung, and the group of former Chat Thai Party MPs led by Col. Narong Kittikachorn. As for the Citizens Party, a new party led by former Deputy Army Commander-in-Chief Gen. Tienchai Sirisamphan, known for crushing the Sept. 9 abortive coup last year, it was pulled together to consolidate support for the military establishment.

Political insiders say that this early election will be one of the dirtiest ever seen in Thailand, one in which there will be not only pay-offs and fraud. Intervention of the major powers—United States, Soviet Union, and China—will be more rampant than ever before. Former Supreme Commander Gen. Saiyud Kerdpol has announced the creation of a "watchdog" committee ready to expose any irregularity in the elections.

What is at stake in this legislative election, however, is the economic future of Thailand. The question remains: the next winning political combination of forces—whatever it will be—have a serious economic development program for Thailand, one that will challenge the "debt-serving" approach of the IMF, one that will improve the welfare of the Thai nation and people?