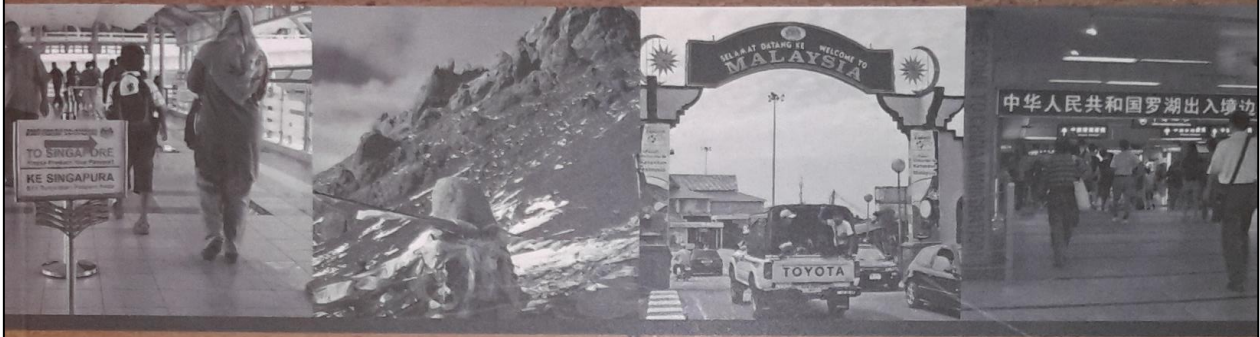


The 4th conference of the Asian Borderlands Research Network

# Activated Borders: Re-openings, Ruptures and Relationships



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# **Military Brotherhood between Thailand and Myanmar: From Ruling to Governing the Borderlands**

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Paper presented at the 4th Conference of the Asian Borderlands Research Network conference “Activated Borders: Re-openings, Ruptures and Relationships”, 8-10 December 2014 Southeast Asia Research Centre, City University of Hong Kong

## **1. Introduction**

Signaling a new phase of cooperation between Thailand and Myanmar, on 9 October 2014, Thailand’s new Prime Minister, General Prayuth Chan-o-cha took a two-day trip to Myanmar where he met with high-ranked officials in the capital Nay Pi Taw, including President Thein Sein. That this was Prime Minister Prayuth’s first overseas visit since becoming Prime Minister underscored the significance of Thailand’s relationship with Myanmar.

During their meeting, Prime Minister Prayuth and President Thein Sein agreed to better regulate border areas and deepen their cooperation on border related issues, including on illicit drugs, formal and illegal migrant labor, including how to more efficiently regulate labor and make Myanmar migrant registration processes more efficient in Thailand, human trafficking, and plans to develop economic zones along border areas – for example, in Mae Sot district of Tak province - to boost trade, investment and create jobs in the areas<sup>3</sup>. With a stated goal of facilitating border trade, 3 pairs of adjacent provinces were named as “sister provinces” under Memorandums of Understanding between Myanmar and Thailand signed by the respective Provincial governors during the trip.<sup>4</sup> Sharing more than 2000 kilometer of border, both leaders reportedly understood these issues as “partnership matters for security and development” (Bangkok Post, 2014).

Also on the agenda was the Dawei Special Economic Zone development, which Thailand has been keen to develop since 2006, and that Prime Minister Prayuth and President Thein Sein during the meeting committed to select private firms to invest in the first phase of the project as well as to enhance investment opportunities for the Thai private firms in the next

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<sup>2</sup> The authors acknowledge the support of the Thailand Research Fund in undertaking this study

<sup>3</sup> Reportedly this was proposed by Thailand, to which Myanmar committed to cooperate upon.

<sup>4</sup> Thailand’s Chiang Mai, Prachuap Khiri Khan, and Rayong were paired with Myanmar’s Kentung, Myeik, and Kawthaung respectively (Bangkok Post, 2014b).

phase which emphasizes more on infrastructure development and transportations. A Memorandum of Understanding was also signed on energy cooperation, including on energy sales, and for infrastructure development of power, gas pipelines, alternative energy and petroleum.

The Prime Minister and President appeared to agree that developing the border area's economies and better regulating migrant labor, would both strengthen security and development of the two countries.

This paper argues that both the Thai and the Myanmar military, which are currently exceptionally influential in the politics of the respective countries, view their border-area collaboration as important for building their legitimacy towards elections in 2016 and 2015 respectively; both governments want to prove that they can generate economic prosperity and provide national security. We suggest that the way the military views the border has shifted from securitizing the border for national security, to developing the border regions economically – also for the purpose of national security. Thus, there has been a shift from governments trying to directly rule the border to a collaborative inter-government “governing” of the border. The main vehicle by which this governing takes place is economic projects.

This process of intensified governance or control at the border, which amongst other things has become less “porous” has implications for those who treat the border as a place to flee (Scott, 2009), including ethnic groups caught between collaborating military governments. Until recently there were spaces of exception within the border regions, ranging from: refugee camps; to ethnic controlled areas; to places of escape/ haven (in Thailand from Myanmar). We argue that nowadays these spaces of exception are not places that can be used to escape any longer from the centralizing state control. One of the most important means of governing collaboratively these spaces between the two military governments now in power are economic development projects. We conclude that even though this cooperation is framed as “development” of the border, it in fact reproduces traditional modes of security rather than moving towards human security.

In the next section of the paper, we offer a brief conceptual framework, focusing on processes of conflict transformation, and the relationship between traditional and human security. Section 3 briefly outlines the research method. Sections 4 and 5 discuss how Thailand and Myanmar's military governments respectively are seeking Legitimacy, including through border development. Section 6 discusses the implications of borderlands development through a case study of the Dawei SEZ and road-link project in Tanintharyi Region. Section 7 offers some conclusions on the emerging military brotherhood, reflecting on prospects for political legitimacy and economic prosperity.

