

Thailand: Protesters Want Oil Back for Thai People

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Protesters in Thailand demanding the resignation of current prime minister Yingluck Shinawatra are planning to re-nationalize Thailand's vast wealth in natural gas, privatized and sold off under Yingluck's brother, Thaksin Shinawatra in late 2001.

[As protests swell to historic sizes in the streets of Thailand's capital of Bangkok](#), and in provinces around the country, pressure is building on toppling the government of Thaksin Shinawatra. While technically speaking, his sister, Yingluck Shinawatra, is prime minister, she literally ran with the campaign slogan, "Thaksin Thinks, Peua Thai does," (Peua Thai being Thaksin's political party).



Image: 1000's of protesters descend on Thai oil giant PTT's headquarters in Bangkok this week - demanding it be re-nationalized after its privatization under Thaksin Shinawatra, part of a larger plan to sellout Thailand's infrastructure and natural resources to foreign

corporations – the same corporations backing Thaksin’s sister, Yingluck Shinawatra as she prepares for her brother’s return to power.

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It is no wonder then, why Yingluck has picked up right where her brother left off, eviscerating the nation’s checks and balances ahead of an even grander scheme – the privatization and sell-off of the entire nation to foreign investors through a series of free trade schemes.

Amid the chaos of her botched amnesty bill bid – which would have exonerated herself, her brother, and his political machine of all wrong doing since rising to political power years ago – she managed to squeak through an amendment to article 190 of the Thai constitution. This change now allows her to sign treaties without parliamentary approval, including unpopular free-trade agreements that have thus far failed for years. Protesters are also citing this at their rallies. Thai PBS reported in their article, “[Civil obedience ends but anti-government protest more intense:](#)”

Meanwhile the Network of Students and People for Thailand Reform also switched from just protesting the amnesty bill to opposing the passage of the amendment of Article 190 of the Constitution which empowers the prime minister as a sole decision maker in making any treaties with foreign countries without seeking approval from Parliament.

The Shinawatra Regime’s First Try To Sell Out Thailand Ended in a Military Coup

The Wall Street Journal reported gleefully in 2001 that Thailand had begun privatizing its nationalized infrastructure. It must be remembered this followed the engineered destruction of Southeast Asia during the IMF bubble of the late 1990’s, with IMF demands of privatization as part of restructuring that came after nations economically collapsed. In its article, “[Thailand’s Privatization Efforts Get Boost From PTT’s Offering,](#)” the Wall Street Journal reported:

Thailand’s drive to privatize its plodding state enterprises is off to a fast start.

The closely watched initial public offering of the state-owned Petroleum Authority of Thailand was oversubscribed by Thai and foreign investors, who collectively purchased 800 million shares in the company. Upon listing, the privatized company will be known as PTT PCL.

This was initiated under Thaksin Shinawatra, who apparently accelerated the process after long delays:

Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra has made the long-stalled privatization process a key economic objective. Over the next three years, the government is counting on the sale of stock in 16 state companies and agencies. Bangkok hopes the new listings will spur interest in the country’s drooping stock market by raising the Stock Exchange of Thailand’s market capitalization by almost 700 billion baht, a 50% jump from its present value.

The New York Times in their article, “[Thai Oil Stock Offering Is Much in Demand,](#)” would report that Thaksin, despite his attempts to comply with foreign interests, faced nationalist resistance. The NYT also notes that the process of privatization involved selling national infrastructure out to foreigners at a discount – which in hindsight we now know was part of the IMF’s plan all along:

Thaksin Shinawatra, the telecommunications tycoon who became prime minister in February, has pledged to push privatization forward to reduce the government's debt and budget deficit. But as share sales failed to materialize and antiforeign measures proliferated, foreign investors came to question Mr. Thaksin's sincerity. Some said that Thailand, like Indonesia, was giving in to nationalism and vested interests that opposed selling stakes to foreigners at a discount.

Last month, for example, the Thais enacted a law limiting foreign shareholdings in their telecommunications companies to 25 percent. So far this year, foreign investors have pulled 2.75 billion baht, or \$61.9 million, out of the Thai stock market.

Though PTT's offering price was far below what the government had hoped for, the sale could represent a turning point, analysts said. "It shows that they're serious about their privatization program," said Kenneth Ng of ING Barings in Bangkok, "and that they're not fiddling around just because the price isn't there."

