

THE EMERGENCE OF NEW POLITICS IN THAILAND

ANFREL Election Report

6 January - 18 August 2001



**General Election for
The House of Representatives**

OBSERVATION MISSION REPORT

ELECTION FOR MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IN THAILAND

MISSION I	2 - 8 JANUARY 2001
MISSION II (1 st re-election)	27 - 30 JANUARY 2001
MISSION III (2 nd re-election)	27 JUNE - 1 JULY 2001

(Thai HOR election conducted more than 2 re-elections but
this report covers only the first and second re-election)

**Asian Network For Free Elections
(ANFREL)
and
Asian Forum For Human Rights and Development
(FORUM-ASIA)**

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Map of Thailand



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1. Introduction

After Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai's declaration of the dissolution of the House of Representatives (HOR) on 9 November 2000 was approved by the King, the Election Commission (ECT) prepared to announce a general election for members of the HOR. The polling day was eventually set on 6 January 2001, 59 days after the dissolution of the HOR. This election was the first general election to be held since the promulgation of the 1997 "People's Constitution. It was also the first time for Thai people to elect members of the HOR on a constituency basis and on a party list basis.

With the apparent problem of repetitive elections experienced since the first senatorial election in April 2000, most of ANFREL missions in 2000 and the first half of 2001 had been focused primarily on Thailand. According to the 1997 Constitution, the Parliament comprises of 500 elected members of the HOR and 200 elected members of the Senate. But the senatorial election took place six times in the span of more than five months to complete the quorum of 200 members, making it the longest election in Thai history and in Asia. The process of investigation and disqualification of sitting members of the Senate continued in 2001. In March 2001, another round of election was ordered in seven provinces by the ECT to replace sitting members of the Senate disqualified on the ground of cheating and violation of the Election Law. The election for members of the HOR was also trapped in a similar situation. The aspiration to establish new politics in Thailand through electoral process appeared to be highly challenging and controversial.

2. Electoral System

The HOR consists of 500 members: 100 members elected on a party-list basis and 400 members elected on a constituency basis. In case the office of a member of the HOR elected on a party-list basis becomes vacant for any reason during the term of

the HOR, the HOR will then consist of the existing quorum of party-list members.

The election will be by direct suffrage and secret ballot. In an election of members of the HOR on a party-list basis, voters will cast ballots from lists of candidates prepared by political parties. Only one party-list will be voted for and the whole territory of Thailand will be regarded as the constituency. Each party will prepare only one list of candidates containing not more than one hundred persons and submitted it to the Election Commission before the date designated for the application for candidacy in an election on a constituency basis. Names of persons nominated on a party-list basis must: (1) consist of the names of candidates from equitably various regions; (2) not be repeated in lists of candidates prepared by other political parties and names of candidates in the election on a constituency basis; and (3) be placed in numerical order.

Any political parties receiving votes less than 5 percent of the total number of votes throughout the country will not have candidates elected on a party-list basis and lists of candidates of such political parties and votes received will not be reckoned in the determination of the proportional number of members of the HOR.

The determination of the ratio of the number of inhabitants to one member of the HOR elected on a constituency basis will be made by reference to the division of the number of inhabitants throughout the country (as evidenced in the census announced in the year preceding the year of election) by the number of 400 members of the HOR representatives elected on a constituency basis, making the electoral quota.

The number of members of the HOR representing each Changwat will be determined by the division of the number of inhabitants in that Changwat by the electoral quota of members of the HOR. Any Changwat with inhabitants below the electoral quota will have one member of the HOR. Any Changwat with more inhabitants than the electoral quota will have additional members of the HOR. With this determination, any Changwat with the largest fraction remaining will have additional member of

the HOR until the quorum of 400 members of the HOR is completed. Any Changwat where the number of members of the HOR to be elected is not more than one, the area of that Changwat will be regarded as the constituency. Any Changwat where the number of members of the HOR is more than one, such Changwat will be divided into constituencies in the number equal to the number of representing members of the HOR and each constituency will have one member of the HOR. Any Changwat divided into more than one constituency, the boundary of each constituency must be adjoining and the number of inhabitants in each constituency must be closely apportioned. Any political parties campaigning for an election on a constituency basis will nominate only one member in each constituency.

In each constituency, the counting of votes from every polling station altogether will be conducted and the result of the vote count will be announced publicly at any single places in that constituency as designated by the ECT. This provision will apply mutatis mutandis to the counting and announcement of votes received on a party-list basis in each constituency.

Electoral Data

(Determined for an election on a constituency basis by the Department of Local Administration, Ministry of Interior as of 30 November 2000 based on electoral quota = 154,154)

<i>Province</i>	<i>Inhabitants</i>	<i>Eligible Voters</i>	<i>Members of the HOR</i>
Bangkok	5,662,499	3,849,777	37
Amnat Charoen	365,943	258,917	2
Ang Thong	289,527	216,200	2
Buri Ram	1,520,419	1,074,804	10
Chachoengsao	637,665	459,268	4
Chai Nat	351,628	266,294	2
Chaiyaphum	1,127,552	818,228	7
Chantaburi	490,039	342,551	3
Chiang Mai	1,587,465	1,112,034	10
Chaing Rai	1,265,091	817,406	8

<i>Province</i>	<i>Inhabitants</i>	<i>Eligible Voters</i>	<i>Members of the HOR</i>
Chonburi	1,059,756	741,725	7
Chumphon	458,297	324,363	3
Kalasin	984,046	697,552	6
Kamphaeng Phet	765,876	537,331	5
Kanchanaburi	778,456	528,817	5
Khon Kaen	1,747,730	1,253,599	11
Krabi	358,383	233,080	2
Lampang	806,762	606,093	5
Lamphun	407,085	310,495	3
Loei	633,856	445,737	4
Lopburi	760,854	563,880	5
Mae Hong Son	232,483	137,380	2
Maharakham	940,402	689,238	6
Mukdahan	333,035	231,523	2
Nakhon Nayok	243,235	179,689	2
Nakhon Pathom	774,276	546,092	5
Nakhon Phanom	714,779	485,926	5
Nakhon Ratchasima	2,540,662	1,704,651	17
Nakhon Sawan	1,126,311	814,000	7
Nakhon Sithammarat	1,525,557	1,061,979	10
Nan	489,505	347,637	3
Narathiwat	671,649	423,351	4
Nong Bua Lamphu	494,327	348,550	3
Nong Khai	899,506	631,308	6
Nonthaburi	839,029	631,476	5
Pathum Thani	633,994	461,540	4
Pattani	608,276	392,012	4
Phang Nga	233,179	162,797	2
Phattalung	502,662	359,865	3
Phayao	515,128	380,385	3
Phetchabun	1,040,731	747,228	7
Phetchaburi	456,233	331,605	3
Phichit	589,406	432,925	4
Phitsanulok	868,138	622,483	6
Phrae	492,607	376,289	3

<i>Province</i>	<i>Inhabitants</i>	<i>Eligible Voters</i>	<i>Members of the HOR</i>
Phra Nakhon Sri Ayutthaya	492,607	376,289	5
Phuket	241,489	169,937	2
Prachinburi	441,162	317,176	3
Prachuab Khiri Khan	477,190	338,490	3
Ranong	158,185	104,723	1
Ratchaburi	817,793	585,388	5
Rayong	513,984	358,751	3
Roi Et	1,320,824	952,073	9
Sakaeo	531,149	374,744	3
Sakhon Nakhon	1,094,615	767,202	7
Samut Prakan	977,388	704,527	6
Samut Sakhon	421,738	297,065	3
Samut Songkhran	205,696	153,390	1
Saraburi	607,042	411,303	4
Satun	260,127	170,285	2
Singburi	224,103	169,888	2
Si Sa Ket	1,445,356	1,024,855	9
Songkhla	1,223,833	838,845	8
Sukhothai	627,585	470,355	4
Suphanburi	855,823	621,438	6
Surat Thani	886,979	608,043	6
Surin	1,381,213	974,249	9
Tak	484,678	299,356	3
Trang	587,930	397,588	4
Trat	224,056	151,572	2
Ubon Ratcha Thani	1,759,548	1,206,708	11
Udon Thani	1,520,651	746,186	10
Uthai Thani	332,063	239,111	2
Uttaradit	485,025	361,549	3
Yala	436,092	269,129	3
Yasothon	554,964	399,016	4
Total	61,661,701	42,978,144	400

Voter and Candidate Qualifications

- Voters must have the following qualifications:
 - (1) Being of Thai nationality and any persons acquired Thai nationality by naturalization must hold the Thai nationality for not less than five years;
 - (2) Being not less than 18 years of age on 1 January of the year of election;
 - (3) Having their names appear on the house register in the constituency for not less than 90 days up to the election day;
 - (4) Any voters with residency outside the constituency within which their names appear in the house register or voters with their names appear in the house register in the constituency for the period of less than 90 days up to the election day or voters with present residency overseas will have the right to cast ballot in an advance election as per procedures determined by the ECT.
- Any persons under any of the following prohibitions on the election day will be disfranchised:
 - (1) Being of unsound mind or of mental infirmity;
 - (2) Being a Buddhist priest, novice, monk or clergy;
 - (3) Being detained by a court warrant or by a lawful order;
 - (4) Being under suspension of the right to vote.
- Any persons having the following qualifications have the right to be candidates in an election of members of the HOR:
 - (1) Being of Thai nationality by birth;
 - (2) Being not less than 25 years of age on the election day;
 - (3) Having graduated with not lower than a bachelor's degree or equivalent, except in the case of former members of the HOR or former members of the Senate;
 - (4) Being a member of any (only one) political party for a consecutive period of not less than 90 days, up to the date of applying for candidacy in an election;

- Candidates in an election on a constituency basis must have any of the following qualifications:

- (1) Having their names appear in the house register in Changwat where they stand for in an election for a consecutive period of not less than one year up to the date of applying for candidacy;
- (2) Having been former members of the HOR for Changwat where they stand for in an election, former members of a local assembly or a local administrator of their Changwat;
- (3) Being born in Changwat where they stand for in an election;
- (4) Having studied in any education institutions situated in Changwat where they stands for in an election for a consecutive period of not less than two academic years;
- (5) Having served in the official service before or having had their names name appear in the house register in Changwat where they stand for in an election for a consecutive period of not less than two years.



Official Document of the ECT, introducing a candidate

- Any persons having the following qualifications must not have the right to be candidates in an election of members of the HOR:
 - (1) Being addicted to drugs;
 - (2) Being an undischarged bankrupt;
 - (3) Being disfranchised of political rights and voting rights;
 - (4) Having been sentenced to imprisonment and being detained by a court warrant;
 - (5) Having been discharged for a period of less than five years on the election day after being sentenced to imprisonment for a term of two years or more except for

- an offence committed by negligence;
- (6) Having been expelled, dismissed or removed from the official service on the ground of dishonest performance of duties or corruption;
- (7) Having been ordered by a court verdict that their assets be dissolved on the state for unusual wealth or having been removed from office by the resolution of the Senate for less than the period of five years up to the election day;
- (8) Holding permanent positions as government officers or state enterprise officers or receiving salary on a regular basis, except the case of political officers;
- (9) Being current members of the Senate, the ECT, the Ombudsman, the National Human Right Commission, the Constitutional Court, the Administrative Court, the National Counter Corruption Commission, the State Audit Commission, a local assembly or a local administration;

Summary of New Aspects of Electoral System

- Voting is a duty. For the first time, voting is obligatory by law with penalty and failure to fulfill such duty is subject to the revocation of political rights as follows:
 - (1) The right to petition an election of members of the HOR, senators, local administrators or members of the local assembly;
 - (2) The right to petition an election of Khamnan or Phuyai Ban under the law on local administration;
 - (3) The right to be a candidate in a election of members of the HOR, senators, local administrators or members of the local assembly;
 - (4) The right to be a candidate in an election of Khamnan or Phuyai Ban under the law on local administration;
 - (5) The right to request the National Assembly for the consideration of law under the law on public request for the introduction of bills;

- (6) The right to request the local assembly for the issuance of local ordinances under the law on public request for the introduction of local ordinances;
- (7) The right to request the Senate for the resolution removing a person under the organic law on counter corruption;
- (8) The right to request for the removal from office of a member of the local assembly or a local administrator under the law on voting for the removal of a member of the local assembly or a local administrator.

Nevertheless, the loss of political rights mentioned above will be for a period from the election day on which a voter fails to attend for voting to the next election day at any level that such voter attend.

- There is a provision for overseas voting. For the first time, eligible voters living overseas are allowed to vote by mail or in person.
- There is a provision for advance voting. For the first time, advance election is provided for eligible voters living or working outside their registered constituencies. In this case, upon prior registration for advance voting with the designated administration authority as determined by the ECT, eligible voters can cast ballots at central polling places outside their original constituencies ahead of the actual election day.
- There is an independent organization to administer electoral process, replacing the Ministry of Interior. The ECT was established in accordance with the Constitution and the Election Law to serve as an independent organization to ensure the "fair and honest" conduct of electoral process. The ECT is obliged by law to work with independent people's organization such as the NGO Coordinating Center, the Poll Watch Foundation for Democracy in Thailand (Poll Watch Foundation) and the People's Network for Election in Thailand (P-Net) to monitor and ensure the integrity of

electoral process according to democratic principles and standards.

- Systematic measures to prevent fraud are introduced to the authentication of ballots, especially with serial numbers and stickers, as well as to the verification of voters' identity with the mark of thumbprints on the counterfoil of ballot stubs.
- Vote count is conducted at a counting place in each constituency instead of polling stations. This is to increase voters' confidence in the secrecy of their votes.
- The ECT is entitled to undertake investigation of complaints of fraud and irregularity. With credible evidence, the ECT is empowered to disqualify candidates and political parties, cancel election results, dismiss elected candidates, revoke election rights of any person on the ground of election fraud and call for a new round of election. This power of the ECT is deemed to serve as both preventive and corrective measures of rampant fraud and irregularity in Thai election.

3. Patterns of Cheating and Irregularity

The pre-election scenario in Thailand shows a picture of contradiction. On the one hand, there exists the growing understanding by the public that a clean, free and fair electoral process is essential for the realization of a system of democratic governance based on "the rule of the people, by the people and for the people". Bad election, on the contrary, is seen as the root cause of cronyism, corruption and a political system that lacks professional and ethical qualifications to serve and protect public interests. Yet efforts of the ECT, government agencies and people's organizations to uphold the integrity of electoral process are running at odd with media reports about the prospect that various forms of cheating constitute the deciding factor for victory at the polls. Common cheating techniques in Thai election include:

Vote Buying

- **Vote Buying in Cash:** Candidates distribute packets of cash between 100 and 2,000 baht to voters in return for their sworn allegiance. This practice is usually carried out through the network of canvassers in each locality. At the same time, identification cards of voters are often collected as receipts of payment. Collected identification cards will be returned to voters when they attend for the election. On the other hand, identification cards of supporters of rival candidates can also be bought and held until the election is over. This practice is known as "negative vote buying" or "buying abstention".

Instead of having direct contact with voters, candidates and their canvassers can channel vote buying money as contribution to village fund. Voters sometimes receive vote buying money via postal orders or bank accounts. There are also reports about chit funds in which participating voters are bound to benefit. Loans are provided to give loans to voters under agreement to terminate repayment clauses when certain candidates win. This practice is also known as "green harvesting". Gambling on election result is encouraged, especially at village level, with lucrative odds on certain candidates to influence voters' decisions. Another common practice in buying vote is by putting voters' names as temporary employees on the party payroll or as temporary employees in labor-intensive business such as plantation and factory. In this case, voters are told that they are bound by terms of employment contract to support certain candidates.

- **Vote Buying in "Kind" and Voting Bribery:** Vote buying also exists in "kind" and common items distributed to voters such as clocks, watches, clothes, sports equipment, tires, cement, kitchen implements, water containers, water coolers, poultry, fertilizers, rice, flood relief supplies and Amphetamine pills. Key canvassers are even provided with new cars, pickup trucks or motorcycles.

Expressions of generosity as a measure to win votes can be seen as voting bribery. Lavish banquets, parties and

entertainment activities are held. In some cases, voters are requested to pay a nominal entry fee about 10 baht per person to disguise as charity events. To increase political popularity, candidates sometimes provide scholarships and education materials as a show of their generosity and commitment to community development. For the same purpose, construction and maintenance of public facilities are provided by candidates. Generous donations are made for funeral services, wedding parties or community charities to boost support of candidates among voters. Free medical care, hair cuts, perms and dental treatment are provided. Free trips and vocational training are organized for voters. Farm products are bought from voters at inflated prices. Free transportation is provided to voters on the election day. Religious centers are paid for their congregations to pray for certain candidates. At the same time, basic necessities or gifts are distributed to voters along with incense sticks to make voters fear that they will suffer ill luck if they do not vote for such candidates.

Misinformation

- Voters are informed by candidates that valid ballots for a party list election and a constituency based election have to be in the same number only.
- Voters are recruited in party membership and are informed that it is illegal for party members not to vote for their parties.
- Candidates spread false information that rival candidates are disqualified by the ECT.
- Candidates orchestrate vote buying or cheating incidents using the name of rival candidates get the ECT to sanction their rivals.

Intimidation, Thuggery and Violent Action

- Candidates, canvassers and their supporters are threatened not to compete or run effective campaign in certain locality.

Posters, campaign materials and vehicles are often vandalized. Voters attending campaign rally are also subject to intimidation.

- Violent actions, particularly in forms of assault and murder, against rival candidates and canvassers are used as a desperate measure when competition is so fierce that non-violent intimidation fails to create competitive edge.
- Witnesses and government officers are threatened to deter them from pursuing legal action against election fraud.

Partisan Conduct of Election Officers and Government Officials

- In most cases, government officers are members of the entrenched patronage network and they are obliged to serve their patrons during the election. This is the main cause of dishonest handling of electoral process. At provincial, constituency and polling station levels, government officers are often acquainted to candidates and canvassers. These officers are often subject to bribery and influence, making their decisions and actions biased in favor of certain candidates. These officers may otherwise opt for inactive approach in handling electoral process by not taking decisive action against fraudulent activities for fear of retaliation. These officers often turn blind eyes to violations committed by their patrons while overtly taking tough stance against rival candidates. The smuggling of ballot papers, multiple voting, impersonation, phantom voting and tampering of ballot boxes as well as tampering of vote tabulation are only possible with cooperation from dishonest officers.
- Ahead of the election day, additional names are wrongfully filled in the house register as a measure to assist candidates to bring in phantom voters. In some cases, deserted houses are registered with more than 10 inhabitants. For the same purpose, identification cards are wrongfully issued to foreign immigrants and factory workers with clear instruction to vote for certain candidates.