## 2. Conceptual framing

### 2.1 Conflict transformation

Particularly relevant to the Thailand-Myanmar border regions at present is the ongoing process of conflict transformation. Theories of conflict transformation have built upon the foundations of earlier theories of conflict management and conflict resolution (Miall, 2004). Theories of conflict transformation describes a process of transformation from “destructive conflict” to “constructive conflict” – or vice versa - where destructive conflict “results in a more dependent and exploitative pattern of development, a distorted pattern of governance and a militarized form of politics” and constructive conflict “promotes legitimate decision making capacity, strengthens autonomous development and sustains civil rather than military politics.” Conflict transformation involves transformation in: actors, including changes in internal parties, and the arrival of new actors; issues and agendas related to conflict; rules and norms governing a conflict; and structures, including relationships within a conflict and distribution of power (Vayrynen, 1991).<sup>5</sup>

Contemporary conflicts are caused and resolved at multiple co-existent scales, namely: global, regional, societal, conflict party and individual elite (see Miall, Ramsbotham and Woodhouse, 1999). Important actors in conflict transformation include: states and intergovernmental organizations; development and humanitarian organizations; international NGOs; and parties to the conflict and other relevant groups within the affected society. These actors engage in a range of internal and external track I, track II and track III diplomatic processes. Whilst potentially synergistic, internal and external actors within the multiple-track process are often in tension and at crossed purposes.

### 2.2 Traditional and Human Security

Theories of traditional security focus in particular on the interests of state as the referent object and that experiences threats to its security from other states. Maintenance of traditional security is therefore often understood in terms of realist frameworks of deterrence, containment and balance of power, military statecraft, and theories of deterrence, and can be observed in terms of territory disputes, arms races and inter-state warfare (e.g. Caballero-Anthony and Cook, 2013).

Traditional security - defined as protecting state sovereignty and territorial integrity from external military threat -, however, is too narrow, both for the security of the state and its population. Non-traditional security threats to the state include: economic instability; social unrest (including forced displacement); and political instability associated with

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<sup>5</sup> Miall (2004) identifies the following five transformers of conflict: 1) *Context transformation* Changes in the international or regional environment; 2) *Structure transformations* Changes from asymmetric to symmetric relations; changes in power structures; and changes of markets of violence; 3) *Actor transformations* changes of leadership; changes of goals; inter-party change; changes in party's constituencies; and changing actors; 4) *Issues transformations*: transcendence of contested issues; constructive compromise; changing issues; and de-linking or re-linking issues; and 5) *Personal / elite transformation*: changes of perspective; changes of heart; changes of will; and gestures of reconciliation.

environmental crises, energy shortfalls, terrorist attacks, pandemic diseases, religious differences. This has resulted in a shift in referent object from state to include individuals and group identity, and led to the emergence of the concept of human security. Sen and Ogata (2003) seek to conceptualize human security to account for the linkages between development, human rights and national security in order to strengthen “Freedom from Want” and “Freedom from Fear.” They emphasize both the individual (empowerment and capability) and the role that institutions play (protection and opportunity), with the following dimensions: economic security, food security, health security, environment security, personal security, and political security.

In 2013, Thailand’s National Security Council presented its own interpretation of the linkage between human, national and regional security, as shown in Figure 1.

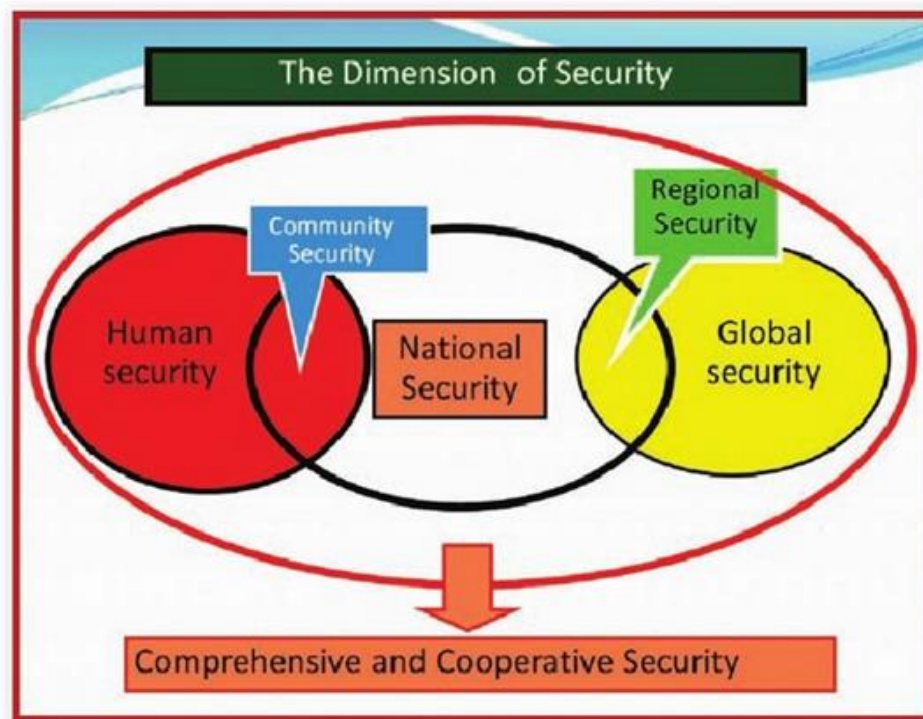


Figure 1: Security ranging from human to global, conceptualized by Thailand's National Security Council (2013)

### 3. Methodology

The research mainly uses qualitative methodology based on in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and observation. The period of fieldwork data’s collection was in October 2013 and May 2014.

In 2013, the research sites were mainly in Dawei with supplementary information from key informants in Yangon and Pha-an. Examples of field observation and interviews included the city of Dawei, office of the Italian Thai Development PCL at the Special Economic Zone, the resettlement site of affected villagers in Bawah village, villages along the Kamoethway river



valley and the Hte Kee Border Checkpoint of Myanmar. Key informant's interviews included staff members of Italian Thai Company, Chairman of Tanintharyi's Chamber of Commerce, Dawei branch's secretariat of the National League for Democracy (NLD), leaders of the Karen Women's Organization and the abbot of Dama Rakheta temple of KaLoneHtar Village. There were three more focus group discussions with villagers from Kler Pu, Tha Yu Chau, Myitta and KaSawWah. Supplementary fieldworks include interviews with the Regional Minister on Energy and industry in Pha-an, members of economic committee of the National League for Democracy (NLD), civil society organizations (both in Pha-an and Yangon) and editor of the Voice Daily Media group.

