



Language

After 1992 many hoped that the era of military coups had come to an end. But the military did intervene again in September 2006 to overthrow the government of Thaksin Shinawatra. The coup had the backing of the king, who is popular and exerts extraordinary moral authority in Thailand, and was tacitly supported by residents of Bangkok, though there was some student protest.

The lack of urban resistance to the military takeover was due to the growing opposition to Thaksin, a former telecom tycoon who, as prime minister after 2000, won loyalty among the poor in the countryside through his health reforms, but was increasingly distrusted by the urban middle class for his authoritarian style, corruption, cronyism and human rights violations (for example use of martial law to crush Muslim resistance in the south, and later declaration of a state of emergency). When he called an unexpected election in April 2006 to bolster his authority, the opposition parties boycotted it and it was annulled. The army stepped in to prevent Thaksin being returned to power again by the rural vote in a re-run election.

The anti-Thaksin movement was launched in September 2005, and in the Spring of 2006 hundreds of thousands protested in Bangkok. However, Thaksin retained the support of many of the rural population and urban poor, who form the majority, and there were a succession of opposed mass protests by pro-Thaksin forces (for example 'the Caravan of the Poor and Democracy Loving Village People') and also by his opponents. From exile, Thaksin continued to be active in politics and mobilize his supporters. After a pro-Thaksin government was elected in December 2007, the opposition coalition besieged parliament and then Bangkok airport in late 2008 to demand the resignation of the prime minister, which they achieved through the intervention of the Constitutional Court. Pro-Thaksin demonstrators responded in both 2009 and in 2010, when serious violence was narrowly averted and the demonstrators were persuaded to disperse.

Kasian, Tejapira, [Toppling Thaksin](#) [1], *New Left Review*, issue 39 (May/June), 2006, pp. 5-37

Analyses social and political context and mounting opposition up to April 2006.

Pongsudhirak, Thitinan, [Thailand since the Coup](#) [2], *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 19, issue 4 (October), 2008, pp. 140-153

See also:

April Carter, [People Power and Political Change: Key Issues and Concepts](#) [3], ([A. 1.a.ii. Theories of Civil Disobedience, Power and Revolution](#) [4]), pp. 110-12, for very brief summary up to 2010, including newspaper references.

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E. II.10.b. Conflicting Protests 2005-2010

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