- Government officers sometimes involve in the dissemination of false information about electoral process and the qualification of candidates to create confusion and increase competitive edge for their patrons. For example, voters are instructed during election education sessions or community activities that valid ballots for a party list election and a constituency based election have to be in the same number of certain candidates.

4. Advance Election (29-30 December 2000)

Members of ANFREL secretariat conducted limited observation of an advance election in Bangkok and Nonthaburi. Observation reports noted that the surrounding environment was highly vibrant. There was unprecedented enthusiasm among voters, candidates, political parties, the ECT, government agencies, the media and NGOs. But admittedly, it was also clear that electoral process had become chaotic as a result of new regulations and measures adopted by the ECT to bring transparency, fairness and honesty to Thai election.



Voters queued outside a central polling center in Nonthaburi on 29 December 2000

During the advance election on 29-30 December 2000, registered absentee voters turned out massively to cast ballots. On the one hand, this phenomenon showed that voters were excited and aware of the election. But on the other hand, a

larger-than-expected turnout and ill-preparedness among staffs of the ECT had led to chaos and confusion.

In Bangkok, 102,488 people had registered to cast an early vote and more than 81 percent of them showed up at three advance voting centers in Bangkok. Most voters were in a frantic rush to cast ballots as they were eager to leave town for New Year holidays. Prominent among them were soldiers and factory workers.

But in terms of basic information for quality voting behavior, most voters who cast ballots during the advance voting period in Bangkok had no clue about candidates in their home constituencies. At their designated central voting stations, they found the information boards provided by the ECT were not of much help to decide whom to vote for. It only gave the candidates' numbers and affirmed their qualification as candidates. Many voters said the information boards would be more helpful if the candidates' background and their party policy in brief were included. Some of them had to call home to inquire about the candidates in their constituencies from family members while a number of them decided to forego casting ballots for constituency candidates and only marked party-list ballots.

Regarding confusion in the administration of electoral process, many voters came to the Thai-Japanese Youth Center in Din Daeng only to find that they were supposed to cast ballots at one of the two other venues, Rajamangala Stadium in Hua Mak and the Future Park shopping complex in Bang Khae. The other two venues were added to accommodate large numbers of absentee voters and the ECT arranged a shuttle bus service for voters who showed up at the wrong place. However, many voters or even staffs of the ECT were unaware of such arrangement. Some voters went home without voting after they found that they had to travel for several hours to the other side of Bangkok.

It was also noticeable that electoral process was slow and frantic partly because staffs of the ECT were not adequate to take care of thousands of voters nor they were familiar with an

initiative of the ECT to affix authenticity stickers, in 10 different codes and 80 different colors, on ballots as a counter-fraud measure. The Thai-Japanese Youth Center, for example, was ill-prepared for this. Some 40,000 voters had to wait for more than an hour in queue. Traffic in front of the center was also a mess. According to Election Commissioner Mr. Yuwarat Kamolwet, 26 percent of registered absentee voters mentioned confusing information as their biggest complaint. Lengthy delays, especially the slow-moving queue, also got most voters down.

Elsewhere, apart from confusing and chaotic electoral process, there also existed evidence of fraud and irregularity. Most evident case noted by ANFREL observers was in Nonthaburi where the ECT seized a ballot box from an advance voting station in Bang Kruay because the number of ballots found inside exceeded the number of the people who voted. Election Commissioner Mr. Yuwarat Kamolwet said 784 ballots were found inside a ballot box but only 700 people had voted in this station. The ECT declared to investigate into whether fraud was involved.

5. Observation Mission I (2-8 January 2001)

ANFREL observers launched a rally to open the Mission I in front of the ECT Office in Bangkok

With a fundamental mandate to support democratic development and related initiatives in Asia, ANFREL has represented international

efforts to ensure the integrity, credibility and transparency of electoral process in Cambodia, the Philippines, East Timor, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Japan, Hong Kong and Thailand since 1997.





ANFREL observers conducted an opening march of the Mission I

The election for members of the HOR scheduled on 6 January 2001 was understood as a major showdown between two extreme forces in Thai politics. On the one hand, there existed public aspirations for better and cleaner electoral process that would produce a political system entrusted with professional and ethical qualifications. Yet on the other hand, electioneers seemed to be riding on the entrenched patronage system and loopholes in the enactment of the Election Law. Orchestrated efforts of the ECT and various people's organizations to maintain the integrity of electoral process were at odd with reports of proliferated frauds, irregularities and election-related violence.

From 2-7 January 2001, ANFREL deployed 43 international observers from 17 countries to observe this all-important election in Thailand. Out of the total 76 provinces throughout the country, international observers were dispatched to sensitive constituencies in 28 provinces with established records of fraud and irregularity, including: Bangkok, Buriram, Chonburi, Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Kanchanaburi, Khon Khen, Kalasin, Lopburi, Nakhon Ratchasima, Nakhon Sawan, Nakhon Sithammarat, Narathiwat, Nonthaburi, Nong Khai, Pathum Thani, Prachuab Kirakhan, Pichit, Phisanulok, Ratchaburi, Sakhon Nakhon, Songkhla, Samut Prakan, Suphanburi, Surat Thani, Ubon Ratchathani, Udon Thani and Uttradit.

ANFREL mission was in support of the P-Net and the Poll Watch Foundation. ANFREL observers sought to represent

solidarity of people from different parts of the world in the consolidation and restoration of the faith of Thai people in democratic electoral process. Extensive cooperation between experienced international observers and prominent local monitoring organizations was hoped to raise public awareness of electoral exercises and increase a chance in deterring and detecting frauds, irregularities and violence.

In parallel, ANFREL also sought to share experiences with members of the ECT at all levels about basic standards in administering and monitoring democratic election. In undertaking observation activities in Bangkok, ANFREL observers met members of the P-Net and the Poll Watch Foundation as well as journalists from The Nation, Matichon Daily and The Nation Channel. In the field, every team of ANFREL observers also had an opportunity to meet, interview and share experiences extensively with candidates, representatives of political parties, voters, law enforcement officers, members of the armed forces and NGOs. Some ANFREL observers even took part in voter education sessions such as teams deployed in Nakhon Ratchasima, Nakhon Sawan and Phisanulok. In general, activities of ANFREL observers had been well covered by local and international media throughout the mission.

Vote Buying

Realizing that vote buy had often been mentioned as one of many critical problems in Thailand's election and democratic reform, ANFREL observers sought to verify the scope and scale of vote buying activities in their areas of deployment as well as the underlying rationale of both vote buyers and vote sellers.

In every area, ANFREL observers found that vote buying was a common practice in election season. It was also the most serious violation of the election law. Vote buying cut across the society and involved almost everybody such as political parties, candidates, canvassers, voters or even state officials dared not take action for fear of political influence. Likewise, most witnesses of vote buying activities were too afraid to report to the police. This practice started many years ago with salted fish

bribes to voters and soon progressed to clothes, utensils and livestock, before resorting to the surest method of all: cash. Many voters expressed that they wanted an election as often as possible because it gave them a chance to enjoy the flow of cash and campaign gifts.

Nevertheless, the enactment of the ECT and records of severe action against candidates who won through corrupt methods put vote buying activities under the close watch. Candidates and political parties appeared to be very wary and cautious in handing out free gifts like jackets, T-shirts, whisky, sarongs for the elderly, cash donations and essential items. Although giveaways were not done in the open any more, there were signs that candidates are using more sophisticated tactics to conceal their activities as evidenced by the numerous complaints brought before the ECT, the P-Net, the Poll Watch, the media or even ANFREL. The P-Net, in particular, reported that it had had received 499 complaints up until 3 January 2001 and serious cases would be forwarded to the ECT for further investigation. Of all cases reported to the P-Net, 270 occurred outside Bangkok. But the upsurge of complaints about fraud and irregularity did not simply mean that the election on 6 January 2001 was dirtier than other elections in the past. Such unprecedented exposure could, on the other hand, be seen as a positive sign of active participation of the civil society in achieving "cleaner and fairer" election campaign. This transformation effective brought new factors, apart from money, into contestation at the polls such as attractive policy platform or personal and professional credentials of candidates.

Reports of ANFREL observers were in the same line as those of the ECT, the P-Net and the Poll Watch Foundation that there were two major vote-buying methods: direct vote-buying at 200-500 baht a head and indirect vote-buying via kamnans and village headmen who are also canvassers. A pyramid scheme had been implemented in which small-scale canvassers recruiting five to 15 voters each. These voters received packets of cash in the amount of 200 baht to 500 baht for passing on to relatives and friends along with instructions on whom to vote for. Apparently, surrounding environment of the election indicated a

changed in the style of canvassing and vote buying with the increasing role of small-scale canvassers while in the past flagrant vote buying by prominent canvassers was common. Candidates depended more on the bottom layer of the canvassing hierarchy for two reasons. First, such practice was less noticeable and less likely to be arrested with hard evidence. Second, the downsizing of campaign constituencies throughout the country had allowed candidates to work more effectively to include small particles in each locality in their canvassing networks.

ANFREL observers deployed in Buriram found that in Surin, a neighboring province, a vote costs about 100 to 200 baht per head. They reported that 45,000 baht had been transferred to a bank account of each of the 100 youth groups in constituencies 3 and 4 while clothes with names of candidates on them were handed out to flood victims in constituencies 7 and 8 on 4 January 2001.

On the same day in Nakhon Ratchasima, ANFREL observers found that religious donation (Phapa) envelopes holding 500 baht notes were handed out to residents of Boonruang Rungruang community in constituency 1. Many of the candidates also offered cash for funeral arrangements in the Nong Phai Lom community.

In Maha Sarakham, people attending a rally in Phayakkhaphum Phisai district were urged to collect 200 baht from a candidate's office on 4 January 2001. Owners of vehicles taking villagers to the campaign venue were offered 500 baht each.

On 5 January 2001 ANFREL observers reported that vote buying is rampant in all 11 constituencies in Khon Kaen with inducements including cooperative membership, opening bank accounts for housewives' groups or distributing chicken or cattle. Similar reports were also received from Sakhon Nakhon. In Khon Kaen, the collapse of a multi-purpose building in tambon Bung Niam of Muang district exposed a certain candidate who planned to deliver the fertilizer to locals in exchange for their votes. The building developed cracks after 1,530 bags of fertilizer weighing more than five tons were hidden in its upper floors. Local leaders

were told the fertilizer had been sent by the provincial administration organization to help farmers whose plots had been damaged by recent flash floods. But later on, it turned out that the fertilizer had been transported from the warehouse of a candidate contesting in constituency 1.

In Kanchanaburi and Buriram, candidates of Chart Thai distributed membership cards number 9 (similar to ATM cards) inscribed with their names and pictures to locals. According to the P-Net, these cards were classified by color code and could be presented to canvassers in exchange for cash from 300 to 1,000 baht.

In Songkhla, candidates of Democrat were accused of providing flood relief bags and food to locals for vote buying purpose. In this regard, the ECT in Songkhla confirmed that it had received more than 200 pages of complaints and the matter was submitted to the ECT in Bangkok for further investigation.

In Bangkok and other provinces, ANFREL observers had an opportunity to see handouts allegedly distributed for vote buying purpose such as clocks, wrist watches, student notebooks, T-shirts, shirts, jackets, water containers, funeral wreaths and statues of famous monks with inscriptions of candidates' names or logos of political party. Moreover, there were household merchandises such as eggs, cooking oil, canned food, beer, whisky and detergent.

While ANFREL observers and other monitoring organizations were aware that vote buying was rampant, it was also difficult to convince witnesses to testify against canvassers and consequently it was almost impossible to acquire sufficient evidence to prosecute wrongdoers. In this regard, P-Net Secretary General Mr. Somchai Srisuthiyakorn urged the ECT to take into serious account the safety of witnesses and the police should not question witnesses openly after local election panels acted on tips from the P-Net. On the side of voters, many of them were aware that selling votes in exchange for money or gift was illegal but they were obliged to follow instructions of canvassers working within the entrenched patronage system in each locality.

Election-Related Violence

ANFREL observers learned that violent acts, particularly in forms of assault and murder, against rival candidates and canvassers had been used as a desperate measure when competition became so fierce that non-violent intimidation failed to create sufficient competitive edge. In this regard, National Police Chief Police General Pornsak Durongkhaviboon said that 300 policemen had been assigned to each constituency while local and Crime Suppression Units were on 24-hour standby. He said 89 task forces would be deployed in Bangkok and 2,726 in the provinces, along with 40 bomb squads and 37 border patrol police units. State hospitals had been instructed to prepare for victims of election-related violence. Mongkhon na Songkhla, Permanent Secretary for Public Health, told 805 hospitals to arrange mobile medical units and all election-related cases handled by hospitals must be reported immediately to the Medical Institute for Accidents and Natural Disasters.

In Chiang Rai, ANFREL observers reported a case of election-related violence. On 1 January 2001 a gunman suspected of killing a Chart Thai canvasser was shot dead by police while resisting arrest. Mr. Amnart Boonkhien, who was close to Mr. Rithirong Manamontrikul (a head canvasser for Chart Pattana candidates), was killed in front of the Big C supermarket during a gunfight with local police. Chiang Rai police believed that Amnart was directly involved in the killing of Mr. Boonthueng Klamcharoen who was campaigning for Chart Thai candidate Mr. Vithawas Pohthasuthon in constituency 7. Kamnan Ti canvassed for Chart Pattana's Mr. Samphan Lertnuwat whose daughter was also contesting a seat in constituency seven covering Mae Sai and Chiang Saen.

ANFREL observers in Ratchaburi reported that two junior policemen were charged with shooting at the home of a Thai Rak Thai candidate and wounding her son. On 28 December 2000 two shots were fired at home of Mrs. Kannikar Tanboon-ek. Mrs. Kannikar, a former municipal mayor and wife of the district superintendent, alleged the attack was part of a campaign by a

rival candidate. Mrs. Kannikar and Mr. Kobkul Nopamornbodee of Chart Pattana, a former chief of the provincial administration, were favorites in constituency 1 following the red-card ejection of Mr. Boonmak Sirinaovakul of Democrat.

In Surat Thani, ANFREL observers reported that a Thai Rak Thai canvasser was shot dead on 3 January 2001. Chalerm Khaokhong, working for Prasert Boonprasop in constituency 3, was shot five times in the back and twice in the hip as he entered his house on Khunthonglang road. Surat Thani police said that Mr. Chalerm knew he was in danger as he always carried a 38 pistol and used the back door of his house.



A Democrat campaign rally during which attacks on its local branch offices were mentioned

On 4 January 2001 a Democrat branch office was bombed in tambon Thapraja, Cha-uad district, Nakhon Si Thammarat. The office was in the compound of a petrol service station of Krida Petroleum owned by Apichart Karikarn, the Democrat candidate in constituency 9. The explosions shattered the office's glass windows and damaged its door, as well as some documents and office equipment. Nobody was injured. Police inspecting the scene found two safety levers, one from an M67 grenade and the other from an M26. Mr Apichart blamed the attack on political conflict, adding his main rival was Rassadorn candidate Prakob Kongprom. Rassadorn had launched a leaflet campaign against him earlier.



In constituency 4 and constituency 5 of Sakhon Nakhon, ANFREL observers received complaints that goons allegedly hired by a Rassadorn candidate had threatened canvassers of Chart Pattana and Seritham.

ANFREL observers visited a Rassadorn candidate in Samut Prakan

Such disturbing security situation prompted election-related organizations to stay on alert and be very careful. In areas with established record of stiff competition and election-related violence such as Buriram, Pathum Thani and Samut Prakan, senior staffs of the ECT had to carry pistols and donned bulletproof jackets for self-protection. ANFREL observers, as well as staffs of the P-Net and the Poll Watch Foundation, in these provinces had to work closely with border patrol police units. The presence of heavily armed border patrol police units effectively created a deterrent effect on perpetrators of violent activities.

ANFREL observers in Buriram witnessed an incident in which a border patrol police unit arrested suspected gunmen with unlicensed shotguns on 5 June 2001. On the same day, they accompanied mobile units of the P-Net and border patrol police to defuse armed supporters of two rival candidates from a violent showdown in ban Non Daeng. In Pathum Thani, ANFREL observers had to limited their observation activities only in constituency 2 and constituency 3 where security could be guaranteed by the ECT and border patrol police because supporters of influential candidates used to assault observers of the P-Net and the Poll Watch Foundation in previous elections. On 4, 5 and 6 January 2001 ANFREL observers reported that supporters of Democrat and Thai Rak Thai had followed their car during most the observation mission.

Misinformation and Misconducts of State officials

Most ANFREL observers expressed serious concerns about misinformation and slander tactics, especially by accusing rival candidates of being disqualified by the ECT on the ground of cheating. For example, leaflets bearing logo of the ECT had been distributed in Sakon Nakhon constituency 5 throughout the campaign period. These leaflets accused a Thai Rak Thai candidate of being involved in vote buying and it would therefore be illegal to vote for this particular candidate. Campaign materials of Thai Rak Thai had also been vandalized.

Elsewhere, the situation had been complicated by efforts of certain candidates to influence voters through misguided advice

of state officials and local media. ANFREL observers in Phisanulok reported a misconduct of local staffs of the ECT in setting up polling stations in Nakhon Thai district. The tent set up to be used by election officers as a center to distribute election material and also as a counting center was inscribed with the name of Mr. Vira Pattamasiriwath, a Thai Rak Thai candidate. His name was illustrated at every corner of the tent.

National Police Chief Police General Pornsak Durongkhaviboon confirmed that 85 police, 52 of them commissioned officers, had been accused of being partial. Nan police chief Police Major General Tha-ngai Prasachaksattru and Songkhla police chief Police Major General Thavorn Phumisingharat were transferred to inactive posts because of lack of neutrality under a request of the ECT.