In 2014, the research sites were mainly along the road-link corridor from Phu Nam Roan to Dawei, which included Ka Lone Htar, Kler Pu, Tha Yu Chau, Myitta and KaSawWah Villages. Interviews were also conducted in the three Karen refugee camps under the Thai territory. Interviews were also conducted in Myawadee and Yangon. Key interviews and fieldwork observation included those who involved in or knew about the peace process between Myanmar and KNU, such as Myanmar Peace Center, Thanintharyi Post, Dawei Development Association, Taninthayi River People Network (TRIPNET) and affected villagers who live along the road-link corridors both Dawei and Karen communities. The research also conducted supplementary fieldwork in Yangon for the Thilawa SEZ as comparison. Supplementary interviews included Myanmar Academic Research Society (MARS), Renewable Energy Association of Myanmar (REAM) and National Human Rights Commission of Thailand.

#### **4. Thailand Military Government: Seeking Legitimacy and Border Development**

The Thai political system currently operates under the framework of a military government since 22 May 2014 when the elected government was overthrown by the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO). Under the discourse of 'political reform', the NCPO has claimed to seek to restore political legitimacy and to make the country become more stable through various constitutional mechanisms (MCOT, 2014).<sup>6</sup> They have argued for the need for strong leadership with great authority in order to unify the country and get rid of bad leaders

The debate over the new form of governance that overruled the principle of democracy has intensified political conflicts that have already become rooted following nine years of various interventions from extra-parliamentary system that have polarized in all sectors of Thai society much deeper than anyone expected. The NCPO originally announced that elections would be held in 2015, but these have since been announced to be delayed until 2016 (Bangprapa, 2014).

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<sup>6</sup> The Junta set up three bodies: National Reform Assembly (250 members), National Legislative Assembly (200 members) and Constitutional Drafting Committee (36 members). Their mission is to create a 'guided democracy' that can unify the country as well as provide a platform for smooth transition for future head of the State. The new Charter has seven (7) parts: General provision; the Monarchy and the people; good leaders and political institutions; Rule of law, Court of justice and monitoring of state's implementation of power; Reform and reconciliation; final provision and temporary specification.

When not under military rule, Thailand's political system has taken the form of a semi-democratic government or guided democracy led by neo-oligarchic group. The country's economic and social policy, however, has continually been driven by aspirations for industrial development, including investment in transportation infrastructure, water management infrastructure, and reform of state-owned enterprises, in the hope that ensuring economic growth would trickle down to all of society. Yet, in recent years, growth of Thailand's export-orientated economy has significantly slowed; compared to the boom years of the late 1980s, when between 1987 and 1989 export growth exceeded 20%, in 2014 it is expected to expand by less than 1% (Pananond, 2014)

Thus, facing a need to address its legitimacy deficit and based on its critique of the government it replaced, Thailand's military government has stated that it will recover Thailand's flagging economy. In 2013, sustained anti-governments protests had paralyzed Bangkok and were undermining investor confidence in Thailand, whilst controversy around the previous government's rice-pledging scheme was later revealed to have placed a heavy burden on public expenses (Finch, 2014). Structurally, Thailand appears to be caught in a middle income trap (Phongpaichit and Benyaapikul, 2013).

The military government thus has proposed more infrastructure development projects and special industrial economic areas, including in border areas with Myanmar on both the Thai and Myanmar side of the border, in order to boost Thailand's economic growth. Ironically, many were promoted by the last Pheu Thai government. Major FDI investment in Myanmar, such as Dawei SEZ and various gas projects and electricity-export hydropower dams, are also seen as strategically important to Thailand's long-term economic growth.

The military government has also sought to address other – from its perspective - long-standing concerns, including: the return of refugees located in camps in Thailand on the Thai-Myanmar border; and the informal migrants from Myanmar.

Regarding refugees in Thailand, as of January 2013, there are 92,000 registered refugees in Thailand and an estimated 54,000 unregistered asylum seekers from Myanmar living in 9 camps in Thailand along the Thai-Myanmar border. Beginning with initial displacement flows in 1984, political and ethnic conflicts within Myanmar have created large-scale displacement of a broad mix of ethnic groups across the border into Thailand. The most recent wave of refugees arrived in November 2010, totaling approximately 18,000 following clashes between Myanmar's Thatmadaw and ethnic armed groups. Whilst the Thai state made them return, further fighting left around 5000 in the Myanmar-Thailand border area (Burma News Network, 2013).

On the issue of refugee policy, in Thailand there is not a single policy body but responsibilities are spread across several governmental institutions, including the National Security Council that comprised of various government sectors including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Interior. Since the Thai government has officially named all camps as 'temporary shelters' and the refugees

themselves to be called as ‘displaced person fleeing from fighting’, instead of using the word ‘refugee camp’ and ‘refugee’, these people are considered to be subject to the Thai Immigration Act of BE 2522 (1979). Formally, therefore, this means that those who leave the camps are subjected to arrest and may be charged for illegal entry.

For the Thai government, the issue of refugees/displaced persons is prioritized as a security issue, which is based on a conventional security paradigm with no formal asylum policy. The general policy principles are: to facilitate and assist temporary shelters on the basis of humanitarian principles; camp confinement for refugees/displaced persons; and interventions to address the root causes in bilateral consultation with the Myanmar government including helping for Myanmar’s ceasefire process. Underlying these policy principles is the intention to reduce Thailand’s burdens related to refugees/displaced persons.

Following Myanmar’s democratic transition in 2010, and indications of some progress in the peace process, the Thai government has informally initiated a process of preparations for voluntary repatriation. Ethnic people living in the camps would be asked to make a choice either becoming economic migrants or seeking refugee status. In the camp, the granting of individual and family registration, birth certificate as well as registration and personal ID as camp population continue to be applied as before. However, for those who might become economic migrants, it has been reported that a number of displaced persons have been asked to participate in vocational trainings for job opportunities in Myanmar if they plan to go home<sup>7</sup>. Meanwhile, regarding seeking refugee status, although the resettlement option has been closed for quite some time, individual cases of family reunion or group considerations for resettlement to a third country is still open to application in the camps<sup>8</sup>. For those who seek refugee status and thus to stay in the camps, the Thai authorities will apply increasingly strict regulations for camp committees as well as closing down of freedom of movement to and from the camps.