This would not be the last attempt Thaksin would make at selling the country out to foreigners. In 2001, he lacked the impunity needed to ramrod deals through nationalist opposition, but by 2004 he felt more confident.

Thaksin attempted to pass a [US-Thailand Free-Trade Agreement](#) (FTA) without parliamentary approval, backed by the [US-ASEAN Business Council](#).



Image: The [US-ASEAN Business Council](#), a who's-who of corporate fascism in the US, had been approached by leaders of Thaksin Shinawatra's "red shirt" street mobs. (click image to enlarge)

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The [council in 2004 included](#) 3M, war profiteering Bechtel, Boeing, Cargill, Citigroup, General Electric, IBM, the notorious Monsanto, [and currently also includes](#) banking houses Goldman Sachs and JP Morgan, Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, Chevron, Exxon, BP, Glaxo Smith Kline,

Merck, Northrop Grumman, Monsanto's GMO doppelganger Syngenta, as well as Phillip Morris.



Photo: Deposed autocrat, Thaksin Shinawatra [before the CFR](#) on the eve of the 2006 military coup that would oust him from power. Since 2006 he has had the full, unflinching support of Washington, Wall Street and their immense propaganda machine in his bid to seize back power.

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While his attempt failed, he continued whittling away at Thailand's checks and balances in the hopes of one day weakening the system enough to give himself and his foreign backers absolute impunity. But with his consolidation of power came an equal but opposite backlash. Thaksin would remain in office until September of 2006. On the eve of a bloodless military coup that ousted him from power, Thaksin was literally standing before the [Fortune 500-funded](#) Council on Foreign Relations [giving a progress report in New York City](#).

Since the 2006 coup that toppled his regime, Thaksin has been represented by US corporate-financier elites via their lobbying firms including, [Kenneth Adelman](#) of the [Edelman PR firm](#) ([Freedom House](#), [International Crisis Group](#), [PNAC](#)), James Baker of [Baker Botts](#) (CFR), [Robert Blackwill](#) of [Barbour Griffith & Rogers](#) (CFR), [Kobre & Kim](#), and currently [Robert Amsterdam](#) of [Amsterdam & Peroff](#) ([Chatham House](#)).

These lobbying firms are the secret to Thaksin's political longevity, manipulating stories in the Western press to whitewash Thaksin's many atrocities and crimes and lend support and legitimacy to his political machine as it maneuvers inside of Thailand to prepare the way for his return to power.

Just before the 2011 general elections that saw Thaksin's sister Yingluck Shinawatra brought into power, the US-ASEAN Business Council hosted the leaders of [Thaksin's "red shirt" "United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship" \(UDD\)](#), proving that the dream of

despoiling Thailand, not “democracy,” has been and remains the goal of Thaksin, his foreign backers, and the myriad of faux-NGOs that flank his political machine’s peripheries.

Protesters Attempt to Roll Back Decade of IMF Incursions, Guard Against New Ones

Protesters, if they succeed in toppling Thaksin’s proxy regime, plan on rolling back Thaksin’s selling-out of its nationalized infrastructure, blocking free trade agreements his government is inevitably going to push through, rolling back self-serving amendments being made to the nation’s constitution, and defending against future incursions by foreign bankers under the guise of the IMF.

Taking a stand against the corporate-financier interests represented by the US-ASEAN Business Council will make a protest movement very unpopular in the eyes of the Western media. Already the West is attempting to claim the protesters are unjustly trying to unseat an “elected government,” no matter how cartoonishly nepotist and corrupt it actually is.

Also to undermine the protests, the Western media repeatedly fails to report on other grievances protesters have with the Shinawatra regime, including Thaksin’s 2003 “war on drugs” that saw [nearly 3,000 mass murdered in just 90 days](#), most of whom had nothing to do with the drug trade at all, as well as his instigation of violence in Thailand’s deep south, culminating in [the Tak Bai incident](#) which saw 85 protesters killed in a single day.

The [US has condemned the seizing of government buildings](#) by protesters in Thailand, while the pro-EU/Wall Street protesters in Ukraine are getting cash and [encouragement](#) to do the same against the government in Kyiv. As the protests expand, [and with regime thugs now being sent to assault protesters](#), expect the already lopsided coverage by the West to tilt ever still in favor of defending Thaksin and the foreign agenda he represents.

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