Equally interesting was an attitude of the ECT toward the conduct of exit polls as a result of reports from local election panels that voters who cast advance ballots felt uncomfortable with the way exit polls were conducted. On 3 January 2001, the ECT ruled that pollsters would be allowed to make exit polls on the election day but they were seriously warned against predicting the election outcome before voting ends. Election Commissioner Yuwarat Kamolvej said that pollsters must not give details of votes cast at each polling unit. Any predictions must be for a constituency as a whole. He said political parties and their campaigners could not make their own exit polls. "The most important thing is that pollsters must not leak information about who voted for whom or what political party. If the majority of a certain constituency were tobacco planters, a threat not to buy their produce would be enough to influence their decisions," he said. Pollsters must also remain impartial, or face up to 10 years in jail or a 200,000 baht fine and be stripped of voting rights. The ECT also suggested pollsters avoid using local people to conduct exit polls in their own constituency for safety reasons.

Apart from that, ANFREL observers deployed in areas inhabited by ethnic minorities also expressed concerns about the conduct of voter education by the ECT. In Chiang Mai and Narathiwat, the use of tower broadcasting was not effective

because the majority of locals did not understand Thai language (Bangkok dialect). Such failure of voter education campaigns became much higher in areas where the literacy rate was low and voters were subject to manipulation by misguided information. For example, hill tribes- voters in Chiang Mai were provided with benchmark sticks. Canvassers would make sure that benchmark sticks would guide voter to cast their votes in a box designated for their candidates. In Narathiwat, voters belonged to the Malay Muslim community were told by canvassers that only candidates from New Aspiration Party candidates were "good Muslims" and must be voted for.

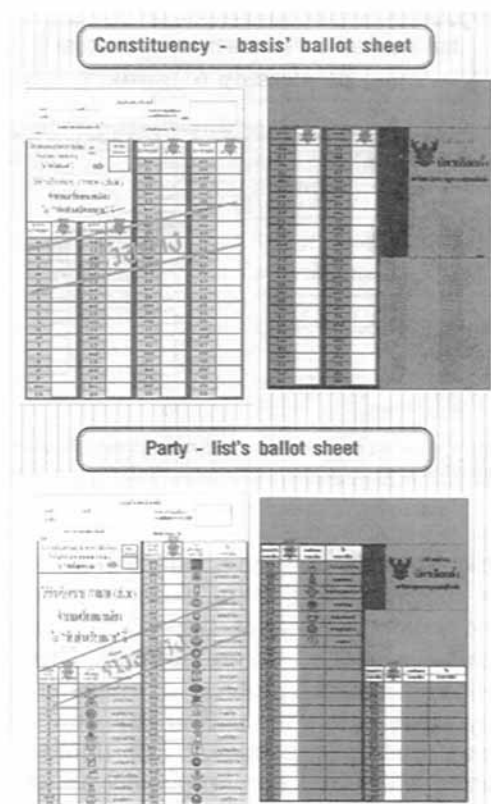
The Conduct of Electoral Process on 6 January 2001



Voters waited to cast ballots

The overall picture regarding the conduct of the election was contradictory. On the one hand, there exists enthusiasm of the voting public and ardent efforts of the ECT in ensuring the integrity of electoral process. Voters' turnout was about 69 percent nationwide. Despite reports of disturbing security situations in many areas before the polling day, atmosphere on 6 January 2001 was generally peaceful. But unfortunately, the election was marred with fraud and irregularity as well as many lapses in the enactment of laws and regulations to the extent that results from a number of constituencies had to be cancelled subsequently by the ECT.

In every polling station visited by ANFREL observers, the opening was on time at 8.00 am but the conducts of electoral process were slow and not in good order. This was mainly because polling station officers did not understand well of new procedures such as an initiative of the ECT to affix authenticity stickers, in 10 different codes and 80 different colors, on ballots as a counter-fraud measure. In Samut Prakan, for example, more than 100 ballots were issued to voters without authenticity stickers.



Sample ballot paper issued by the ECT

After being alerted of situations in Samut Prakan, the ECT immediately gave an instruction by radio to every polling station throughout the country that authenticity stickers must be affixed

on every ballot. But seeing that such mistakes were caused primarily by lapses and misunderstanding on the side of polling staffs, the ECT agreed to accept the validity of ballots issued earlier to voters in Samut Prakhon without authenticity stickers. Decision of the ECT regarding Samut Prakhon became precedent for similar cases in other provinces.

Apart from that ANFREL observers also noted that voters' rolls in some areas were ridden with mistakes. Many voters could not find their names or went to the wrong place. But more serious were complaints of voters that names in their households had been tampered either by wrongfully adding names or deleting names. In Pathum Thani, for example, ANFREL observers reported on 6 January 2001 that 50 households were found on voters' rolls in constituency 3 but these households did not exist in reality.



A public announcement board providing information about candidates and voters' lists in front of a polling station

Confusions and mistakes on the side of polling station officers combined with high voter turnout, effectively slowed down the flow of electoral procedures. Voters had to wait for more than an hour in queue. Lengthy delays, especially the slow-moving queue, got most voters down. After that, the average time taken for each voter to receive a ballot and cast it properly varied from two minutes to five minutes.

Another point of concern was about secrecy of the vote. In almost every polling station outside Bangkok visited by ANFREL observers, voting secrecy was not strictly observed. Election officers did not seem to be concerned with people standing at the back of the polling station where they could clearly see how voters marked their ballots.



A layout inside a polling station that could compromise voting secrecy

In Pathum Thani constituency 2 and constituency 3, the situation in polling stations became more complicated when ANFREL observers found out that people appointed to serve as election officers did not show up and the presiding officer had to deputize voters from the same locality as their replacements but these newly deputized officers were in fact canvassers either of Democrat or Thai Rak Thai candidates. Such collusion led to both the violation of voting secrecy and intimidating atmosphere inside polling stations. Even worse, two polling stations in constituency 2 were located in private residences of village chiefs known to be connected with a Democrat candidate.

A Thai Rak Thai canvasser was deputized to serve as a polling station officer in Pathum Thani

Election officers in Pathum Thani constituency 2 and constituency 3 also failed to impose the prohibition of campaign materials within the polling perimeter and posters of Thai Rak Thai and Democrat candidates were placed at the entrance of almost every polling station.



There were other lapses found by ANFREL observers regarding liquor ban in Pathum Thani, Sakhon Nakhon and Kanchanaburi where some voters and election officers reportedly exhibited drunken behaviors during voting hours even inside polling stations.

Closing of the Election

Voting hours ended at 3.00 pm but as a result of confusions and mistakes on the side of polling officers combined with high voter turnout, there were reports about failure of many polling stations to accommodate voters waiting to cast their votes by the closing of the election.

In most polling stations outside Bangkok, ANFREL observers noted that polling station officers did not have a clear understanding of procedures regarding the closing of the election. The transport of ballot boxes to a counting center in Kanchanaburi was abnormally slow. There were reports about delay and lapses in the closing of the election in many provinces. In ANFREL observers Buriram, Kanchanaburi, Pathum Thani, Sakhon Nakhon and Samut Prakan doubted whether such problems were deliberately caused to slow down the delivery of ballot boxes from polling stations to counting centers in each constituency as part of coordinated efforts between candidates and polling station officers to tamper with ballots and ballot boxes. In Sakhon Nakhon constituency 4, ANFREL observers reported that ballot boxes from polling station 7 were stored over night at a village chief's residence. When ballot boxes from this polling station arrived at a counting center, security seals were found broken. The ECT had to suspend the counting of ballots in Kanchanaburi constituency 1 as two ballot boxes arrived late and there were evidences that both ballot boxes were tampered.



Transport of ballots and polling materials

Counting Process



Military officers at a central counting center verified and sorted ballots delivered by polling station officers

At counting centers, the scene was generally chaotic and tensed. There were confusions on the side of counting officers, especially in receiving ballot boxes and determining conditions of ballot boxes and ballots received from each polling station. There were accusations from candidates as well as suspicions of ANFREL observers whether such confusions were in fact a deliberate act of cheating in the counting process. In Buriram, about 10 percent of ballots were declared invalid while the winning margin between two major candidates was about 500 votes. Clearly, these invalid ballots could change the result in this province.



Border patrol police guarded ballots at a central counting center

The situation was complicated by the lack of order in and around counting centers. Public witness in the counting process was apparent everywhere. But that was not necessarily meant to be positive. Despite the presence of security officers, candidates brought hundreds of supporters to surround counting centers and tried to make as much noise as possible to influence decisions of counting officers and intimidate their rivals. In many places, there were reported about unruly behaviors of the crowd gathering around counting centers. Candidates also equipped their supporters with cameras and video cameras to film the conduct inside counting centers and record any evidence of fraud committed by their rivals as well as mistakes committed by counting officers.

Inside counting centers, there were more than one hundred counting officers. Some of them were high school students with little experiences related to vote count and tabulation. These students were clearly under mounting pressures from candidates and their supporters as well as from their fear of making mistakes in the counting process. Given the number of officers swarming inside counting centers, it was also highly difficult to monitor the conduct of each counting officers in case any one of them had made mistake or tamper with ballots in a way that could seriously affect the integrity and fairness of electoral results.

By law, the counting must be proceeded non-stop once it had started. In every counting center, the actual counting of ballots started after midnight. By the morning of the next day, counting officers were already tired. Most ANFREL observers noted this problem as another key factor for mistakes in vote count and tabulation.

6. Observation Mission II (28-30 January 2001)

In an attempt to maintain the integrity of electoral process, the ECT had investigated complaints concerning alleged fraud and irregularity. The ECT had a legal mandate to invalidate election results (yellow card) or even disfranchise voting rights of candidates and bar them from participating in subsequent rounds of election (red card). Decisions to cancel electoral results and disqualify candidates require a unanimous approval from the ECT Commissioners. The ECT had started the hearing process on serious fraud and irregularity on 16 January 2001. The ruling of the ECT was announced on 23 January 2001 and a re-election was ordered in 62 constituencies in 29 provinces on the ground of violation of Section 44 of the Election Law:

Section 44

"No candidate nor any person shall commit any act to induce electors to cast a ballot for him or her or other candidate or any political party or to abstain from voting for any candidate or political party by the following means:

- (1) Providing, giving, offering, promising to give or preparing to give properties or any other benefits which can be calculated in money value to any person;
- (2) Giving, offering or promising to give money, properties or any other benefits whether directly or indirectly to the community, association, foundation, temple, education institution, asylum or any other institution;
- (3) Advertising for an election by organizing an entertainment;
- (4) Treating or promising to treat any person with meals;

- (5) Deceiving, forcing, threatening, intimidating, slandering or inducing the misunderstanding in the popularity of any candidate or political party."

Province	Total Constituency	Re-election in Constituency
Bangkok	37	20
Buriram	10	1, 5, 8, 9
Chaiphaphum	7	1, 5
Chiang Mai	10	4
Chiang Rai	8	5
Kanchanaburi	5	1, 3, 4, 5
Khon Kaen	11	4, 6, 9, 10
Lampang	5	3, 5
Loei	4	3
Maharakham	6	6
Nakhon Nayok	2	1, 2
Nakhon Phanom	5	1, 2, 4
Nakhon Ratchasima	17	1, 6, 7, 9, 10, 14, 15, 17
Narathiwat	4	2, 4
Nong Bua Lamphu	3	2
Nong Khai	6	5
Petchabun	7	1
Pichit	4	2
Prachinburi	3	2
Ratchaburi	5	1
Roi Et	9	2, 3, 9
Sakhon Nakhon	7	1
Samut Prakan	6	6
Srisakhet	9	7, 9
Sukhothai	4	2, 4
Surin	9	4, 7
Ubon Ratcha Thani	11	1, 2, 4, 6, 10
Uttaradit	3	2
Yasothon	4	1, 2, 3

In this connection the ECT also received an approval from the Council of the State to disfranchise voting rights of eight elected candidates and bar them from participating in subsequent

rounds of election. Disfranchised Thai Rak Thai candidates were Mr. Sarun Sarunket of Uttaradit constituency 2, Mr. Seksit Weinijompong of Roi Et constituency 2, Mr. Chaityuth Chankomon of Chaiphum constituency 5, Mr. Tirachai Tiewcharoensoha of Surin constituency 4 and Mr. Rewat Saengvijit of Petchabun constituency 1. Disfranchised New Aspiration Party candidates were Mr. Suthiphan Sririkanond of Narathiwat constituency 2 and Mr. Pajit Srivorakhan of Nakhon Phanom constituency 2. Disfranchised Chart Thai candidate was Mr. Somsak Charoenphan of Surin constituency 7.

Nevertheless, under the Election Law, the 500 quorum of the HOR must be completed within 30 days from the 6 January's polls so that the first session of the HOR could start on 9 February 2001 as schedule. As a result the ECT expected to finish this process in a re-election on 29 January 2001. After the 500 quorum of the HOR is endorsed, the ECT could still continue to investigate complaints concerning fraud and irregularity in electoral process. The ECT could exercise the power to dismiss elected members of the HOR and call for a re-election.



ANFREL observers monitored a Thai Rak Thai campaign rally

For the second mission, ANFREL continued to work in support of the ECT, the P-Net and the Poll Watch Foundation in deploying 15 observers in eight provinces from 28-30 January

2001. Areas covered by ANFREL observers included constituencies in Buriram, Chiang Mai, Kanchanaburi, Khon Kaen, Nakhon Ratchasima, Roi Et, Ubon Ratchathani and Yasothon.

The overall picture of a re-election reflected a fierce competition as Thai Rak Thai, New Aspiration party, Democrat and Chart Thai parties sought to secure their victory in each constituencies so as to boost political leverage in the formation of a coalition government. To further complicate the situation, these major political parties nominated local magnets with established records of conflicting interests to run in each constituency. Each parties also drew resources and manpower from constituencies where electoral results were approved by the ECT to support their candidates in a re-election. The fact that a re-election was called only in certain constituencies also gave an opportunity for candidates to conduct activities to solicit votes illegally outside campaign constituencies, sometimes even in another province, so as to avoid be caught red-handed and punished by the ECT. For example, voters in Ubon Ratchathaini constituency 10 were transported to other constituencies to received vote buying money or receive meals provided by candidates.

Thai Rak Thai, in particular, was committed to penetrate into strongholds of rival parties. Results of an election on 6 January 2001 show that more than 50 percent of constituencies nationwide were taken by Thai Rak Thai candidates leaving Democrat a first runner up and other big parties like New Aspiration Party, Chart Thai, Chart Pattana, Rassadorn and Seritham became small parties in over night. Thai Rak Thai candidates were also confident that, given the popularity of the party and its leader Thaksin Shinawatra, they could win if rival parties were prevented from soliciting votes.

In parallel, even when leaders of Thai Rak Thai and New Aspiration Party decided to cooperate and work together to win over Democrat candidates, ANFREL observers found that candidates of both parties were actually not follow the policy of their leaders because they have their own local agenda and candidates did not want to loose their political bastions.

Given the nature of electoral contest, there were substantial reports concerning vote buying, fraud, intimidation of candidates and party supporters and witness of illicit activities and partisan behaviors of election officers and members of the authority. The amount of vote buying money was almost double from an election on 6 January 2001 and certain candidates, for example in Nakohn Ratchasima, even promised to give more money if they won.

Elsewhere, voting bribery was also rampant as the expression of generosity became an important measure to win votes. Lavish banquets, parties and entertainment activities were held. In Ubon Ratchathani constituency 10, voters were requested to pay a nominal entry fee to a concert about 10 baht per person to disguise as a charity event. ANFREL observers reported that Chart Thai candidates made generous donations for funeral services, wedding parties or community charities in Buriram and Roi Et to boost their popularity. For example, villagers in Buriram celebrated in late night for their football teams but many villages claimed to win in the same match.

In some areas, the safety of ANFREL observers was a risk as candidates tried to evade from getting caught red-handed buying votes. A car of ANFREL observers, accompanied by the P-Net and border patrol police, narrowly avoided a road trap allegedly set by canvassers of a Chart Thai candidate during one of late night surveillance missions in Buriram. Also in Buriram, security officers were hired as personal bodyguards of a Chart Thai candidate. ANFREL observers raised concerns that these security officers could probably work in intimidating voters and rival candidates too.

ANFREL observers in Chiang Mai and Ubon Ratchathani still reported incidents concerning misinformation and slander tactics, especially by accusing rival candidates of being disqualified by the ECT on the ground of cheating.

ANFREL observers noted that the ECT had increasingly adopted bureaucratic ideology in administering electoral process. The ECT had set up the NGO Coordinating Center to serve as its people's wing. This practice effectively bypassed the role of

independent monitoring groups such as the P-Net and the Poll Watch Foundation. Independent organizations did not received reasonable supports from the ECT in terms of budget, resources and administrative cooperation. Observers of the P-Net and the Poll Watch in some areas were marginalized by polling station officers.

Patronage politics constituted an important factor that worked to hamper local staffs of the ECT and observers of the P-Net and the Poll Watch from taking active roles due to the fact that they were connected to candidates and canvassers.

On the side of the ECT and related authority, the logistical and technical preparation of electoral process was clearly better. Border patrol police provided sufficient security to every step of electoral process. In general, the distribution of electoral material in most constituencies went on in good order with clear instructions provided in each stage. Polling centers and counting centers were better equipped. In Ubon Ratchathani constituency 10, a counting center was even moved into Tung Sri Udom District Police Station so as to increase security in vote count and tabulation process.

On the polling day, public enthusiasm was relatively lower than 6 January 2001. Voters' turnout on 29 January 2001 was about 55 percent. Electoral process was simpler than an election on 6 January 2001 because voters needed to choose only for constituency based candidates. Voters received only one ballot.



Atmosphere outside a polling station

Although there was no report about serious security problems, ANFREL observers still noted a number of confusions and lapses on the side of polling officers in enforcing laws and regulations governing electoral process.

Despite efforts of the ECT Commissioners, local staffs of the ECT were slow and ineffective in responding to complaints that voting rights of many voters were disfranchised because their names were still put on a list of "advanced voters" in the previous round of polls.

Polling station officers did not post a statement declaring the number of ballots received in front of many polling stations in Buriram and Ubon Ratcha Thani despite a clear instruction from the ECT that wanted to use in as a measure to prevent the smuggling of ballot papers, ballot rotating and multiple voting.

In Kanchanaburi, there were campaign posters in the perimeter of many polling stations in constituency 1.

In Chiang Mai, Kanchanaburi, Khon Khen and Roi Et, little efforts were made to ensure voting secrecy and to prevent unauthorized persons from entering into polling stations.