Regarding economic migrants from Myanmar, Thailand depends very much upon these workers for its economy, including in the construction, fishing and fish processing, and manufacturing industries. As of 2013, an estimated 3,721,735 migrants were located in Thailand, the majority of whom are informal, constituting 5.5% of Thailand’s total population (UN DESA, 2013). Of these, just under half (1,892,480 people) were estimated to be from Myanmar<sup>9</sup>. Yet, many of these migrants end up in 3D (dirty, dangerous and demeaning) work, and are at risk of human rights violation including as “*victims of trafficking and*

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<sup>7</sup> The authorities have recently placed greater restrictions to outsiders to enter the camps

<sup>8</sup> Reflecting a long-standing policy position of the RTG, local settlement as a durable solution still remains not an option

<sup>9</sup> IOM summarize the main “push” and “pull” factors as follows: “Main push factors are related to limited livelihoods, poor socio-economic conditions, and insecurities created by prolonged conflicts in the source communities. Better wages and demand for less skilled labours in neighbouring countries act as pull-factors for the migrants.” IOM Website: <http://www.iom.int/cms/en/sites/iom/home/where-we-work/asia-and-the-pacific/myanmar.html>



*smuggled migrants who are exposed to abuses such as extortion, debt bondage and physical exploitation” (IOM, 2014).*

Both the Thailand and Myanmar governments are now focusing on regulating migrant workers through their border area’s policy for their national security and for economic development. This includes a collaboration to set up special economic zones in several places. The Thai military government has proposed 5 border areas in total within Thailand, which includes Mae Sot in Tak and Sangklaburi in Kanchanaburi provinces that borders Myanmar<sup>10</sup>. Meanwhile, on the Myanmar side of the border, the Myanmar government is in the process of establishing SEZs at Myawaddy in Karen state (located opposite MaeSot town) and at Phaya Thongzu in Mon state (located opposite the Three Pagoda checkpoint at Kanchanaburi Province).

These SEZs can be seen as serving various purposes. They are intended to boost economic growth and cross-border trade, first in the form mainly of border trade, and in the longer term internationally. The SEZs in Myanmar, based on labor intensive production, benefit from labor that is cheaper than Thai labor, including formally employed Myanmar labor in Thailand<sup>11</sup>. From Thailand’s perspective, placing SEZs in border areas either in Thailand or the neighboring country enables greater control of the movement of migrant labor away from inner cities and Bangkok. Furthermore, since Myanmar still has another 19 years of tariff free access to the EU and US, with Thai investment in the SEZs in Myanmar it could contribute towards Thailand addressing its middle-income trap challenge. Meanwhile, from the Myanmar government’s perspective, the SEZs in ethnic states are an important strategy within the peace process for transforming the sources of armed groups to come from legitimate business.

Regarding foreign direct investment in mega-projects, Thai businessmen were among the first foreign investors to gain major business concessions near the Thai-Myanmar border. In the 1990s, Thailand’s PTT Exploration and Production PCL was part of consortium that invested in exploring and importing natural gas via the Yandana gas pipeline, and has also sought to build a cascade of power-export hydropower projects on the Salween River that passes through Shan, Kayah and Mon states and in part forms the Thai-Myanmar border (Middleton, 2012). Thai investors also secured various mining concessions in the 2000s, for example the Heinda mine in which is currently subject to a court case the post-transition period in Myanmar (see below). Most recently, Thailand’s military government has continued to pursue the Dawei SEZ that was initiated during the earlier coup-instated government of General Surayud Chulanont who signed the project’s first Memorandum of Understanding (see below).

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<sup>10</sup> Other sites are Aranyaprathet and Trat provinces at the Cambodia border, and Songkla province bordering Malaysia.

<sup>11</sup> Thailand’s minimum wage is currently 300 baht/ day (approx. US\$10/ day). This is significantly higher than the average industrial wage in Myanmar, which is approximately US\$80 per month.

In sum, the Thai military government's strategy towards the border shared with Myanmar encompasses a number of long-standing considerations including: refugee policy; economic migrant policy; economic development at the border area; and FDI in to Myanmar within nearby provinces. Since the instatement of the military government in April 2014, rather than emphasize on national or state security alone, the Thai military government has redefined and enhanced the implementation of 'security' to include economic activities and involve other actors, in particular the Myanmar government although this has implications for a wider array of actors, including local communities on both side of the border, ethnic armed groups and political parties, and investors. Addressing issues related to refugees, economic migrants and economic growth are important factors (amongst others) by which the performance of the military junta will be evaluated come the return to democracy, now postponed from 2015 to 2016.

### **5. Myanmar Government: Incentives and Strategy for Seeking Legitimacy**

Myanmar's political and economic transformation is now in its fourth Year since the introduction of a new constitution and the creation of a civil-military hybrid model of government<sup>12</sup> in 2011. The world has cautiously welcomed the reform from two-decades military rule. It is clear, however, that is a succession of military leaders into civilian roles within parliament and within business. The most challenging issue that Myanmar's reformist government now faces is to prove the tangible results of the reform process ahead of the next election scheduled to be held in late 2015.

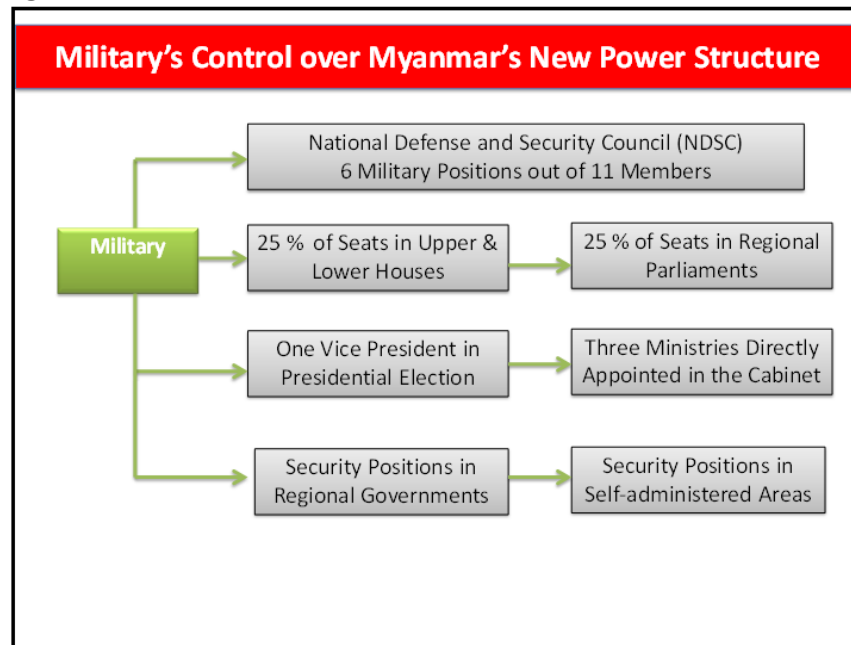
Of highest priority to President Thein Sein's agenda are national economic growth (including in border areas), together with securing a permanent ceasefire with ethnic armed groups, many of whom are located within – and control, even if under various forms of “dual government” – territories that are distant from Yangon and constitute the border with neighboring countries. States bordering with Thailand are Wa Region, Shan State, Kayah State, Kayin State, Mon State and Tanintharyi Region (Burma News International, 2013).

Assessing Myanmar's current political structure, it is clear that there is excessive military control which is so undemocratic that it is hard to call the country's constitution democratic (figure 2). The military solidly controlled both legislative and executive powers, meaning that it also: has the right to nominate one of the three presidential candidate names; and to directly appoint all security positions in central, regional and sub-administrative governments. Above all, the military control the majority of seats in the country's most powerful body called National Defense and Security Council (NDSC).

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<sup>12</sup> 25% of Myanmar's parliamentary seats are reserved for representatives of the military.

Figure 2: Military's Control over Myanmar's New Power Structure



Source: Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar (2008)

Since the beginning of the five-year presidential term in 2011, President Thein Sein has made efforts to continue the failed ceasefire talks initiated by the previous military government. However, in spite of a series of talks between the government and various armed ethnic groups over the past three years, Myanmar is yet to accomplish even the first step of the three-step roadmap to peace, namely signing Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement.<sup>13</sup> President Thein Sein's approach towards the ceasefire process within the broader political arena was to delink the two, thus marginalizing democratic political groups including the National League for Democracy (NLD) led by Aung San Suu Kyi, who is also the chairperson of the Rule of Law Committee at Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House). As a result, the military successfully marginalized the democratic political parties from the whole ceasefire process, stating that the talks were not about politics but about security matters and that it is not yet time for the political groups to enter into the process. At the same time, however, the military has not allowed the ethnic armed groups to discuss political problems in ceasefire talks, effectively silencing them in voicing their political demands in public.

According to our interviews with senior officials from Myanmar Peace Center in September 2014, there is growing pressure from the Myanmar government towards the ethnic armed groups to establish a nation-wide ceasefire agreement before the 2015 election. Those in favor of this deadline argue that it is best to secure agreement under the political certainty of President Thein Sein, rather than the next president – whoever it may be – who may have less incentive to push for a ceasefire (at least until the end of their own presidency in

<sup>13</sup> The remaining two steps of the process are: 2) solving political problems, including the constitutional amendment among the government, the political parties and the armed ethnic groups; and 3) and signing an everlasting peace agreement

another 5 years' time). However, others suggest that this pressure is more in the interests of ensuring President Thein Sein's legacy, and ethnic groups should not rush into an overly compromised agreement.

The ongoing peace process in Myanmar – better understood as a process of conflict transformation – is complicated by the mixing of political and economic reforms at various scales in the country; the interrelation between the two opens both opportunities and complexities. While the government couldn't substantially move forward the peace process to date, it has pushed Myanmar's economy towards industrialization; President Thein Sein has said: *"Agricultural development alone is not enough for the country to become a developed one. So, we must turn to national industrialization to transform country into a developed, rich one with a lot of employment opportunities and high per capita income."*<sup>14</sup> He has suggested that the lack of development in the borderland areas is one reason that prolongs the armed conflicts in Myanmar, even as the armed groups have consistently insisted that their struggles are for equal rights among all the ethnic nationalities and for self-determination. Reflecting his analysis, President Thein Sein's government has introduced new industrial zones, such as Myawaddy and Pha-an Industrial Zones in Karen State and the Dawei SEZ in Tanintharyi Region, each of which border with Thailand and are attracting the country's investments. Yet, on the side of ethnic armed groups, such as the Karen National Union (KNU), there are divisive splits as to whether economic development should be pursued parallel to a political agreement around federalism, or if a political agreement should be a precursor to permitting economic investments in ethnic territories.

The Myanmar government has also sought to cooperate with Thailand over the issues of common concern mentioned above (refugee policy; economic migrant policy; economic development at the border area). They have also requested cooperation on other issues of concern to them, including preventing ethnic armed groups from seeking refuge in Thailand at times of conflict, and also addressing cross-border arms trade from Thailand to the ethnic armed groups.

In summary, President Thein Sein is yet to demonstrate definite success in his reform endeavors for Myanmar including constitutional amendment, peace talks with armed ethnic groups, and economic reforms in terms of industrialization. He has won international support to some extent for Myanmar's peaceful transformation from repressive military rule to an increasingly liberalized governance structure, but it is difficult to claim that it is democratic yet. Thus, 2015 – Myanmar's election year – is a key deadline for claiming legitimacy of his term, which will be judged by the sufficient completion of his reform agenda, many of which are linked to Myanmar's borderlands with Thailand.

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<sup>14</sup> The New Light of Myanmar, Vol. XVIII. No. 344, p 1 – 3 (March 31, 2011)

## 6. Implication for the Borderlands: Case study of Tanintharyi Region

### 6.1 Evolving arrangements for cross-border investment at Dawei SEZ and roadlink project

Myanmar's Dawei Deep-sea Port and Special Economic Zone (DSEZ) was little known in Thailand when the Thai and Myanmar governments signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the "Development of Dawei Deep Sea Port and Road Link to Bangkok"<sup>15</sup> at the sideline of an ASEAN ministerial meeting in May 2008. Whilst Thailand had just emerged from a coup-backed government from September 2006 to January 2008, the agreement was signed under the leadership of Prime minister Samak Sundaravej of the People's Power Party, which was linked to Thaksin. Myanmar, meanwhile, was under the military control of the State Peace and Development Council chaired by senior general Than Shwe.

Briefly, the project was conceived to host: a 56-berth large deep seaport capable of handling large cargo vessels up to 300,000 DWT and LNG terminals; an SEZ area of 204.5 km<sup>2</sup>; and a 160-km eight-lane highway connecting Dawei and Kanchanaburi, which would link into the "Asia Highway Network (AHN)." The total cost of the project was anticipated to be US\$50 billion (DDA, 2014). The Dawei project was to be the western gateway of Thailand to the Indian Ocean, and a strategic component of "the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity," including constituting a "land bridge" called the Southern Economic Corridor (SEC) under the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) project.