ANFREL observers in every province noticed canvassers flocking at the entrance and the exit of polling stations. Obviously, this was a measure to ensure that voters under their control came to cast ballots. In Ubon Ratchthani constituency 10, canvassers of a Chart Thai candidate were found providing transport for voters.

Voting hours ended at 4.00 pm but as a result of confusions and mistakes on the side of polling station officers ANFREL observers reported that many polling stations in Kanchanaburi constituency 1 failed to accommodate voters waiting to cast their votes by the closing of the election. In Nakhon ratchasima, ANFREL observers suspected that many polling stations in rural areas were still closed at 3.00 pm. But it was not confirmed whether ignorance was the cause of this problem or corrupt polling station officers deliberately closed polling stations earlier so as to have sufficient time to tamper with ballots.



A voter cast his ballot in Khanchanaburi

Nevertheless, in most polling stations, ANFREL observers noted that polling station officers had a better understanding of procedures regarding the closing of the election. The transport of ballot boxes to a counting center in was well secured by border patrol police. There was only one report about the delay of the delivery of ballot boxes from polling stations to a counting center in Ubon Ratchathani constituency 4 as a result of a car accident. A backup team was quickly dispatched to retrieve ballot boxes.

Except in Chiang Mai where vote count was delayed as a result of complaints about irregularity in the transport of ballot boxes, the counting of ballots began late at night on 29 January 2001 by army officers. Clearer instructions were provided in each stage. But there were still confusions on the side of counting officers, especially in receiving ballot boxes and determining conditions of ballot boxes and ballots received from each polling station. Foreseeing these problems, candidates also equipped their supporters with cameras and video cameras to film the conduct inside counting centers and record any evidence of fraud committed by their rivals as well as mistakes committed by counting officers.

Security and order were relatively well maintained by border patrol police. Only authorized persons were allowed to enter into the area designated for actual counting process. Representatives of candidates were nominated to witness the tabulation of votes inside counting centers while local people observe the process with enthusiasm.



Officers from the Navy were assigned as counting officers

7. Observation Mission III (27 June - 1 July 2001)

On 19 May 2001 the EC decided to hold a re-election on 30 June 2001 in seven constituencies in six provinces because of election fraud and vote-buying complaints against section 44 of the Election Law, including: Kanchanaburi constituency 5, Khon Kaen constituency 10, Nakhon Nayok constituency 2, Buri Ram constituency 5, Surin constituency 4 and Ubon Ratchathani constituencies 1 and 10.

As a result of this decision, the following elected members of the HOR were disqualified: Mr. Pracha Phopipit (Democrat, Kanchanaburi constituency 5), Mr. Sirichai Chat-chaipolrat (Chart Pattana, Khon Kaen constituency 10), Mr. Wuthichai Kittithanesuan (Chart Thai, Nakhon Nayok constituency 2), Mr. Panawat Liangpong-phan (Democrat, Buri Ram constituency 5), Mr. Prapas Virasathian (New Aspiration, Surin constituency 4), Mr. Kriang Kaltinant (Thai Rak Thai, Ubon Ratchathani constituency 1) and Mr. Sakchai Jittavej (Chart Thai, Ubon Ratchathani constituency 10).

A re-election was scheduled on 30 June 2001 (8.00 am - 3.00 pm) while an advanced polling was scheduled on 23 - 24 June 2001 (8.00 am - 5.00 pm).



ANFREL observers visited Thai Rak Thai campaign office in Bangkok

ANFREL observation was conducted in connection with efforts to assist democratization process in East Timor. Understanding that success of electoral process in East Timor would rely heavily on peace and order situation in the territory, ANFREL assigned one team of East Timorese delegates to a constituency in Nakhon Nayok where the armed forces have contributed significantly to the assurance of a peaceful electoral environment while the ECT and NGOs have been working vigorously to stamp out frauds in various forms such as vote buying, manipulation of voters' lists, ballot tampering and distortion in vote tabulation. Another team of East Timorese delegates was deployed in Ubon Ratchathani where concerted efforts of NGOs are primarily key to success in exposing fraud and irregularity in electoral process. Other two teams were sent to Khanchanaburi and Buriram.



ANFREL observers exchanged comments on electoral system with Members of the Law Society

Nakhon Nayok and Ubon ratchathani have been known for stiff electoral contest. Candidates campaigning in both provinces would do their utmost to win. This assumption could be proven by an established record of repetitive election as well as rampant fraud and irregularity reported by the media, the ECT, the NGO Coordinating Center and the P-Net. ANFREL observers found that local voters were not surprised but rather ashamed about the fact that the ECT had to disqualify elected members of the House of Representatives from their provinces.

Regarding problems in electoral process, ANFREL observers learned that a Chart Thai candidate and a Democrat candidate were accused of being involved in vote buying. Generally packets of cash in the amount of 150-200 baht had been distributed by canvassers. Each canvasser was assign to control 10-15 voters in the neighborhood, creating an effective and encompassing monitor system. Apart from direct vote buying, money had also been provided to voters as allowance, seminar per diem or payment for temporary employment in the amount of 150-200 baht per day.



ANFREL observers visited Democrat campaign office in Bangkok

In both provinces, ANFREL observers were informed that video taped pictures would be used as the evidence of presence of supporters at every party activity, including on the polling day, so that candidates could assess how effective their money had been spent in each village. Canvassers were assigned to tape everyone and verify with the pay list whether those who received

money turned out or not. This practice, according to the ECT, could also be used as the evidence for canvassers to pay vote buying money to voters after the polling hours when they checked taped pictures with their lists of supporters.

ANFREL observers went to observe a campaign rally of a Democrat candidate in Nakhon Nayok. Key members of Democrat, including former Prime Minister Chual Leekpai, spoke at the rally. The rally was conducted in good order and the content of most speeches were against vote buying and an agenda to develop eco-tourism in Nakhon Nayok. While presenting an agenda on tourism development, Democrat members severely criticized a Chart Thai candidate who was accused of encroaching a conservation area and taking soils from this area for his construction company. Copies of local newspaper reporting such accusation were disseminated in front of a stadium. A certain point, the practice of a Democrat candidate was close to slandering his rival. It was at this rally that ANFREL observers witnessed the use of video cameras to record the presence of party supporters.

Regarding efforts to raise public awareness against vote buying, the NGO Coordinating Center in Nakhon Nayok put primary schools students and teachers in a parade. Students were believed to be more effective in appealing and in embarrassing anyone who committed or tried to commit fraud.



An awareness campaign in Nakhon Nayok

In terms of election administration, ANFREL observers were confirmed of the readiness on the side of the ECT to ensure integrity, honesty, transparency, fairness and democratic standards of electoral process. The ECT also vowed to end the cycle of repetitive elections.

ANFREL observers witnessed the distribution of ballots, ballot boxes and other polling materials in Nakhon Nayok and Ubon Ratchathani. In general, the event went on smoothly and in good order with the presence of candidates. When polling station officers were confused about procedures, a clarification was quickly and effectively made by superior officers.

Nevertheless, given the fact that Nakhon Nayok and Ubon Ratchathani have experienced stiff contest between powerful families, ANFREL observers doubted the neutrality of local officers of the ECT such as polling station officers and local police. It has been accepted that candidates would do their utmost to win, including by creating an effective vote buying system.

ANFREL observers expressed concerns about implications of the entrenched patronage system for the conduct of the polls. Specially, the proximity between local members of the ECT and candidates could be a factor in influencing voting behaviors in some areas. The presence of party representatives as appointed election officials could intimidate some voters. The presence of canvassers inside and outside polling stations in historically sensitive constituencies could affect voters' freedom of choice.

ANFREL observers in Nakhon Nayok successfully convinced the ECT to prohibit unauthorized use of video cameras in front of polling stations on 30 June 2001 (video taped pictures had been used as the evidence of presence of voters who received vote buying money).

The ECT in Nakhon Nayok and Ubon Ratchathani agreed to take serious measures to ensure that the control of ballots distributed to and returned from each polling station would be thoroughly practiced by polling station officers so as to prevent the rotation of ballots and ballot stuffing on the polling day.

In Nakhon Nayok, the ECT promised to look into complaints submitted by a Democrat candidate about the illicit addition of 50 names into voters' list in village number 6, tambon Chumpol, Ongkarak district as well as a report of iTV that a village chief in Ban Kamsai, tambon Kao Perm, Ban Na district organized a mock election to use the result to identify the number of supporters of each party. This village chief was allegedly working for a Chart Thai candidate and supporters of Democrat would be intimidated not to go to vote or would be offered money to change their mind.

Situations in Ubon Ratchathani were complicated by the fact that a prominent politician, Mr. Newin Chidchob (Chart Thai), of Buriram took Ubon Ratchathani as his political turf and exercised all available measures to support a Chart Thai candidate in constituency 10. Capitalizing on his network of power and influence in lower part of Northeastern provinces, Mr. Newin allegedly involved as the mastermind of vote buying and thuggery activities in favor of a Chart Thai candidate in Ubon Ratchathani. Staffs and vehicles of Mr. Newin were heavily deployed all over the area.

On 29 June 2001, police arrested a Chart Thai member of the House of Representatives of Surin when he led vehicles from Surin and Buriram into Nam Khun district of constituency 10. Police found packets of money in the amount of 165,000 baht and slander leaflets attacking a Thai Rak Thai candidate inside both vehicles. The ECT set up a committee to investigate this case.

On the side of voters, ANFREL observers noted that the general atmosphere in both provinces was relatively peaceful without any report of conflicts and provocative actions committed by candidates and their supporters. Nevertheless, as elections had been held in repeatedly, most voters clearly showed weariness to participating although voting was compulsory. On the bright side, however, most voters felt ashamed that their provinces have become the land of never-ending election and wished to have this round of a re-election "clean and honest".

This sentiment was essentially supportive to efforts of the ECT, the NGO Coordinating Center, the Army, border patrol police and other related state agencies as well as the P-Net and the Poll Watch Foundation in deterring and detecting fraud and irregularity. This was especially the case in terms of information provided by local residents to mobile units of the ECT, the NGO Coordinating Center, the Army, border patrol police, the P-Net and the Poll Watch Foundation.

ANFREL observers monitored the ban of campaign activity and liquor before voting hours. The ban of campaign activity was well observed by both candidates while the ban of liquor was violated. Apart from that, there were reports of rampant vote buying but ANFREL observers did not witness it directly.

Generally, the conducts in polling stations on 30 June 2001 were peaceful and in good order. Voting secrecy was well observed. Although there still existed some lapses, these problems were quickly rectified by the ECT. For example, in 8 polling stations visited in Nakhon Nayok before 12.00 pm, the number of ballots received by each polling station and the number of eligible voters were not placed in front of each polling station. Understood that this lapse could possibly lead to the rotation of ballots and ballot stuffing, ANFREL observers consulted with the ECT. After that, there was an instruction by radio to every polling station to post such information to ensure the control of ballots distributed to and returned from each polling station.

In Ubon Ratchathani, there was no measure (such as a blind or a partition) to ensure voting secrecy in polling station 82 of constituency 1 in Muang district. In this polling station, ANFREL observers also witnessed a Democrat canvasser distributing Buddha amulets to polling station officers. This incident was reported to the ECT immediately and the identification of this person was recorded for further investigation.

Volunteer observers of the NGO Coordinating Center and the P-Net were welcomed and allowed to perform their duties in most polling stations.

The closing of polling stations was generally in good order. In fact, there was a notable improvement of administrative logistical management in most areas compared with previous elections. Polling stations and vote tabulation centers were better prepared in terms of manpower, equipment, space, lighting and security.

Nevertheless, at a counting center in Nakhon Nayok, a Chart Thai candidate brought a number of supporters to pressure vote tabulation officers regardless of the presence of local police and border patrol police. Due to the discrepancy of the number of ballots reported by polling station officers and the number of ballots found in a ballot box, vote count in constituency was withheld and a re-election was called on 2 July 2001 in polling station 7, village number 8, tambon Srisakrabua, Ongkarak district.



Vote tabulation process

In case of Nakhon Nayok, an unofficial result showed that Mr. Wuthichai Kittinaresuan (Chart Thai) received 24,919 votes while Mr. Vikij Issarasenarak (Democrat) received 22,794 votes. Voter turnout was 58.47% (51,127 voters) of total eligible voters in constituency 2 and 47,713 ballots were valid (equal to 93.32%). There were 1,458 voters that cast their votes but did not choose any candidate (equal to 2.85%). There were 1,956 void ballots (equal to 3.83%).

However, as a result of complaints about vote buying, the ECT had to withhold the approval of election result of Nakhon Nayok constituency 2. A tape recording allegedly featuring two Chart Thai members discussing vote-buying tactics was handed over to the ECT after Army-run Channel 5 television station aired the tape on 30 June 2001. The conversation allegedly took place between Chart Thai deputy leader Mr. Somsak Prisananathakul and Nakhon Nayok Member of the House of Representatives Mr. Sithichai Kittithanesuan. They discussed about buying votes for 200 baht each in Nakhon Nayok, where Chart Thai candidate Mr. Wuthichai Kittithanesuan beat his Democrat rival Mr. Vikij Issarasenarak.

The ECT said the Scientific Crime Detection Division of the National Police would be asked to identify the voices. If the tape recording was genuine, those involved would be subject to legal action. Meanwhile, the ECT has set up a committee to examine a tape recording of an alleged telephone conversation between Chart Thai members about vote buying.

In case of Ubon Ratchathani, an unofficial result showed that in constituency 1 Mr. Krieng Kaltinan (Thai Rak Thai) received 26,671 votes while Mr. Adul Ninprem (Democrat) received 23,060 votes. In constituency 10 Mr. Sakchai Jittavej (Chart Thai) received 27,338 votes while Mr. Kittipong Tieamsuwan (Thai Rak Thai) received 25,465 votes. However, as a result of complaints about vote buying, the ECT had to withhold the approval of election result of both constituencies of Ubon Ratchthani.

Both teams of ANFREL observers returned to Bangkok and held a debriefing meeting. They noted that there had been much public enthusiasm for better electoral process that would produce a political system entrusted with professional and ethical qualifications.

ANFREL witnessed strong commitment of Thai people to exercise their democratic rights and duties at the polls. Polling stations from different parts of the country recorded relatively high voter turnout although it was a re-election. Situations related to electoral process had also been extensively monitored and

reported by the media. In parallel, both teams were impressed by unprecedented efforts of the ECT, various people's organizations and other state agencies to uphold democratic integrity of electoral process.

A number of initiatives had also been made to encourage awareness of the voting public as well as to stamp out fraud and irregularity. Against the backdrop of reports about fraud and irregularity during the pre-election period, ANFREL found that general atmosphere of the polls was relatively peaceful. Overall efforts of related authorities to maintain order and basic standards of democratic elections were also commendable. Nevertheless, ANFREL observers still reported about money and intimidation being used as a means to influence voters.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

From 2 January - 18 August 2001, ANFREL deployed international observers from 17 countries to observe Thailand's election of members of the HOR. This mission covered sensitive areas in 30 provinces including Bangkok, Buriram, Chonburi, Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Kanchanaburi, Khon Khen, Kalasin, Lopburi, Nakhon Nayok, Nakhon Ratchasima, Nakhon Sawan, Nakhon Sithammarat, Narathiwat, Nonthaburi, Nong Khai, Pathum Thani, Prachuab Kirakhan, Pichit, Phisanulok, Ratchaburi, Sakhon Nakhon, Songkhla, Samut Prakan, Suphanburi, Surat Thani, Ubon Ratchathani, Udon Thani, Uttradit and Yasothon.

Because this was the first general election under Thailand's new constitution, there had been much public enthusiasm for better electoral process that would produce a political system entrusted with professional and ethical qualifications. ANFREL witnessed strong commitment of Thai people to exercise their democratic rights and duties at the polls. Polling stations from different parts of the country recorded high voter turnout for both advanced polling during 29-30 December 2001 and the actual election on 6 January 2001. Situation surrounding electoral process had also been extensively monitored and reported by the media.



ANFREL observers gave comments about mission findings to the media

In parallel, ANFREL was impressed by unprecedented efforts of the ECT and various people's organizations such as the P-Net and the Poll Watch Foundation to uphold

the integrity of electoral process. A number of initiatives had also been made to provide understanding about new election system to both election officials and voters.

On 6 January 2001, against the backdrop of reports about irregularity and violence during the pre-election period, ANFREL found that general atmosphere of the polls was relatively peaceful. Overall efforts of related authorities to maintain order and basic standards of democratic elections were also commendable. Nevertheless, ANFREL would like to express concerns on some confusions and lapses in procedural and technical consistency in administering and conducting of electoral process.

Electoral results in many constituencies indicated significant progress in combating money politics, family domination and patronage tradition. Decisions of the ECT to cancel electoral results on the ground of cheating was wide praised by the public as a show of political courage and commitment to democratic reforms. However, without sufficient power to block candidates that committed cheating from participating in electoral process again, the ECT faced difficulty to ensure that the final results of the senatorial elections really produced members of the HOR with professional qualifications and political legitimacy to represent the people.

Legal loopholes that contradicted sharply with bold measures adopted by ECT to stamp out frauds and irregularities in electoral

process had caused concerns. There existed controversies over a call for a re-election as disqualified candidates were still able to participate in the race. Previously, the Constitutional Court ruled that decisions of the ECT to disbar candidates that had committed fraudulent activities in two elections consecutively were unconstitutional.



*Activities of ANFRELo bserver
were covered by the media*

Verdicts of the Constitutional Court had serious impacts on voter confidence in electoral process and democratic reforms. Candidates known to be involved in fraudulent activities were likely to continue to buy their way to victory. As a result, Thailand's election of members of the HOR could be trapped in repetitive cycle, causing public enthusiasm and faith in democratic election to fade away.

ANFREL noted the implications of the entrenched patronage system for the conduct of the polls. In many cases, ANFREL confirmed reports of money and intimidation being used as a means to influence voters. As a result of the entrenched patronage system in many areas, there also existed a culture of passiveness as well as the lack of neutrality among law enforcement officers and members of local election bodies.

In extreme cases, activities of observers from the P-Net and the Poll Watch Foundation were even obstructed and marginalized by polling station officers. Therefore, it was difficult for independent election observers to effectively engage in efforts to deter and suppress fraud and irregularity in electoral process. Equally important, actions against vote buying in some cases were frustrated by the fact that witness were not willing to testify for fear of possible retaliation from candidates and their supporters.