It was only in late 2010 that the project began to receive the public's attention both in Thailand and Myanmar after the Italian-Thai Development Public Co. Ltd. (ITD), Thailand's biggest construction company, signed a framework agreement with the Myanmar government, becoming the sole developer and constructor of the large-scale infrastructure project.

However, despite having a strategy of "catching a tiger with empty hands", it proved that ITD was too ambitious in its belief that it could develop the project, and within a couple of years the project was stalled. ITD failed to attract any major strategic partner to invest during the Bangkok Road Show<sup>16</sup> and Tokyo Road Show<sup>17</sup>. At the beginning, the Thai government and ITD had expected to attract Japanese investors and Japan's government, but they proved that they were more interested in the Thilawa Deep-seaport and SEZ located nearby Yangon<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup>Memorandum of Understanding on the Development of Dawei Deep Sea Port and Road Link to Bangkok: <http://daweidevelopment.com/index.php/en/why-invest-in-dawei/g2g-relationship>

<sup>16</sup> Bangkok Road Show: [http://daweidevelopment.com/images/stories/news/Events/BKK\\_Road\\_Show.pdf](http://daweidevelopment.com/images/stories/news/Events/BKK_Road_Show.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> Tokyo Road Show: [http://daweidevelopment.com/images/stories/news/Events/Japan\\_Road\\_Show\\_June2011.pdf](http://daweidevelopment.com/images/stories/news/Events/Japan_Road_Show_June2011.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> The Japanese government started to give Oversea Development Assistance (ODA) loans to the Government of Myanmar for the Thilawa project in 2013



Furthermore, Myanmar's political transformation and leadership change in 2011 significantly stalled the DSEZ implementation. The DSEZ was reviewed by Myanmar's new government and reoriented to become a Government to Government (G-to-G) project, rather than letting ITD alone handle the whole project. The project thus became a semi (state-private) public enterprise under the title as special purpose vehicle (SPV).<sup>19</sup> Under the SPV, both Thailand and Myanmar governments share responsibility to develop the project by 2020.<sup>20</sup> The two governments formed two levels of joint committee – the Thai-Myanmar Joint High-Level Committee (JHC) and the Thai-Myanmar Joint Coordinating Committee (JCC)<sup>21</sup> - to oversee the overall project after re-signing a new “MoU on the Comprehensive Development in the Dawei Special Economic Zone and its Related Project Areas”<sup>22</sup> during President Thein Sein's official visit to Thailand in July 2012.<sup>23</sup> The arrangement with the KNU, through whose territory the access – and perhaps ultimately the 8 lane roadlink – passes is less clear.

Thailand's military government has allocated staff from the National Economic Social Development Board (NESDB) to work out under the SPV structure. From the NESDB's perspective, the Dawei Project could reap enormous benefits for both Thailand and Myanmar if all the relevant stakeholders carried out the project in a transparent and accountable manner.

In addition to plans to list the SPV on the Stock Exchange of Thailand, and later on the Stock Exchange of Myanmar once it is created in 2015, the two governments agreed to invite ITD and Japan's Ministry of Economic, Trade and Industry (METI) for selective bidding for developers and investors in the project. This time, Italian-Thai Development PCL (ITD) formed as “ITD Consortium”<sup>24</sup> with Rojana Industrial Park PCL, Electricity Generating PCL (EGCO) and LNG Plus International Company Limited (LNG Plus) contested the bid. The ITD consortium won the bid as developer to develop the initial 35 sq. km out of the 196 sq.km in the DSEZ. According to *Prachachat News*, the ITD Consortium will sign a new contract in December 2014 and the implementing will take 5 years from 2015-2020<sup>25</sup>.

The involvement of Japan is potentially a key figure to financing the project. Whilst initially hesitant, there are some reports that the Japanese government now has interest in trilateral

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<sup>19</sup> See more information in <http://consult-myanmar.com/tag/special-purpose-vehicle/>

<sup>20</sup> According to SPV subcommittee, the ITD would still be allowed to continue participating in the project in the future after a re-evaluation of the investment as well as a due diligence audit on the work completed by ITD before other investors could be invited to participate in the project. From the SVP's perspective, the DSEZ will continue with the idea of downsizing of the deep sea-port and restructuring the planning of the SEZ from heavy petrochemical industries to be friendly to the environment and local communities. On the road-link corridor, however, a cross-border highway being seen as the Asia Highway Network (AHN) remains unchanged.

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.thaigov.go.th/en/news-room/item/73911-thailand-myanmar-to-expedite-the-development-of-dawei-project-with-an-aim-to-upgrade-economic-and-social-development-both-in-the-local-and-regional-levels.html>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.thaigov.go.th/en/news-room/item/71001-prime-minister-and-president-of-the-republic-of-the-union-of-myanmar-declare-success-in-discussions.html>

<sup>23</sup> <http://daweidevelopment.com/index.php/en/introduction>

<sup>24</sup> Myanma Alin, Vol. 54, No. 53, p 6 (November 22, 2011)

<sup>25</sup> This phase will construct the industry estate and basic infrastructure such as small port, power plant, two-lane road, reservoir, and telecommunication system, at a cost of US\$8 billion.

ownership of the Dawei SEZ and road link project, including a recent courtesy call in October 2014 to Prime Minister Prayuth by a senior Japanese delegation (Jikkham, 2014), and delegation visits to the project in November 2014 where it was announced they would invest in “the second step” (Eleven Newspaper, 2014). Others, however, doubt Japan’s present commitment; Author Wai Yan Maung, probably a pseudonym of a senior government official taking part in the DSEZ, identified of all the risks in the project, the most sensitive is the political risk as both countries had announced to hold national elections in the 2015/16 which could affect both countries’ existing economic policies (Maung, 2014)<sup>26</sup>.