The proximity between local election officials and political parties could also be a factor in influencing voting behaviors in some areas. The location of polling stations near or in the residence of local officials and the presence of party representatives as appointed election officials could intimidate some voters. The presence of canvassers inside and outside polling stations in historically sensitive constituencies clearly affected voters' freedom of choice.

Regarding technical improvement of electoral process, ANFREL recommends that posters and leaflets depicting a step-by-step picture of voting process and counting process should be printed and widely distributed so as to reduce confusions and mistakes on the side of election officers and voters. For the same reason, mock elections and mock vote counts should be held in every constituency. With regular practice, election officers could be more ready and able to handle problems professionally and promptly. To reduce the number of mistakes and speed up counting process, two separate ballot boxes should be used: one for constituency ballots and another for party list ballots. To ensure voters' freedom of choice, voting secrecy in polling booths must be well protected and representatives of political parties and candidates should not be made election officers.



A mock election in Pathum Thani

Number of votes polled should be announced and recorded after each hour. This measure could avoid any scope of manipulation at the end of voting hours. As a result of complaints

about the lack of neutrality of election officers, political parties and independent people's organizations should make sure that they have their observers to monitor the conduct in polling stations and counting stations.

Apart from that ANFREL recommends that, while broad-based education has been carried out quite successfully by both the ECT and private groups, more concerted efforts may help address some of the problems mentioned above. Increased efforts to educate the voting public and officials on a sustainable basis about democracy and the significance of political reforms may help the fight against political patronage. Officials also need more education and systematic training to ensure a consistent and fair voting process. More consistency and decisiveness in the conduct of the ECT at national level will support people's faith in democratic balloting and reduce the chance that Thailand will be entrapped in repetitive elections. At the same time, the roles of non-governmental organizations merit more recognition and support from the government. And in general, efforts to generate transparency in Thai politics should be further emphasized in the process of creating of local election bodies.

CHRONOLOGY

The Election of the House of Representative of Thailand

9 November, 2000 The Chuan government announced the House dissolution. His Majesty the King approved the dissolution of the House of Representatives, paving the way for a Jan 6 general election.

Duties Related to Candidates

- Nov. 15-19: Party list candidacy registration
- Nov. 20-24: Constituency candidacy registration
- Nov. 25 – Dec.1 Screen candidacy qualifications
- Nov. 25 onward: Announce candidate lists
- Dec. 5- 10: Overseas voting
- Dec. 29-30: Advance voting at central constituency

polling

stations

JAN 6: GENERAL ELECTION

- Revoke the election rights of candidates found to have cheated
- Re-Election

FEB 5: Announce final official election results

- Receive complaints about election results
- Dismiss MPs found to have cheated or to have been disqualified
- By-elections

Duties Related to Voters

- 20 days before election (Dec 17): Post eligible voters' lists at voting stations
- 15 days before election (Dec 22): Notify homeowners of eligible voters in households
- 10 days before election (Dec 27): Add or withdraw eligible voters names
- 7 days before election (Dec 30): Voters must give reasons for not voting to district chief or municipal clerk

JAN 6:

30 days after (Feb 6):

GENERAL ELECTION

Release list of voters failing to vote, with reasons

- Day 31-90 (Feb 7-May 6):
Release additional reasons for not voting
- 180 days after (Aug 4):
Announce list of voters who have lost rights for failing to vote.
- Rights will be reinstated when voters vote in the next election.

On the same day The EC conducting its first election instead of the Interior Ministry, is already meeting resistance from candidates who find its rules and guidelines too rigid. But EC Gothom Arya dismissed claims that the EC applies only one principle: that every candidate gets an equal chance. One of the most contentious areas is campaign-advertising spots intended for broadcast on radio and television. **Prohibitions on candidates:**

- Not allowed to buy TV or radio time to talk or launch any kind of campaign. They can only place ads on the air for a specified amount of time decided by the commission, to ensure equal exposure.
- Cannot appear on social or entertainment programs on TV and radio. Their roles in TV soap operas or movies and their songs cannot be aired either.
- Not allowed to take the role of TV or radio host.
- Distribution of tapes and books prohibited.
- Distribution of calendars and other usual New Year items prohibited.
- Introductory messages cannot be given on items of value, such as rulers and calendars.
- Not allowed to speak at social functions, such as wedding receptions or ordaining ceremonies.

10 November, 2000 Commissioner Yuwarat Kamolvej announced that people who would be 18 on Jan 6 next year would be allowed to register for advance balloting.

Applications from party-list candidates will be accepted from Nov 15-19 at the Election Commission

headquarters, and those from constituency candidates from Nov. 20-24 at the Thai-Japan Youth Centre in Din Daeng.

11 November, 2000 Somchai Srisuthiyakorn, secretary-general of the People's Network for Democracy, said big changes were in store. MPs who quit their seats to join cabinet must pay for by-elections to elect their successor. Party list MPs elevated to cabinet are automatically replaced by colleagues further down the list. Mr. Bovornasak Uwan, Prachadipok Institute secretary-general and former charter writer expected the counting of constituency ballots to take a day and party list votes a couple of days longer. Mr. Somchai said a week was more realistic. Slow counting should be acceptable if it brought about a transparent election.

7 November, 2000 The Interior Ministry ordered the transfer of 203 district chiefs out of what were likely to be fiercely contested constituencies, in a bid to ensure fairness in the upcoming General Election.

Meanwhile, PM. Chuan Leekpai said that some 43 million people are eligible to vote, including one million teenagers who would have missed out participating in the first poll of the reform era had December 23 been set as the poll date, as initially expected.

The EC has proposed that December 29 be declared a public holiday to allow migrant workers to return to their hometowns to cast advance ballots. Chuan warned Cabinet colleagues who will contest the election they must be 'extra careful' because they will be 'wearing two hats at the same time'. Certain routine ministerial activities or remarks could be perceived as violation of the electoral law.

12 November, 2000 The Royal Thai Police has set up a special task force to combat gunmen nationwide during the run-up to the January 6 election. The taskforce has eight members in charge of four areas; Bangkok and Central provinces, Northern provinces, Northeastern provinces, Southern provinces. They will coordinate with local officials and intelligence officers to

gather information on gunmen and vote-buying. Provide training to local police to fight vote-buying and prevent violence.

Manpower provided by the Royal Thai Police to assist the Election Commission:

- 5,600 border patrol police; 14 per constituency
- 1,200 commissioned police officers: 3 per constituency
- 100 senior officers: 10 per 40 constituencies

14 November, 2000 Former supreme commander Gen. Viroj Saengsanit will contest the Jan 6 election on Chart Thai's party list. Gen. Viroj is a key member of Chulachomklao Royal Military Academy's class 5 led by former strongman Gen Suchinda Kraprayoon. He is also close to the current supreme commander, Gen. Sampaio Chusri. He said "Mr. Banharn wants me because he believes I would help attract other former senior officers and military votes."

Meanwhile, former army chief Gen. Chettha Thanajaro has already agreed to join Thai Rak Thai's party list.

16 November, 2000 The ECT felt the laws had loopholes that were being exploited by small parties set up just for the chance to dip into the political parties fund. Thirteen parties have registered fewer than 10 party-list candidates each for the Jan 6 general election. The poll agency allocate 65% of the fund to parties which have MPs and 35% to parties that win no House seats. Commissioner Jira Boonpojanasunthorn said that after the Jan 6 election the founding of political parties must be endorsed first by election committees in respective provinces, which have to verify such parties really exist. If any misuse of funds was found, the commission would seek to dissolve them through the Constitutional Court, he said.

Thaksin Shinawatra, Thai Rak Thai leader, is accused of transferring huge amounts of his shares in the Shinawatra empire to his domestic servants to hide his true wealth, which is required to be transparent under the Constitution. The NCCC is also trying to find out whether the controversial

transactions were part of tax evasion or shady stock schemes.

The National Counter Corruption Commission (NCCC) recently earned public praise for indicting former Democrat secretary-general Sanan Kachornprasart for 'faking' a Bt45million debt in his assets report. Thaksin's shady stock transfers to his servants were worth billions of baht. The NCCC's job is to determine if "Thaksin did not report those holdings on purpose."

17 November, 2000 The ECT announcement:

Voters whose domicile is in another province.

1. Request form Sor Sor 50 from local administration offices (district or municipality office, etc.) or call 1171 for fax copy.
2. Register with local or provincial administration (district officer, municipality clerk, etc.) in the area of residence for advance voting right by **Dec. 8**. Registration may be done by mail, in person at local administration office or by another with power of attorney.
3. The following documents must be submitted with the registration request. For Sor Sor 50 copy of personal ID and official domicile registration form, self-addressed and stamped envelope, a letter confirming current residence.
4. Wait for reply by mail on voting location one of 76 provincial central polling stations. Voting date is Dec. 29 or 30.

Voter who will be absent on Jan 6

1. No registration needed.
2. Vote at designated central constituency polling station on Dec. 29 or 30
3. Voters must produce evidence of domicile

Overseas voting

1. Register to vote at embassy or consulate up to the day polling day is announced.
2. Vote at embassy or consular office or designated central polling station in that country. Voting date is Dec.4 to 30
3. Advance voting by mail may be organised if fewer than 500 voters have registered or face travel problems.

On the same day Thaschai Inwiset, chairman of a provincial election panel, said students at Trang Agricultural and Technical College were recruiting among their number, gathering signatures, addresses and ID card numbers on behalf of an unknown political party which apparently planned to issue membership cards to the students. While on the face of it such tactics did not amount to fraud, he feared students may later be given money or gifts to win their support.

18 November, 2000 Somchai Srisuthiyakorn, the Poll Watch secretary-general, suggested the commission delay endorsing the results until it had undisputed proof of irregularities and could disqualify discredited candidates without having to merely suspend them..

In the senate race early this year, the poll agency annulled victories of candidates on grounds of campaign fraud and called fresh rounds of voting, which the suspended candidates could still contest. Many suspended winners won again and were again denied endorsement. This resulted in several rounds of voting in some provinces and caused the senate elections to drag on for almost five months.

Mr. Somchai said the commission should spend the whole time before the 30-day deadline gathering evidence of poll fraud, interviewing witnesses and making other inquiries until it could prove beyond reasonable doubt that suspected cheats really breached campaign rules.

20 November, 2000 The P-Net had sought 43.4 million baht from the commission to finance the scheme which it

said, would provide a comprehensive network of private poll observers at all levels. Despite the commission's disapproval of the scheme and refusal to give financial assistance, the P-Net yesterday vowed to press on with its monitoring activities. Mr. Somchai Srisuthiyakorn, the P-Net Secretary General alleged that some political parties had funded the setting up of certain private poll watch organizations as a front to abuse the commission's budget. This had hurt both the P-Net's reputation and the credibility of private poll watchers as a whole, he said.

Gothom Arya, an election commissioner, said the EC felt it would be inappropriate to have all private election supervisors work under the P-Net's umbrella. The Law Society has also offered to set up centres to receive poll fraud complaints at 93 courts of law nationwide.

21 November, 2000 The Maha Sarakham Election Committee said it had evidence of vote buying attempts. A number of electoral candidate had violated electoral rules by handing out money and gifts in exchange for votes, committee chairman Ruangyos said.

- Per diem payments to party members attending meetings;
- Free sightseeing trips for vote canvassers;
- Handout funds to villages;
- Gifts to potential voters such as wristwatches, eye glasses, relief supplies, and coffins.

22 November, 2000 Most television channels are promising not to let anything get in the way of professionalism and neutrality. EC member Gothom Arya promised the commission would not intervene with radio and television broadcasts featuring entertainers and performers who were also electoral candidates. If a dispute arose on such broadcasts, concerned parties could petition the EC to launch an investigation to determine whether there were electoral violations.

INN news agency broadcast on 99.5 MHz, has promised to launch programs which include everything from campaign and

party activities, to daily analysis, and phone-ins on the economic policies of each party.

26 November, 2000 Thirayuth Boonmi, a prominent Thammasat University lecturer predicted that the end is near for the Democrat party and its leader Chuan Leekpai. The Democrat will be punished for the stubbornness and inflexibility of Mr. Chuan and former finance minister Tarrin Nimmanahaeminda. Because of his unwillingness to listen to this critics, Mr. Chuan has made a lot of enemies among academics, activists and the media.

The academic accused Thai Rak Thai of 'buying' votes by promising one million baht to every village and proposing debt moratorium for farmers. This policy will work in rural areas, but would have a negative impact on the nation's finance and debt burdens. However, Thai Rak Thai was not a viable solution as a long-term alternative to the Democrats.

He said vote-buying patterns would change with villagers and candidates conspiring more to foil the Election Commission. He criticised Thai Rak Thai for using a 'merger and acquisition' strategy to combine many political factions. The strategy was popular in banking and communication industries but not for politicians.

The next prime minister should select quality ministers, listen to different viewpoints, stick to democratic principles, allow time to strengthen the civil sector, reform the economic structure, solve social disparity and promote good governance.

27 November, 2000 The P-Net committee for the North wants a very close watch kept on 49 of the 78 constituencies in the region. Money, cloths and even speed pills have been handed out to voters in the North. Warin Thiamcharas, a P-Net executive, said some candidate and canvassers in Chiang Rai and Kamphaeng Phet have distributed methamphetamine pills among villagers in border areas in exchange for votes. Some candidates have given canvassers 100,000-baht life insurance premiums for a three-month cover and have extended interest-free loans to the bank account of housewives' groups, he said. Northern P-Net had questioned the neutrality of the election panels in Tak, Phetchabun and Uttaradit. Pan Yuanlay, who

heads P-Net in the lower South, said flooding has kept the southern branches from declaring risk zones.

On the same day, Ms. Boonchu, the housekeeper for Mr. Thaksin's family, was reported to have been given 100,000 shares worth 26 million baht in NCC Management and Development Co, 3.7 million shares worth 74 million baht in Shin Satellite Co and 60 million baht worth of shares in SC Asset Co Ltd, Infolink Co Ltd and Teleinfo Media Co Ltd.

Meanwhile, the former deputy defence minister, who is seeking re-election in a constituency where some 80% of voters are navy personnel and dependent, laid complaint with Capt Suchon Raksasuk, chairman of the local election committee. "The committee should get the Navy's military police to check the ID cards of naval people and have local police inspect civilians for ID cards throughout the constituency," he said.

29 November, 2000 The Election Commission source said so far found about 120 dishonest candidates, plus or minus 10. Most were from Thai Rak Thai and the rest from the Democrat, Chart Pattana, Chart Thai, New Aspiration, Seritham and Rassadorn parties.

The Central Region had the second most largest number of cheats, running in Bangkok, Kanchanaburi, Nonthaburi, Samut Prakan and Pathum Thani. Next was the North, where irregularities had been found mostly in Chiang Rai and Phitsanulok.

Meanwhile, Ungfa Jungpattana, a Democrat candidate in Surin has been disqualified for failing to vote in the second round of the Senate election this year.

Election Commission chairman Thirasak Kannasutr said the commission would press for an extra 500 million baht in addition to the 1.8 billion baht already allocated for the elections. The commission first asked for 2,865 million baht, but the Budget Bureau cut it back to 1.8 billion.

30 November, 2000 The democrats will definitely not pair up with Thai Rak Thai to form a new government after the polls, deputy leader Abhisit Vejjajiva said today. He also doubted Mr. Thaksin would differentiate between business administration which make profit-making its ultimate gold

and economic management which focuses on resources allocation if Thai Rak Thai were elected in to rule the country. "Many things about them are superficial", he said.

- P-Net Ubon Ratchathani secretary Krisana Kaewlordhan confirmed that some leading politicians had paid voters in constituency 11 to fill in questionnaires on their favourites in the poll. He said people were bound to get confused because several opinion polls were being organised in the area by both public and private organizations.

3 December, 2000 Thaksin Shinawatra has denied he is afraid of a head-on debate with PM Chuan Leekpai, but his manner of refusing has irked Poll Watch. The Thai Rak Thai leader said the debate would be "unconstructive" and he preferred to spend his time on the campaign trail.

"It's Mr. Thaksin's choice, whether he joins the debate or not, but he doesn't really need to use that kind of excuse to justify his decision. We want to act as a bridge between the parties and the people", Poll Watch secretary-general Somchai Srisuthiyakorn said.

"We want the people to pay more attention to party policies. We want to correct the public attitude towards politics and to stop vote buying. If this is not constructive, what else should we call it?". However, Mr. Chaturon Chaisaeng insisted Mr. Thaksin was ready to face Mr. Chuan.

On the same day, Thai Rak Thai Party has declared war on the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) for its recent news report that suggested the party bought votes in Phitsanulok province. Thaksin said a party investigation of its Phisanulok candidates had found no evidence of vote buying.

Meanwhile, Assembly of the Poor members, have agreed not to vote for the ruling Democrat party, Mr. Prasithiporn said. "That party never helped the poor. Instead it hurt them."

Thin Thai (Thai Motherland) party of former Bangkok governor Bichit Rattakul appears to be the only party whose policies fit well with the group's ideas.

5 December, 2000 According to Election Law, anyone found to have falsely accused a candidate of election fraud risks a maximum two years' in jail, a fine of up to Bt40,000 and a 10 year suspension of candidacy rights. If the violation is found to have been aimed at disqualifying a candidate or cancelling an election result, the violator faces a jail term of between five and 10 years, a fine ranging from Bt100,000 to Bt200,000 and a 10-year suspension of candidacy rights.

If false charges are made before the EC, the violator faces between seven and 10 years in jail, a fine ranging from Bt140,000 to Bt200,000, and a 20-year suspension of candidacy rights.

6 December, 2000 Parties set out their environmental policies in broad terms at a public forum. They agreed on most issues in general such as conservation of natural resources, promotion of clean air, public participation, decentralization of environmental management, and the polluter-pays principle. On issues such as nuclear safety, dams, resolution of conflicts arising from state projects, and genetic modification technology, they became vague.

The Examination of Environmental Policies of Political Parties forum was organized by the Thai Society of Environmental Journalists as part of Thai Environment Day.

Meanwhile, Mr. Chirmsak Pinthong, a Bangkok senator was summoned by the National Counter Corruption Commission to testify about the Thai Rak Thai party leader's purchase of the golf course from Sanoh Thiengthong, formerly of the New Aspiration party.

Mr. Thaksin bought the 500 rai Alpine golf course and clubhouse in Pathum Thani for 500 million baht because he thought it worth the investment.

Mr. Chirmsak said he believed in the honesty of the commission panel handling the case. The panel is looking into Mr. Thaksin's alleged failure to disclose holdings in 17 companies in declarations filed when he was a deputy prime minister in August 1997. The golf course belongs to one of the companies and its ownership by Mr. Thaksin was not declared.

8 December, 2000 *(Today is the last day for voters, who live or work outside their home provinces to register with local authority. Voters must produce evidence of their domicile.)*

Mr. Thaksin Shinawatra told graft investigators he had no intention of hiding his wealth, holding legal shortcomings responsible for incomplete assets declarations.

The new rules were not in place during the transition from the old corruption watchdog to the new independent National Counter Corruption Commission, the Thai Rak Thai leader said.

In the absence of regulations his secretary, and his wife's, had made mistakes and slightly over 600 million baht, or 2.5% of their total assets, had been left out of their statements. Mr. Thaksin said he forgot to declare unpaid shares of a non-profit education-oriented company worth 6, 750 baht and his wife, Khunying Pojamarn, did not report shares she owned worth 140,200 baht.

In a statement issued later, Mr. Thaksin said his willingness to disclose his worth when he was foreign minister in 1994, even though no legal requirement existed at the time, was clear indication he never meant to conceal anything. Under the 1997 constitution declaration are mandatory for holders of political office, their spouses and children under the age of 20. He said he filed assets and debts statements three times after the charter came into force on Oct.11, 1997.

Nov 7, 1997, when he was a deputy prime minister in the Chavalit Yongchaiyudh government; Dec 4, 1997, when he left the portfolio; Dec 4, 1998, one year after he left the position.

9 December, 2000 The Election Commission promised to investigate the source of a donation made by a logging company to the Chart Thai party. The controversial donation was exposed by Prachachart Business newspaper, which reported the party received 25 million baht from Kaopinyo Co., Ltd.

Pol. Lt-Gen Vasana Permlarp, secretary –general of the Commission Against Money Laundering, said it was not against the law to make donations to political parties.

The commission was the agency responsible for keeping the donation list, and should be the first to investigate any questionable contribution.

10 December, 2000 Thai Rak Thai party expects to win at least 45 seats in the North regardless of the outcome of the assets declaration case involving leader Thaksin Shinawatra.

'Thaksin fever' seems to be gripping the upper northern region where locals are swamped with huge posters urging them to support 'Khon Muang', the native northerner.

Northeastern farmer groups are launching a campaign to boycott the Democrats and prevent the party from winning any seats in the region. They accuse the ruling party of 'inhumane treatment' of the poor and having failed to address their needs.

Chiang Rai reported the largest number of dud ballots in the senate elections and authorities are worried the trend could repeat itself in the general election. Chiang Rai province topped the list of bad senate ballots with 12%. Boonlue Kerdpetch, Chiang Rai election committee chairman, said the province had a mix of ethnic minorities.

The problem of language was to blame for errors in marking the senate ballots, which

Made them void.

11 December, 2000 Luangta Maha Bua, a wellknown Buddhist abbot, expressed support for Thaksin Shinawatra by condemning the National Counter Corruption Commission for abusing its authority and destroying "good people". Addressing followers at Wat Pa Ban Tad in Udon Thani province, the monk called on the anti-graft agency to 'reward the good and punish the bad' instead.

Hundreds of members of the Patriots Group, led by Thongkon Wongsamut, seek a meeting with Khunying Preeya Kasemsant na Ayutthaya, chairwomen of the panel probing Mr. Thaksin's case. The group earlier filed complaints with the NCCC, accusing Mr. Chuan and Finance Minister Tarrin Nimmanahaeminda of mismanagement of the Thais-Help-Thais fund, a demanded their dismissal.

Almost every household in the North-east has jackets and T-shirts emblazoned with party logos. The distribution of goods and souvenirs began several months ago and only started dwindling after the issuance of the royal decree calling for the election. The free items ranged from clocks kitchenware, plastic

water bottles to food such as rice instant noodles and food ingredients like shrimp past and fish sauce.

At the same day, Mr. Korn Dabbaransi, Chart Pattana leader, warned that pre-election disqualification of poll cheats may bring about chaos which could eventually lead to a coup attempt.

12 December, 2000 Sorat Makboon, chairman of the People's Network for Election (P-Net) in 14 Southern provinces, said some candidates tried to cause a split among voters by urging that Muslims to vote for Muslim candidates only. He accused the commission of trying to control their organizations.

Meanwhile the Thai Farmers Bank's research centre says that in October alone, parties spent 258.5 million baht in television advertising for the whole of last year. Candidates are expected to pay about 100,000 baht a month campaigning on radio. In the printing business, at least 30 million baht will be spent on campaign posters, cut-outs and leaflets.

Fifteen commissioned police officers are working undercover in pursuit of vote-buying evidence in the province under the direct orders of the Election Committee in Bangkok. Overall, 1,200 commissioned police officers are currently operating under cover in the country's 400 constituencies.

13th December 2000 Mr. Piya Angkinand, a local godfather and a leading Thai Rak Thai candidate admitted basic items had been distribute to residents of constituency 1, but insisted not only Thai Rak Thai but 'eveybody else' had done the same. They gave away spoons, plates, powder milk and coconut milk with the names of candidates and their parties on those items. One side accused the other of having done that. The fact is they all did it.

Thai Rak Thai is speculated to win a total of some 200 House seats. But what if the Election Commission red-carded about half of them?

Election monitors say a second round of voting is inevitable in Nakhon Ratchasima, where candidates seem intent on cheating. They said more than half of the candidates are trying to get elected through unfair means.

14th December 2000 Deputy leader Chalerm Yubamrung said there was no way his party would win the election in the first round, but that did not mean New Aspiration was finished.

Gen. Chavalit said he was against any coup attempt, which some people feared might happen if pre-election disqualification of poll cheats brought about chaos.

Meanwhile, the media is barking up the wrong tree by concentrating on the acquisition of Alpine golf course when it should be digging into Thaksin Shinawatra's share transfers, according to a former executive of the company which runs the golf course.

Nop Sattayasai, a Chart Pattana candidate for Bangkok and also one of the co-founders of the Alpine Real Estate Co. and Alpine Golf and Sports Club Co, said the media had missed the point.

Two plots of land covering 924 rai were bought from Maha Mongkut Ratchavithayalai Foundation for 130 million baht by Alpine when Sanoh Thienthong, a company shareholder was deputy interior minister. Mr. Sanoh is now a member of Thai Rak Thai. More questionable was whether the land, technically registered as temple property, was transferable to private parties.

18th December 2000 The Nakhon Phanom election commission seized 100,000 baht from the pick-up truck of a New Aspiration candidate and charged the money was for vote buying. The cash was found in the pick-up truck of Chavalit Vichayasuth, running in constituency 1 in place of Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, now on the party list. The truck was in a procession of vehicles led by that of Khunying Pankrua, the party leader's wife.

19th December 2000 Democrat candidate Boonmark Sirinawakul and Pattanawut Pukpaiboon of Chart Pattana were shown the red card yesterday. Three candidates have now been barred. Last week the commission red carded Suchon Chartsuntaravuth, a Chart Pattana candidate in Chaiyaphum.

The candidates would be barred from voting for one year, which effectively prevents them from contesting elections in the same period.

Meanwhile the NCCC announced a 14 point clarification on the filing of asset statements.

Political office holders are obliged to submit the following;

- ◆ A statement of assets and liabilities, including those of spouse and minor children.
- ◆ Each asset statement must be furnished with certified copies, relevant documents for verification, and copies of filed income-tax returns.
- ◆ A listing of documents submitted for verification.
- ◆ In case of being single or with no minor children, the office holder must clearly indicate as such and sign his or her name to confirm the information.
- ◆ Assets to be declared include those owned or in possession, those held by nominees, and those located inside and outside the country. It must be specified as to how each item of asset is being held.
- ◆ If holding more than Bt2 million in cash, the office holder must declare the reason for such action.
- ◆ In appraising land plots, the benchmark prices of the Lands Department should be used.
- ◆ Property rights to be declared include those having monetary rewards. Each right must be specified.
- ◆ Other assets mean miscellaneous items such as gold, jewellery, ivory, antiques, Buddha amulets, watches, pets and livestock.
- ◆ In case of joint ownership, the shares of ownership must be specified.
- ◆ If the office holder runs out of space while filling in the furnished forms, he or she will have to procure an extra form to complete the details and certify each additional paper submitted.
- ◆ Liabilities to be declared include those incurred outside of the country.
- ◆ Each page of the asset statement and documents attached must be signed.
- ◆ In the remarks section of the asset statement, the office holder should furnish explanations of assets held by nominees.

20th December 2000 Democrat candidate Boonmark Sirinavakul vowed to fight his disqualification by the Election Commission (EC). He said he respected the EC's red card decision but the legal proceedings had not been exhausted. Kamnan Sing claimed that he received money from Boonmark, and the allegation triggering the investigation.

Chat Pattana candidate Patravut Pukvibul, from Samut Prakarn, said he would also appeal the EC's ruling against him. He also was qualified on the Tuesday.

23th December 2000 Saroj Pueksamlee, a Ban Krua leader said residents usually vote for Prachakorn Thai but all have resolved not to support the Democrats because the party approved the on-off road project. He said the Democrat-led government had ignored the public hearing committee's recommendation that the project be scrapped.

25th December 2000 The Thai Rak Thai Party had petitioned the Senate for a Constitution Court ruling on whether the NCCC had the power to investigate Thaksin more than two years after his term as deputy prime minister in the Chavalit government ended. The commission has said that while investigations of "unusual wealth" must be launched within two years. Thaksin's case was related not to corruption but to allegations that he intended to conceal some of his assets.

29-30 December, 2000 ADVANCE VOTING DAYS

6th JANUARY 2001.....POLLING DAY OF THE FIRST ROUND

7th January, 2001 Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) express its concerns on some lapses in procedural and technical consistency in administering and conducting of electoral process. For example, conflicting instructions were given to the public in general about voting procedures. Additionally, the layout of some polling stations also compromised voting secrecy.

ANFREL noted the implications of the entrenched patronage system for the conduct of the polls. Specially, the proximity between local election officials and political parties could be a factor in influencing voting behaviors in some areas.

The location of polling stations near or in the residence of local officials, and the presence of party representatives as appointed election officials could intimidate some voters. The presence of canvassers inside and outside polling stations in historically sensitive constituencies clearly affected voters' freedom of choice. In many cases, ANFREL confirmed reports of money and intimidation being used as a means to influence voters.

8th January, 2001 People's Network for Elections in Thailand (P-NET) found reports of foreign news agencies that the 6 January election was the dirtiest polls in Thai history misleading. Somchai Srisuthiyakorn, secretary general of PNET, said this assumption only reflected personal impression of certain Election Commissioner and it did not represent general situation of Thailand's election. At this stage, it appeared that new regulations and procedures could serve to maintain basic standards of democratic election. Cheating at the polls became more difficult. Vote counting carried out at a central counting center was proved to be relatively successful in providing voters greater freedom of choice. With less fear of intimidation and retaliation, the voting public could express their free wills at the polls. Equally important, broad-based education programs of the Election Commission and private groups seemed to be effective in creating more informed and reasonable voting behaviors. Democratic aspiration was key to success in a fight against political patronage.

14th January, 2001 P-Net has concluded the general election was marred by fraud in at least 33 provinces but predicts the Election Commission (EC) will issue just a few red cards, if any. P-Net volunteers gathered to assess their work and review the election outcome. While deploring the evidence of rampant fraud, the organization hailed the fact that many influential politicians who were reputed vote-buyers failed in the election. A major reason was the introduction of the new vote-counting system, in which all ballots in each constituency are tallied at a central venue.

Meanwhile, the EC defended its decision to give P-Net a small budget of about Bt 3 million to conduct its operations. EC secretary-general Vichit Yusuparp said "up to 100 private

organizations registered as poll watchdogs and P-Net is one of them."

"P-Net's accusation that we don't want it to work for us is not true. P-Net apparently wants to work alone, which is impossible."

15th January, 2001 The EC found it hard to handle millions of ballots in one single counting venue. The new system required better security arrangement, coordination and more manpower. Election Commissioner Yuwarat Kamolwej has also voiced support for the new counting system, saying its true merit of giving rural voters freedom from fear outweighed any problems stemming from its introduction. According to observers, the problems with the new system included;

- ♦ The risk of ballot boxes being tampered with during their transportation to counting centres;
- ♦ Simultaneous counting at the central venue (with up to 40 teams doing the tallies at the same time) could lead to much confusion, giving room for on-the-spot cheating;
- ♦ Ballot papers have to go through too many hands from the time the polling station is closed to the end of the counting process;
- ♦ The new system is harder to monitor than the old one, where votes were counted at individual polling booths;
- ♦ The much longer counting process allows more opportunity for rigging;
- ♦ The EC was undermanned and staff were poorly trained;
- ♦ Candidates and supporters disrupted the central counting venues with continual protests.

On the same day Dr. Gothom Arya, another commissioner, urged all losers to concede defeat, saying the commission would never yield to mob pressure. "People protesting against the results will neither change things nor sway the commission. It all depends on evidence and witnesses".

16th January, 2001 For the second round of elections the EC has decided to extend the balloting by one hour. It will run from 8am to 4am instead of 8am to 3pm, EC secretary general Vichit Yusuparp said. The EC has also cancelled advance voting for the second round, in a move to speed up the election process. Local Administration Department director-general Prinya Nakchattree said provincial government and district chiefs would provide facilities and personnel for vote counting, avoiding the confusion that had occurred in the first round.

18th January, 2001 With the country's political direction now clear after the January 6 election, parties have been quick to alter their campaign strategies in advance of a second vote scheduled for January 29. An election official said people who voted outside their home constituencies in the January 6 election will be unable to do so in the second round of voting. The law stipulates that people who voted outside their constituencies in the general election cannot vote in their home provinces until they have requested the necessary change of venue.

Their problem is that the request will be effective only 20 days after the submission. That means those voters will not have enough time, given that the vote is only now 10 days away.

In the general election, 275,517 people had registered for the right to vote outside their constituencies and 229,709 actually did so.

Informal talk between prime minister-in-waiting Thaksin Shinawatra and leaders of three other likely partners in his coalition government have agreed to give 27 of the 36 Cabinet seats to the Thai Rak Thai Party.

21th January, 2001 Democrat spokesman Sathit Wongnongtoey said that the Election Commission would not have time to disqualify cheats before it endorsed all 500 winners on February 1 to meet a 30-day deadline for ratification of the result. Meanwhile the Campaign for Popular Democracy called on the EC to change officials manning polling stations for fear that political parties might already have bought them.

Nearly 40 per cent of ABAC poll surveyed felt that Thaksin's concealment of stocks had hurt his image. As to his promised three-year debt moratorium for farmers, 28 percent of

those polled were "not at all confident" and 23 per cent "not quite confident" that Thaksin would follow through with it. Twenty-two per cent were "quite confident" and another 18.6 per cent "absolutely confident".

Sceptics also outnumbered believers with regard to both the proposed million-baht village fund and the Bt30 health-care policy, with almost 60 per cent of respondents either "not quite" or "not at all" confident about seeing campaign promises realised.

23th January, 2001 The EC has backed results in 338 constituencies and called new polls in another 62 for Monday. This comes after red cards were handed to candidates in eight of those seats and yellow cards in the other 54. Those shown the red card will be barred from contesting elections for a year while candidates given yellow cards can still run.

MPs whose victory was endorsed could still be red-carded if evidence of poll fraud emerges later, said Thirasak Kannasutr, commission chairman.

The EC submitted a list of eight winners in the Jan 6 election to Council of State panel to issue **red cards** to them.

THAI RAK THAI..

1. Sarun Sarunket constituency no. 2, Uttaradit province
2. Seksit Weinoyompong constituency no. 2, Roi-et province
3. Rewat Saengvijit constituency no. 1, Phetchaburi province
4. Chaiyuth Chankomon constituency no 5, Chaiyaphum province
5. Tirachai Tiewcharoensotha, constituency no 4, Surin province

NEW ASPIRATION

1. Suthiphan Sririkanond, constituency no. 2, Narathiwat province
2. Pajjit Srivorakhan, constituency no. 2, Nakhon Phanom

CHART THAI

1. Somsak Charoenphan, constituency no. 7, Surin province

28th January, 2001 Election-Law violations in the second round of voting in 62 constituencies were the worst ever seen by the Election Commission, commissioner Yuwarat Kamolvej said. He did not elaborate on his pessimistic prediction, but warned polling booth officials and voters they could get up to 15 years in jail for tampering with ballots.

He said that in Ubon Ratchathani flyers purporting to be from the EC had been distributed falsely claiming that a candidate in the province had been disqualified. An

investigation was under way to establish who was behind the flyers, which contained the forged signature of the provincial EC chief.

In Buri-Ram vote-buying was reported in many villages of the four constituencies where new votes will be held. Eligible voters were paid between Bt.100 and Bt200 each and canvassers between Bt5,000 and Bt10,000 each. Some candidates' supporters openly bought voters at night and blocked the roads into villages in order to prevent rival camps from entering, witnesses said.

In Kanchanaburi provincial EC chief Aree Ungjanil said that there had been attempts to break the electoral law in all of the four constituencies where revoting was to be held.

Meanwhile the national police chief has ordered the deployment of one company of Border Patrol Police to each province where second-round voting will be held, Police Lt-General Chidchai Wannasathit, the EC's senior adviser on investigations, said. Provincial governors will also help ensure orderliness in their provinces.

In Nakhon Ratchasima deputy provincial governor Suwat Choksuwattanasakul said 62 local administrators and government officials had been ordered to move out of the province temporarily until voting was completed. They were accused of being biased towards certain candidates, he said. Paiboon Makkawiman, the provincial election chief, said to prevent a recurrence of problems 1,000 army and air force personnel will count ballots in constituencies 1, 6, 7, 9, 10, 14, 15 and 17. They would come from the 2nd Army and the First Wing.

Some 50 villagers from the Assembly of the Poor, led by assembly adviser Varin Atnak and Seritham candidate for Loei Constituency 2 Pinit Sithiho, gathered in front of the EC's head quarters to demand the immediate transfer of the Loei governor and two senior police officers out of the province. The protestors accused them of bias.