**Table 1: The Chronology of the Political Economy in Myanmar alongside the Progress of Dawei SEZ and Roadlink Project**

Political Economy in Myanmar	Progress of Dawei SEZ and Roadlink
■ <b>September, 2007:</b> Saffron Revolution	■ <b>May, 2008:</b> MoU between Myanmar and Thai governments
■ <b>May, 2008:</b> Cyclone Nargis	■ <b>June, 2008:</b> MoU between ITD and MPA
■ <b>May, 2008:</b> Constitutional Referendum	■ <b>November 2, 2010:</b> Signing a Framework Agreement between ITD and MPA.
■ <b>November 7, 2010:</b> The First Election in Myanmar in 20 Year	■ <b>2011:</b> ITD drafted the DSEZ law, citing to Kriangsak Teerakowitkajorn, a researcher from Thammasat University.
■ <b>January 27, 2011:</b> The DSEZ Law was enacted two months before the military government dissolved itself.	■ <b>June, 2011:</b> ITD held two Road Show on Dawei project in Bangkok and Tokyo
■ <b>March 30, 2011:</b> A new government took the state power.	■ <b>September 16, 2011:</b> ITD registered DDC in Myanmar, holding 75% share + 25% share reportedly from Max Myanmar Group
■ <b>August 19, 2011:</b> The meeting between President U Thein Sein and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi turned out as the beginning of the country’s transition to democracy.	■ <b>November 14, 2011:</b> ITD signed a deal with RATCH for the investment of the plant.
■ <b>December 15, 2011:</b> DDA rejected coal-fired power plant construction in Dawei.	■ <b>January 9, 2012:</b> Myanmar canceled the 4,000 MW coal-fired power plant in Dawei, but 400 MW plant is under consideration.
■ <b>January 7, 2012:</b> Ministerial Meeting in Dawei including from ADB, Thai Banks: Siam Commercial, Krungthai and Bangkok Bank.	■ <b>July 23, 2012:</b> Thailand and Myanmar government signed a new MoU of Dawei Project.
■ <b>July 4, 2012:</b> The resignation of the Vice President Tin Aung Myint Oo and the withdrawal of Max Myanmar from the Dawei project was confirmed	

<sup>26</sup> Wai Yan Maung wrote a long article detailing the project’s latest information in the state-run newspaper *Myanma Alin* and analyzed that the reasons that the DSEZ was delayed were 1) giving a concession to a single company, namely ITD; 2) the huge infrastructure investment cost that neither a country or a financial institution can lend; 3) the reluctant of other private financial institutions to invest in a developer company that didn’t get the government support fully; and 4) the international economic sanctions on Myanmar despite of some removals due to the governance reforms (Maung, 2014)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>October 25, 2012:</b> Myanmar formed JHC headed by a Vice-President and JCC headed by Industry Minister.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>November 6-8, 2012:</b> 1<sup>st</sup> JHC<sup>27</sup> meeting was held in Bangkok, and agreed to form six sub-committees to implement the DSEZ.</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>January 26, 2013:</b> Deputy Minister Phone Swe, head of a DSEZ sub-committee, accused Dawei CSOs of the enemies of the project, rising tension between the authorities and the CSOs.</li> </ul>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>December 17, 2012:</b> Thai Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra<sup>28</sup> and President Thein Sein together visited Dawei SEZ site.</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>September 26, 2013:</b> Deputy Minister Set Aung<sup>29</sup>, a key technocrat of Myanmar SEZs spoke out his doubt on the ITD's capacity to handle the DSEZ as a reason to seek Japan as a strategic partner.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>June 17, 2013:</b> 2<sup>nd</sup> JHC meeting was held in Bangkok and officially invited Japan to join the DSEZ development and held the 1<sup>st</sup> Tripartite (Myanmar, Thailand and Japan) meeting in Bangkok.</li> </ul> |

## 6.2 Impacts on the ground along the road link

In July 2013, the Htee Kee (Myanmar) - Phu Nam Ron (Thailand) checkpoint opened that allowed travelers to cross between Kanchanaburi province, Thailand to Thanatharyi Region Myanmar. People can now travel along the recently completed 132 km laterite “access road”, constructed by ITD since 2010, such that from Phu Nam Ron to Dawei town takes only 4 to 5 hours. The “roadlink” itself is yet to be constructed and is much more controversial; it is intended to be 200 meters wide and would accommodate an 8-lane highway, transmission lines, oil and gas pipelines and a rail link. According to the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Border Pass issued at the checkpoint allows Thai people to spend up to 7 days in Dawei, whilst Myanmar people can spend up to 7 days in Maung district, Kanchanaburi province.<sup>30</sup> This check point is seen as an important gateway in order to promote cross-border trade and tourism between Thailand and Myanmar, supposed to contribute to border area development and enhance economic opportunities including opening future-border SEZs in the vicinity of the checkpoint.

The opening of the checkpoint, the construction of the “access road”, and a growing array of other investments in commercial farming and extractive industries, has initiated a process of transformation within its vicinity that articulates with the transforming political circumstances and reveals the on-the-ground complexities of border policies. Although a preliminary ceasefire was signed on 16 January 2012 (BBC News, 2012), until now a dual-system of government exists over the territory between the KNU and the Myanmar government. Thus, for major investments, investors need to negotiate with both, and – in principle – trilateral agreement attained.

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/business/6-joint-panels-set-for-master-plan-30193887.html>

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/national/Countries-want-Japan-in-Dawei-port-project-30196340.html>

<sup>29</sup> <http://elevenmyanmar.com/business/3537-tripartite-discussion-to-be-held-for-japanese-investment-in-dawei-sez>

<sup>30</sup> Travelers who carry their passport can travel anywhere within either country within the validity of their visa.

During the access road construction, land from 13 villages<sup>31</sup> was confiscated (DDA, 2014). These upland areas are mainly ethnic Karen dependent on natural resources for the livelihoods, including orchards for betel nut and rubber amongst other crops alongside swidden rice production. Overall, according to the Dawei Development Association, a locally active civil society group, there has been limited information shared with communities about the Dawei SEZ and roadlink project, a lack of meaningful consultation, a flawed compensation process and a lack of accountability. In September 2013, villagers blocked the access road for three weeks 50 kilometers West of the SEZ seeking compensation for land that they had lost (Vrieze and Htet, 2014a)<sup>32</sup>. There are widespread reports of outside businessmen buying up land, or just land-grabbing, along the access road, including during our fieldwork (Vrieze and Htet, 2014a).