29th JANUARY, 2001 POLLING DAY OF THE SECOND ROUND.

30th January, 2001 Counting was suspended in Nakhon Nayok's constituency 1 and by-elections ordered after alleged ballot rigging. Official failed to obtain signatures from voters before they

cast ballots. The EC set new elections for 11 polling stations in constituency 1 in Muang district where a Chart Thai veteran is standing against a Democrat candidate.

At each unit, new officials will include one commissioned army officer and five sergeants and corporals. "The officials suspected of having been hired to cast 'ghost' ballots may have chosen to leave voter registration papers almost blank with the excuse that they simply forgotten to ask voters to sign their names," he said.

5th February, 2001 Official Results

NAME OF PARTY	House Seats	Party-list	Total
Thai Rak Thai	200	48	248
Democrat	97	31	128
Chat Thai	35	6	41
New Aspiration	28	8	36
Chat Pattana	22	7	29
Seritham	14	0	14
Rassadorn	2	0	2
Social Action	1	0	1
Thai Motherland	1	0	1
TOTAL	400	100	500

9th February, 2001 Thaksin Chinawatra officially became Thailand's **23rd Prime Minister** after his nomination won overwhelming approved of the House of Representatives (by a vote of 340 to 127) and received royal endorsement. The coalition parties was including New aspiration party and Chart Thai party. Mr. Thaksin, **51** promised to work to the best of his ability in the interest of the people and not for his own political survival.

15th April, 2001 P-Net Chairman Saiyud Kerdphol said the ECT has been accused of incompetent investigations and inadequate suppression of poll fraud. It should allow greater public access to poll monitoring and co-ordinate better with private pollwatch groups. Improvement of the commission's line of duty was in order. The panel was functioning in a way similar to the Interior Ministry when it was entrusted with the poll monitoring authority.

The ministry was bloated and had been ineffective in monitoring elections. If possible, P-Net would choose a member to apply for a place on the commission, he said.

Pipbong Dhongchai, chairman of the Campaign for Popular Democracy, said civic groups would closely follow up on the shortlisting of nominees and the final selection. The charter does not permit direct public access to the selection committee. He said his network of civic groups would support non-partisan individuals serving as commissioners. The panel should comprise individuals of mixed professional backgrounds and a woman should sit on the panel.

Mr. Pichet Pattanachote, deputy senate speaker, said it was unlikely political elements would be able to lobby all 200 senators to pick their own people. The selection committee would recommend 10 candidates to the Senate, which would thoroughly examine their backgrounds and personal conduct.

He said some incumbent commissioners should be re-appointed, so that the new batch would not have to start over from square one.

28th April, 2001 By-Election in Phitsanulok province (TRT's MP Death)

Voting in constituency 6 went smoothly, despite a low turn-out and many complaints of election law violations. The poll was called in two districts to fill the seat left vacant by the death of Thai Rak Thai MP Veera Patamasiriwat. A total of 98,393 people in Wang Thong and Noen Maprang districts were listed as eligible voters.

29th April, 2001 Democrat candidate Chuti Krairerk narrowly beat Thai Rak Thai's Yingpan Manasikarn in Saturday's by-election in Phitsanulok's constituency 6, the EC said.

Mr. Chuti received 22,757 votes, followed by Mr. Yingpan with 22,100, Rassadorn's Yothin Panthong with 441 and Surapol Pipathanasart, of Thai Prachathipatai, with 156.

Commission secretary-general Vijit Yusuparp said votes were cast by 47,550 of the constituency's 78,257 eligible residents, or 50.43%. Of these, 878 declined to vote for a particular candidate and 3,218 ballots were ruled invalid, he said.

20th May, 2001 The EC called a third round of voting in 7 constituencies where the winners of the previous poll on Jan.29 were suspected of cheating. ***New voting has been scheduled for June 30 in 6 provinces; Buri Rum, Kanchanaburi, Khon Kaen, Nakhon Nayok, Surin and Ubon Ratchathani.***

The decision will effect two Chart Thai MPs, two Democrat MPs, and one MP each from New Aspiration, Thai Rak Thai and Chart Pattana parties. Advance balloting will be on June 23-24, 2001. The new round of voting will cost about Bt35 million, EC secretary general Vijit Yusuparb said. The EC also endorsed the victory of Democrat candidate Juti Krairiksh in the April 28 by-election in Phisanulok's constituency 6.

22th May, 2001 EC said "the cost of holding repeat elections is not as worrisome as bored voters. Their turn out keep dropping in each re-election, This is dangerous."

Theerasak said the panel had the major task of investigating vote fraud in 338 constituencies from the Jan 6 election and almost 10,000 witnesses had to be interrogated.

The Election Commissioners will be ending their three and a half year term but the commissioners continue their work until the Senate picks a new team. The panel's term was halved from seven years because it was picked by the old, non-elected Senate. The new panel will sit for a full seven-year term.

28th May, 2001 Five nominees to the EC will be picked by the screening panel on June 22. They will join five others to be chosen by the Supreme Court on June 20, as finalists for the seats to be vacated by the country's first five election commissioners whose term ended on **May 26**.

Five of the ten finalists will be selected by the 200 member Senate, the contest is open to all.

Prasert nasakul, the Constitutional Court president who chairs the screening panel said the panel itself would also look for suitable people for nomination. These might or might not include the former commissioners. All candidates would have to prove their worth before the panel on June 22. The five who make the shortlist must receive at least eight votes out of 10.

Adisorn Plangket, the panel's deputy chairman, said the applicants must give all details about themselves, spouses an

family members to allow thorough checks on their political connections. We have to know even the maiden names of their wives, or who their brothers-in-law are.

2nd June, 2001 Mr. Taksin admitted discussing a merger with New Aspiration leader Chavalit Yongchaiyudh and secretary general Wan Muhamad Nor Matha. There were also reports TRT discussed consolidation with Chart Pattana, an opposition party headed by Korn Dabbaransi.

Key figures would have to decide whether to dissolve their parties and become part of TRT.

He conceded that the move could cause dissent among TRT members but believed differences could eventually be ironed out. TRT spokesman Suranad Vejajiva said his party now had 246 MPs and expected to have five more from the June 30 by elections in seven constituencies.

Seritham, headed by Prachuab Chaiyasarn, should disband this month and its 14 MPs would join TRT before parliament reconvened in July. Social Action, which has one MP, shared many ideas with TRT and was another likely ally. That would give us 266 votes. Political reform aimed to lower the number of political parties. Mr.Suranand said.

30th June, 2001 POLLING DAY OF THE 3RD ROUND

There are re-election in 6 provinces **Unbon Ratchathani, Nakorn Nayok** , Karnchanaburi, Rurirum, Surin and Korn Khen. ANFREL deployed international observers in 4 provinces, two from East Timor, two from Philippine and one from USA.

13th July, 2001 The panel of eight senior policemen and experts listened to an actual tape of Somsak Prissanantakul's voice that it had received earlier this week, but was unable to compare it with the voice in the tape presented as evidence. Somsak, a Chart Thai executive, had refused to have himself recorded while reading out the script of the alleged vote-buying tape for fear that the recording might later misused. A sound expert said if Somsak read out the exact words, it would make comparison easier.

17th July, 2001 The Senate committee met to check the selection process and the qualifications of members of the EC

candidate-screening committee. "If candidate-screening members cannot give us a clear explanation about the selection process, the Senate will reject all EC candidates and start the nominating process from scratch-the same way it rejected the candidates for the National Telecommunications Commission," the panel member said.

The Senator said "it was strange that there was not a single representative on the candidate-screening committee from opposition political parties even though they had five political parties and the government only four.

Meanwhile, six of the 7 winners in the June 30 by-election have been invited by the Election Commission to defend themselves against fraud complaints on the 19th July.

19th July, 2001 An EC investigative committee decided to halt its probe into an alleged vote-buying conspiracy involving Chat Thai Party deputy leader Somsak Prissananantakul after police said they were unable to verify that the voice on an audiotape belonged to Somsak.

EC secretary-general Wijit Yusuparp said the Scientific Crime Detection Division insisted that it was impossible to accurately compare voice recorded in two different environments so he decided to halt the investigation. The person on the tape, who sounds like Somsak, talks about an order for a person to buy votes in the by-election for Nakhon Nayok's Constituency 2.

He said former Democrat MP Charnchai Issarasenarak, who gave the tape to the EC, had told the committee that he could not produce the person who made the recording.

9th August, 2001 Applications for seats on provincial election panels nationwide opened today. Candidates in each province will be screened by 8 members local committees and names of short-listed nominees will be forwarded to the EC. An eight-member national selection panel, chosen from 8 groups of people, will then decide.

The 8 groups which will each choose their own representative, are: state and state enterprise; local administrative organisations; trade and commerce; judges, prosecution and lawyers; academics and teachers; NGOs; farmers; and employee groups.

Local election panels will serve for 6 years and are likely to be empowered to organise local elections under a draft bill being vetted by the Senate. Mr. Gothom also expressed concern about possible political affiliations of local selection panels.

Meanwhile, the EC is not happy with a research study on election problems which recommends that the agency give up the power to organize elections. Gothom Arya, a commissioner, has criticized the study and its proposals put forward by a research team of King Prachadipok Institute and the National Defence College. The team. The team suggests the commission should give up its power to organize elections but keep its power to endorse poll results and purge cheats.

Also, it recommends that the commission stop giving the 'yellow card' to suspected cheats and go for the 'red card' to avoid having to organize election again and again.

Also, eligible voters who fail to cast ballots should be punished with a fine or forced to do a community service. The research is based partly on an opinion survey of various groups of people.

Bavornssk Uvanno, the institute's secretary-general, said people were annoyed with the fact elections and suspensions of suspected cheats seemed to go on endlessly, because officials concerned could not find enough evidence to nail down cheats. "That is why the research team wants to do away with the yellow card and go directly for the red card. Suspensions are unbearable, but we can't just dump the yellow card. We must have a back-up system" However, he welcomed the idea of voting for a reserve candidate as a means to avoid repeated polls.

18TH August, 2001 POLLING DAY FOR THE 4TH ROUND

The re-election is organized in two provinces; Ubon Ratchathani and Nakorn Nayok provinces.

From the Nation and Bangkok Post

APPENDIX I

**Population, Eligible Voters and Number of Members of the
House of Representatives**

IN 76 PROVINCES*

<i>No</i>	<i>Province</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Eligible Voters</i>	<i>MPs**</i>
1	Bangkok	5,662,499	3,849,777	37
2	Amnat Charoen	365,943	258,917	2
3	Ang Thong	289,527	216,200	2
4	Buri Ram	1,520,419	1,074,804	10
5	Chachoengsao	637,665	459,268	4
6	Chai Nat	351,618	266,294	2
7	Chaiyaphum	1,127,552	818,228	7
8	Chantaburi	490,039	342,551	3
9	Chiang Mai	1,587,465	1,112,034	10
10	Chaing Rai	1,265,091	817,406	8
11	Chonburi	1,059,756	741,725	7
12	Chumphon	458,297	324,363	3
13	Kalasin	984,046	697,552	6
14	Kamphaeng Phet	765,876	537,331	5
15	Kanchanaburi	778,456	528,817	5
16	Khon Kaen	1,747,730	1,253,599	11
17	Krabi	358,383	233,080	2
18	Lampang	806,762	606,093	5
19	Lamphun	407,085	310,495	3
20	Loei	633,856	445,737	4
21	Lopburi	760,854	563,880	5
22	Mae Hong Son	232,483	137,380	2
23	Mahasarakham	940,402	689,238	6
24	Mukdahan	333,035	231,523	2
25	Nakhon Nayok	243,235	179,689	2
26	Nakhon Pathom	774,276	546,092	5
27	Nakhon Phanom	714,779	485,926	5
28	Nakhon Ratchasima	2,540,662	1,704,651	17
29	Nakhon Sawan	1,126,311	814,000	7
30	Nakhon Sithammarat	1,525,557	1,061,979	10

No	Province	Population	Eligible Voters	MPs**
31	Nan	489,505	347,637	3
32	Narathiwat	671,649	423,351	4
33	Nong Bua Lamphu	494,327	348,550	3
34	Nong Khai	899,506	631,308	6
35	Nonthaburi	839,029	631,476	5
36	Pathum Thani	633,994	461,540	4
37	Pattani	608,276	392,012	4
38	Phang Nga	233,179	162,797	2
39	Phattalung	502,662	359,865	3
40	Phayao	515,128	380,385	3
41	Phetchabun	1,040,731	747,228	7
42	Phetchaburi	456,233	331,605	3
43	Phichit	589,406	432,925	4
44	Phitsanulok	868,138	622,483	6
45	Phrae	492,607	376,289	3
46	Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya	730,391	536,822	5
47	Phuket	241,489	169,937	2
48	Prachinburi	441,162	317,176	3
49	Prachuab Khiri Khan	477,190	338,490	3
50	Ranong	158,185	104,723	1
51	Ratchaburi	817,793	585,388	5
52	Rayong	513,984	358,751	3
53	Roi Et	1,320,824	952,073	9
54	Sakaeo	531,149	374,744	3
55	Sakhon Nakhon	1,094,615	767,202	7
56	Samut Prakan	977,388	704,527	6
57	Samut Sakhon	421,738	297,065	3
58	Samut Songkhran	205,696	153,390	1
59	Saraburi	607,042	411,303	4
60	Satun	260,127	170,285	2
61	Singburi	224,103	169,888	2
62	Si Sa Ket	1,445,356	1,024,855	9
63	Songkhla	1,223,833	838,845	8
64	Sukhothai	627,585	470,355	4
65	Suphanburi	855,823	621,438	6
66	Surat Thani	886,979	608,043	6

No	Province	Population	Eligible Voters	MPs**
67	Surin	1,381,213	974,249	9
68	Tak	484,678	299,356	3
69	Trang	587,930	397,588	4
70	Trat	224,056	151,572	2
71	Ubon Ratcha Thani	1,759,548	1,206,708	11
72	Udon Thani	1,520,651	746,186	10
73	Uthai Thani	332,063	239,111	2
74	Uttaradit	485,025	361,549	3
75	Yala	436,092	269,129	3
76	Yasothon	554,964	399,016	4
Total		61,661,701	42,978,144	400

*Department of Local Administration, Ministry of Interior (as of 30 November 2000)

**Average population per MP = 154,154

APPENDIX II

NUMBERS GRANTED TO POLITICAL PARTIES

Candidates of each party will use the same number with the party throughout the country.

(Parties with no regular numbers because they do not enter party-list competition)

1. Free Democratic (Seri Prachatipatai)
2. Thai People (Chaothai)
3. Kasikornthai
4. Lawyer Public (Niti Mahachon)
5. **New Aspiration (Kwam Hwang Mai)**
6. Love and Unity (Rak Samakkhi)
7. **Thai Rak Thai**
8. National Democratic (Chart Prachatipatai)
9. **Chart Thai**
10. Peace Party (Santiparb)
11. **Thai Motherland (Thin Thai)**
12. People Power (Palang Prachachon)
13. **Party of the People (Rassadorn)**
14. New Social (Sangkhom Mai)
15. **Liberal Democratic (Seritham)**
16. **Democrat (Prachatiapat)**
17. People Force (Amnart Prachachon)
18. **Thai Citizen (Prachakorn Thai)**
19. Thai
20. **Progressive (Khao Na)**
21. **Chart Pattana**
22. Thai Labour (Rang-Ngarn Thai)
23. Paw Thai
24. Social Democratic (Sangkhom Prachatipatai)
25. Better Life (Cheewit Thideekwa)
26. Social Development (Pattana Sangkhom)
27. Thai Chuay Thai
28. Greater Thai (Thai Maharat)
29. People Belief (Satha Mahachon)
30. Vithi Thai
31. Thai Democracy (Thai Prachatipatai)
32. Palang Dharma
33. Farmer's Development (Chao Na Pattana Prathet)
34. Social Action (Kitsang Khom)
35. National Agro (Kaset Mahachon)
36. Farmer Force (Palang Kasetrakorn)
37. Siam

APPENDIX III

**LIST OF DEPLOYMENT
ASIAN NETWORK FOR FREE ELECTIONS (ANFREL)
2nd –8th JANUARY, 2001**

<i>PROVINCES</i>	<i>NAME OF OBSERVERS</i>	<i>COUNTRIES</i>	<i>INTERPRETERS</i>
1. BANGKOK	Gen.Saiyud Kerdphol Ms.Inday Olayer Prof.Premapati Mr.Kassie Neou Ms.Dulcey Simpkins	Thailand Philippine India Cambodia USA	Mr.Somchai Homlaor Ms.Chananya Kraisorn Ms.Anothai Soma Ms.Thippawan Maidee
2.BURIRUM	Mr.Steve Beeby	Australia	Mr.Ratpakorn Nipanun Mr.Satdha Hunpayon
3.CHONBURI	Fr. Nandana Manatunga	Sri Lanka	Mr.Suwit Lertkraimaethee Ms.Chalida Tajaroensuk
4.CHIANG MAI	Ms.Amarsanaa Darisuren Ms.Samantha Burman Mr.Leng Bunna	Mongolian UK Cambodia	Local Interpreter
5.CHIANG RAI	Mr.Yoshio Terada Ms.Louise Helen Gee	Japan UK	Mr.Issawut Sirichairach
6.KANCHANABURI	Mr.Santos Lamban	Philippine	Ms.Chalinee Chunark Ms.Sunsanee Sutthisunsanee
7.KHON KHEN	Mr.Leav Sakoeun	Cambodia	Mr.Priewpan Pakeesuk
8.KALASIN	Mr.Soeum Vanna	Cambodia	Ms.Parinya Boonridrerthaikul
9.LOPBURI	Mr.Hassan Ariff	Bangladesh	Ms.Kwansuda Chanklin
10.NAKHON RATCHASIMA	Dr.Deepika Udagama	Sri Lanka	Ms.Manisha Bohara
11.NAKHON SAWAN	Ms.Andrea Norquay	Canada	Ms.Nuntaporn Sangdavene
12.NAKORN SRITHAMARAT	Prof.Dr.Omar Farouk	Malaysia	Local Interpreter

PROVINCES	NAME OF OBSERVERS	COUNTRIES	INTERPRETERS
13.NARATHIWAT	Mr.Andrew Little	USA	Ms.Surapee Phootrakul
14.NONTHABURI	Mr.Kim Maung Win Mr.Birgitta Juhlin	Burma Swedish	Ms.Chirawatana Charoonpatarapong Ms.Tippawan Wiriyaahakij
15.NONG KHAI	Mr.Krishna Upadhyaya	Nepal	Ms. Pornphen Khongkachornkiet
16.PATHUM THANI.	Mr.Damaso Magbual Mr.James Joseph Keezhangatte	Philippine India	Mr.Sunai Phasuk
17.PICHIT	Mr.Leopold Sudaryono	Indonesia	Ms.Sirirak Vichayarangrom
18.PHISANULOK	Mr.Khut Inserey	Cambodia	Mr.Thirapat Loyvirat
19.RATCHABURI	Mr.Hang Puthea Ms.Kim Sokuntheary	Cambodia Cambodia	Ms.Puttanee Kangkun
20.SAKHON NAKORN	Mr.Jethro Stern	UK	Ms.Natawee Kiatweracul
21.SONGKHLA	Ms.Fritzie Chavez	Philippine	Mr.Prapart Santaprapa
22.SAMUT PRAKRAN	Prof.Buddhadeb Chaudhuri Ms. Barbara Orlandini Mr. Watanabe Kazuo	India Italy Japan	Ms.Somsri Hananuntasuk-Berger Ms. Pairat Junthong
23.SUPHANBURI	Mr.Sanjay Gathia Mr.Shawn James Kelley	India USA	Ms.Maliwan Khruemanee
24.SURAT THANI	Ms.Nguon Sopheap	Cambodia	Ms.Jantima Jampasri
25.UDONTHANI	Mr.Jerald Joseph	Malaysia	Ms.Yanaphak Mantarat
26.UTTRADIT	Mr.Sokong Chhay	Cambodia	Mr.Charat Pratheuangrattana
27. UBON RATCHATHANI	Mr.Sher Zaman	Pakistan	Local Interpreter

APPENDIX IV



ASIAN Network for Free Elections
- A special project of Forum-Asia -

109 Suthisarnwinichai Road, Samsennok, Huaykwang, Bangkok 10320 Thailand
 Tel: (662) 276-9846-7 Fax: (662) 276-2183, 6934939
 E-mail: anfrel@forumasia.org

PRESS RELEASE

International Team Observes Mixed Signals in Pre-Election Period

The Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) has deployed 47 international observers from 17 countries to observe Thailand's general election from 2-7 January 2001. This election observation mission covers sensitive areas in 28 provinces including Bangkok, Buriram, Chonburi, Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Kanchanaburi, Khon Khen, Kalasin, Lopburi, Nakhon Ratchasima, Nakhon Sawan, Nakhon Sithammarat, Narathiwat, Nonthaburi, Nong Khai, Pathum Thani, Prachuab Kirakhan, Pichit, Phisanulok, Ratchaburi, Sakhon Nakhon, Songkhla, Samut Prakan, Suphanburi, Surat Thani, Ubon Ratchathani, Udon Thani and Utharadit. This general election for the House of Representatives is the first under Thailand's 1997 Constitution. While there is much enthusiasm for the electoral process, this election will also test the capacities of new anti-corruption mechanisms.

1) Against the backdrop of election-related violence and fraud, ANFREL is impressed by unprecedented commitment of Thai people to exercise their democratic rights and duties at the polls. More than 80 percent of voters registered for advanced polling throughout the country had cast their votes during 29-30 December 2000. The actual election, scheduled for 6 January 2001, is also expected to record a high number of voter turnout.

2) In response to the rising public aspirations for better and cleaner electoral process that will produce a political system entrusted with professional and ethical qualifications, ANFREL calls on the Election Commission of Thailand (ECT) to exercise its power to curb vote cheating, election-related violence and irregularities.

3) ANFREL sincerely urges ECT to work in cooperation with independent people's organizations, such as the People's Network for Elections (P-Net) and the Poll Watch Foundation (Poll Watch), to ensure that candidates and political parties found involved in election frauds or committed political violence in any forms will be penalized according to the law. Only honest and decisive actions of ECT can maintain people's faith in democratic balloting and reduce the chance that Thailand will be entrapped in repetitive elections again.

The preliminary findings of ANFREL's election observation mission in Thailand will be presented during a press conference on 7 January 2001 at 5 pm in the conference room of Poll Watch (Lan Luang Road, Tel. 2826544).

For more information, please contact:

- Somsri Hananuntasuk-Berger Tel. 01-8105306
- Sunai Phasuk Tel. 01-6323052

APPENDIX V



ASIAN Network for Free Elections
- A special project of Forum-Asia -

109 Suthisarnwinichai Road, Samsennok, Huaykwang, Bangkok 10320 Thailand
 Tel: (662) 276-9846-7 Fax: (662) 276-2183, 6934939
 E-mail: anfrel@forumasia.org

PRESS RELEASE

Thailand launches improved electoral system amid old power politics

The Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) is a Bangkok-based regional network of election monitoring and human rights organizations with a fundamental mandate to support democratic development in Asia. Since 1997, ANFREL has been working actively to ensure the integrity, credibility and transparency of election process in 10 countries, including last year's senatorial election in Thailand.

From 2-7 January 2001, ANFREL deployed 42 international observers from 17 countries to observe Thailand's general election. This mission covered sensitive areas in 28 provinces including Bangkok, Buriram, Chonburi, Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Kanchanaburi, Khon Khen, Kalasin, Lopburi, Nakhon Ratchasima, Nakhon Sawan, Nakhon Sithammarat, Narathiwat, Nonthaburi, Nong Khai, Pathum Thani, Prachuab Kirakhan, Pichit, Phisanulok, Ratchaburi, Sakon Nakhon, Songkhla, Samut Prakan, Suphanburi, Surat Thani, Ubon Ratchathani, Udon Thani and Uttradit.

Because this was the first general election under Thailand's new constitution, there had been much public enthusiasm for better electoral process that would produce a political system entrusted with professional and ethical

qualifications. ANFREL witnessed strong commitment of Thai people to exercise their democratic rights and duties at the polls. Polling stations from different parts of the country recorded high voter turnout for both advanced polling during 29-30 December 2000 and the actual election on 6 January 2001. Situation surrounding electoral process had also been extensively monitored and reported by the media.

In parallel, ANFREL was impressed by unprecedented efforts of the Election Commission and people's organizations to uphold the integrity of electoral process. A number of initiatives had also been made to provide understanding about new election system to both election officials and voters.

On 6 January 2001, against the backdrop of reports about irregularity and violence during the pre-election period, ANFREL found that general atmosphere of the polls was relatively peaceful. Overall efforts of related authorities to maintain order and basic standards of democratic elections were also commendable.

Nevertheless, ANFREL would like to express concerns on some lapses in procedural and technical consistency in administering and conducting of electoral process. For example, conflicting instructions were given to the public in general about voting procedures. Additionally, the layout of some polling stations also compromised voting secrecy.

ANFREL noted the implications of the entrenched patronage system for the conduct of the polls. Specially, the proximity between local election officials and political parties could be a factor in influencing voting behaviors in some areas. The location of polling stations near or in the residence of local officials, and the presence of party representatives as appointed election officials could intimidate some voters. The presence of canvassers inside and outside polling stations in historically sensitive constituencies clearly affected voters' freedom of choice. In many cases, ANFREL confirmed reports of money and intimidation being used as a means to influence voters.

ANFREL recommends that, while broad-based education has been carried out quite successfully by both the Thai government and private groups, even more concerted efforts may help address some of the problems mentioned above. For example, increased efforts to educate the voting public and officials about democracy may help the fight against political patronage. Officials also need more education and systematic training to ensure a consistent and fair voting process at the local level. More consistency and decisiveness in the conduct of the Election Commission at the national level will support people's faith in democratic balloting and reduce the chance that Thailand will be entrapped in repetitive elections. At the same time, the roles of non-governmental organizations and citizens' groups merit more recognition and support from the government. And in general, efforts to generate transparency in Thai politics should be further emphasized in the process of creating of local election committees.

For more information, please contact:

- ANFREL Secretariat Tel. 2769846-7 extension 3 / Fax. 2762183
- Sunai Phasuk Tel. 01-6323052 / Somsri Hananuntasuk Tel. 01-8105306

APPENDIX VI

Statement

P-NET Position on the 6 January Election

Was it the dirtiest polls in Thai history?

- 1) On the one hand, general situation of Thailand' election appeared to be similar to all the previous polls. But on the other hand, it was the first time that rampant cheating and election-related violence encountered with democratic aspiration of the voting public, related authorities and NGOs.
- 2) As election became more competitive under the new constitution, political parties and candidates appeared to be in a desperate situation. Indeed, they were ready to resort to any possible means to ensure victory at the polls.
- 3) Large amount of money were invested in different forms of campaign advertisement, exceeding expenditure ceiling that the Election Commission set for both political parties and individual candidates. There were also incidents of the use of money and intimidation to influence voters. Canvassers and supporters of different parties became victims of political harassment and assassination. In some areas, government officials were found to have proximate relationship with political parties and candidates. Throughout the country, complaints about vote buying, fraud and violence plagued political atmosphere during the pre-election period. Nevertheless, a number of complaints about irregularity was not verifiable. On the one hand, part of this difficulty was due to the lack of witness and evidence. But in many cases, complaints about irregularity were wrongfully used in a political mud-sling.
- 4) Against the backdrop of reports about irregularity and violence during the pre-election period, the Election Commission and people's groups embarked on unprecedented efforts to fight against corrupt practice in electoral process. Apart from initiatives made to provide understanding about new election system, the Election

Commission sought to uphold the integrity of the polls by banning cheating candidates from the race. Decisive move of the Election Commission was widely praised by the public. Because this was the first general election under Thailand's new constitution, there had been high enthusiasm among to people for better electoral process that would produce a better political system. This democratic momentum was further reinforced by relentless works of NGOs and the media in detecting and exposing corrupt practice of candidates and political parties. Taken together, all these concerted efforts and commitment were relatively effective in reducing the level of cheating and irregularity at the polls.

- 5) Regarding complaints received by P-NET during the advanced election from 29-30 December 2000, North and Northeastern provinces such as Nakhon Ratchasima, Surin, Buriram and Chaiyaphum recorded relatively high number of vote buying activity, voter impersonation and improper conduct of some election officials. There were also a number of complaints about some procedural and technical lapses in administering and conducting the polls. Poor logistical preparedness and the lack of proper understanding of voting process among election officials generated disorder when many polling stations were unable to accommodate high voter turnout. Equally important, complaints from many areas clearly indicated that election officials in many localities lacked political neutrality in organizing the polls.
- 6) From 3-6 January 2001, P-NET still found that the most common complaints were related to vote-buying. Packets of money from 200-1,000 baht were distributed to voters in almost every part of the country. Lavish banquets were prepared and provided free of charge as a means to bribe voters especially in Bangkok area. A number of canvassers, including some government officials, were found involved in the use of violence to influence voting result. Some officials were accused of corrupt practice and vote cheating such as falsifying voters' lists and house registration to facilitate voter impersonation.

- 7) On 6 January 2001, the actual polling day, P-NET received a number of reports about vote buying. In addition, there were also complaints about vote cheating in some constituencies such as rotating of ballots, tampering of ballots and unreasonable delay in transporting ballot boxes to the counting center, etc. Voters in many areas continued to complained about the lapse of technical and logistical arrangement in polling stations and counting stations. Conflicting instructions were given by election officials about voting process. For example, there was no consistency in verifying voters' identity and issuing ballots in many polling stations. A number of election officials failed to observe the special arrangement designed to verify authentic ballots. This was especially the case when stickers issued by the Election Commission were not placed on the top of ballots.

Regarding complaints about improper conduct in vote counting process, P-NET found that officials in many counting stations did not provide sufficient transparency and consistency in accepting and rejecting ballots. As a result, there were a number of protests against preliminary results of the election. Even worse, in some cases, the counting of ballots was abruptly stopped by angry mobs.

- 8) Nevertheless, P-NET found that reports of foreign news agencies that the 6 January election was the dirtiest polls in Thai history misleading. This assumption only reflected personal impression of certain Election Commissioner and it did not represent general situation of Thailand's election. At this stage, it appeared that new regulations and procedures could serve to maintain basic standards of democratic election. Cheating at the polls became more difficult. Vote counting carried out at a central counting center was proved to be relatively successful in providing voters greater freedom of choice. With less fear of intimidation and retaliation, the voting public could express their free wills at the polls. Equally important, broad-based education programs of the Election Commission and private groups seemed to be effective in creating more informed and reasonable voting

behaviors. Democratic aspiration was key to success in a fight against political patronage.

To certain extent, money and intimidation no longer produced desirable results in garnering supports from voters. Preliminary results of the election also indicated that, despite concerns about rampant cheating and election-related violence, Thailand moved to a higher level of political maturity as a number of candidates accused of involving in vote buying, fraud and political violence were rejected by their constituents. In many provinces, a system of patronage politics inherited along family line was even put to an end.

- 9) To maintain the momentum of democratic aspiration expressed by the voting public, the Election Commission would need to show its decisiveness in verifying complaints about fraud and other violations of election laws. P-NET would like to urge the Election Commission to work in cooperation with private groups to ensure that candidates and political parties found involved in election fraud or committed political violence in any forms would be duly penalized according to the law. In this connection, P-NET would provide evidence of vote cheating and irregularity received from different parts of the country to the Election Commission for further investigation. P-NET believed that only honest, transparent and decisive actions of the Election Commission could uphold people's faith in democratic balloting and reduce the chance that Thailand would be entrapped in repetitive election.

People's Network for Elections in Thailand (P-NET)
8 January 2001

APPENDIX VII

**ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION
FOR THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IN THAILAND**

2-7 January 2001

*Vidhayanyes Hostel, Phayathai Rd., near Mah Boon Krong Center,
Soi Chula12*

(behind National Stadium), Tel. 2183010, 2183015

Somsri hand phone 01 8105306, Sunai 01 6323052

1 January**Arrival of All Observers in Bangkok****19.00-21.00****Welcome Dinner**

- *Hosted by Gen. Saiyud Kerdphol, President of P-Net and Vice Chairman of the Poll-Watch Foundation*

2 January**08.00**

March for Free and Fair Election in Thailand
from Vidhyanyes Hostel, Chulalongkorn University to the Election Commission of Thailand)

09.00- 09.15

Meet Chairman of the Election Commission of Thailand

10.00-15.30

Briefing Sessions at Vidhyanyes Hostel, Chulalongkorn University

10.00-11.00

Briefing on Political Situations in Thailand
Sunai Phasuk, Researcher of ANFREL

11.00-12.00

Briefing on Election Laws and Procedures
• *Dr. Gothom Arya, Commissioner of the Election Commission of Thailand*

12.00-13.00**Lunch**

- 13.00-14.00** **Briefing on Voting Behaviors in Thailand**
- *Gen.Saiyud Kerdphol, President of P-Net and Vice Chairman₁ of the Poll-Watch Foundation*

- 14.00-15.30** **Briefing on Monitoring Procedures and Mission Deployment**
- *Sunai Phasuk, Researcher of ANFREL*
 - *Somsri Hananuntasuk-Berger, Election Monitoring Coordinator of ANFREL*

3-5 January

- *Observe Election Campaigns in Deployment Areas*
- *Visit Local Observers of the Election Commission of Thailand, P-Net and the Poll-Watch Foundation*
- *Interview Voters in Deployment Areas*

6 January

Observe Polling and Vote Counting Procedures

7 January

Assessing Observation Mission

09.00

De-Briefing of Observation Reports

18.00

Press Conference (venue to be informed)

8 January

Departure of All Observers

APPENDIX VIII

RE-ELECTION ON 29TH JANUARY, 2001

Province	Total Constituency	Re-election in Constituency
1. Bangkok	37	20
2. Buriram	10	1, 5, 8, 9
3. Chaiyaphum	7	1, 5
4. Chiang Mai	10	4
5. Chiang Rai	8	5
6. Kanchanaburi	5	1, 3, 4, 5
7. Khon Kaen	11	4, 6, 9, 10
8. Lampang	5	3, 5
9. Loei	4	3
10. Mahasarakham	6	6
11. Nakhon Nayok	2	1, 2
12. Nakhon Phanom	5	1, 2, 4
13. Nakhon Ratchasima	17	1, 6, 7, 9, 10, 14, 15, 17
14. Narathiwat	4	2, 4
15. Nong Bua Lamphu	3	2
16. Nong Khai	6	5
17. Petchabun	7	1
18. Pichit	4	2
19. Prachinburi	3	2
20. Ratchaburi	5	1
21. Roi Et	9	2, 3, 9
22. Sakhon Nakhon	7	1
23. Samut Prakan	6	6
24. Srisakhet	9	7, 9
25. Sukhothai	4	2, 4
26. Surin	9	4, 7
27. Ubon Ratcha Thani	11	1, 2, 4, 6, 10
28. Uttaradit	3	2
29. Yasothon	4	1, 2, 3

APPENDIX IX

RE-ELECTION DEPLOYMENT LIST
28-30 January, 2001

<i>Province</i>	<i>Name of Observers</i>
1. Buriram	Ms. Prieupan Pakeesuk Ms. Parinya Boonridrerthaikul
2. Chiang Mai	Ms. Pornpen Khonghachornkiet Ms. Samantha Burman
3. Kanchanaburi	Ms. Sansanee Suthisansanee Ms. Sopa Chaiyawan
4. Khon Kaen	Mrs. Somsri Hananuntasuk Mr. Chalot Pratheuangrattana
5. Nakhon Ratchasima	Team 1. Gen. Saiyud Kerdphol, Ms. Inday Olayer Ms. Darunee Tuatongkorn Team 2. Prof. Somchai Srisuthiyakorn
6. Roi Et	Mr. Issarawut Sirichairach
7. Ubon Ratcha Thani	Mr. Sunai Phasuk
8. Yasothon	Mr. Natawee Kiatweracul Ms. Fritzie Chavez



Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL)

is a Bangkok - based regional network of election monitoring and human rights organizations whose general mandate and objectives are to support initiatives toward democratization in the Asian Region. It came about as a special project of Forum Asia and part of its campaign thrust addressing human rights and democratization issues in the region. Formed in November 1997, ANFREL's aims are to contribute to the democratization process by building capacities through training and supporting actual monitoring of elections by local groups, lobbying and dissemination election-related information.

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