According to an interview by the Irrawaddy with a local KNU officer:

*“The buying and selling of land is a very big problem here. Many businessmen come here now that the roads are becoming better. They came with licenses obtained in Naypyitaw, showing that they can buy the land. The KNU never approved these sales, and some people sell land when they don’t own it—this creates a lot of problems. That’s why the KNU banned land sales [pointing to a KNU notification placed along roads in the area that reads: No selling, buying of land in this territory.]” (Vrieze and Htet, 2014a)*

As pointed out by a local activist in the article:

*“This is also related to the peace process. So many Karen refugees [from Dawei] live across the border in the camp near Kanchanaburi. How can they return when there is no access to land?”*

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<sup>31</sup> Kha Ta Ra Khee, Wahtaw, Hsin Phyu Tine, Iwine, Ngayatni, Htee Pho Lay, Myitthar, Kalatgyi, Ka Htaung Ni, Pyin Tha Taw, Thabyu Chaung, Kalonehtar, and Yaypote (DDA, 2014)

<sup>32</sup> See also <http://www.irrawaddy.org/burma/thai-burma-road-link-blocked-dawei-protesters.html>



## TRANSBORDER CORRIDOR LINK TO THAILAND



Figure 3: Dawei Roadlink's Masterplan (Source: Italian-Thai Development, 2012)

At a focus group with 40 informants in Kler Pu village in October 2013, there were affected villagers from 6 villages. One villager from Ka Lek Ki village revealed that the companies started compensating the villagers in 2012 after the company started to use backhoe tractors to clear villagers' orchards without informing them. They said that the company had not operated transparently, and they had no idea if the company would be returning to clear even more land for the 8 lane highway. The villagers said it was difficult to estimate the damage caused, because various aspects of their livelihoods had been disrupted. They said the company had not paid the full compensation, and neglected other problems that they had caused. For example, the company had shifted soil on to some orchard lands damaging the trees, but they did not pay compensation for this.

One villager told us that there seem to be no systematic system of compensation at all, and compensation varied from case to case; if a villager was strong enough to ask, they would get the compensation, while those who were not brave enough to ask would not get it. The company had promised to a water supply to the villagers but it did not keep the promise.

A woman from Bha Yu Chau village said that there were many environmental impacts from the construction of the road, including the disappearance of wild animals and the contamination of streams near the village from soil dumped into the river:



*“In the past, the water was so clear that I could see shrimps, fish, crabs and other animals which right now have been disappeared.”*

A pastor from Ker Bor village said that not only ITD but also other companies extracting natural resources had damaged the environment in his village. As a result, the villagers had to rely on polluted water ponds as they were the only water resources they had, though they did not know if they would eventually have health problems after having consumed the fish in the ponds. The companies did not take responsibility or even care for the problems they have caused. The companies had reported to KNU that they provided usable water systems to the villagers while the villagers could not use the water because it was muddy. The villagers were certain that the water was not good enough to consume and use in their daily lives because the companies told their employees not to use the water while encouraging the villagers to use it. Overall he summarized that there had been:

*“misinformation, cheating and destructive practices associated with the various projects.”*

Moreover, Pu Lu, a mother of two in Kler Pu village voiced that:

*“I am worried for children that—unlike me and previous generations—they could not understand difficulties in lives because modernization had brought convenience and technologies. This is just the beginning of the new changes in the country. Many elders and I could not cope with the technologies as well as many rapidly emerging problems, such as drug abuse.”*

Based on our research along the roadlink project, a consistent theme was the transforming relationship between the central government, the KNU and the Karen people living along the road. Since the preliminary ceasefire was signed in January 2012 (BBC News, 2012), interests are realigning between the Myanmar Government, the KNU and businesses who operates in the area, which include the extractives industry (coal, tin, tungsten) and commercial crop production including corn, palm oil and rubber.

For most of the Karen in the communities we visited, which are located in KNU territories, their historical relationship with the KNU has been to acknowledge its legitimacy to negotiate their interests over natural resources, including with companies coming to the area. However, over the past several years, for some interviewed there has been a widening gap of mistrust between the KNU leaders and the communities in this territory over several concessions that have been granted permission to operate but that have damaged the environment and creating social problems, including the Heinda Mine and East Star Mine, both of which involve investors from Thailand and Myanmar. In our meeting in October 2013, village representatives said that they had complained to KNU leaders saying that:

*“the people respect the KNU leaders like they respect their own parents, therefore KNU leaders should care and pay more attention to the local communities.”*

The Heinda Mine, which extracts tin and tungsten for export to Thailand for processing, is jointly owned by Thailand’s Pongpipat Company and Myanmar state-owned Mining Enterprise 2, under the Ministry of Mining<sup>33</sup>. The project is located 25 kms east of Dawei city in Myitta Township. On 14 May 2014, the Dawei District Court accepted a case by villagers affected by waste water for years from the project (Yen, 2014). One of the 9 plaintiffs from the affected village, where more than 100 families have been affected<sup>34</sup>, said:

*“Our houses are not livable anymore. We are losing farmlands and gardens. Plants in gardens and farmlands have died. Betel [nut], mango, long-term plants have died. Water comes in during rainy seasons and floods underneath the houses. All the plants we have are dead because water is always there, since 2011.”* (Yen, 2014)

The plaintiffs are suing for damages of between 10 million to 39.9 million kyats each, in a case brought with the support of the public interest lawyer group Dawei Lawyers Association. The case is the first of its kind, and tests Thein Sein’s public commitment to “responsible investment” in Myanmar, which has become his mantra with regard to FDI, as well as Aung San Suu Kyi’s advocating of “rule of law” in the country (OECD, 2014). Despite this, more than 50 companies were seeking permits to mine for tin in Thanatharyi Region as of February 2014 (Vrieze and Htet, 2014b). Others are seeking permission to explore for tungsten, lead, coal and gold in an area that has been considered off-limits for the past 50 years due to the insurgency.

Meanwhile in the case East Star Mining Company, which mines coal in the Ban Chaung area for export to Thailand and is a joint venture between the Thai company East Star and the Burmese company May Flower, the KNU issued a license to mine a 60 acre concession in 2011. Permission was also provided by the central Myanmar government. The KNU license, to be renewed annually, required that the company protect against environmental damage and not harm local lands and peoples’ livelihoods, and to mine only outside village areas to avoid damage to farmland, waterways and the environment. Protests against the project by villagers who alledge they had lost land and experienced water resource degradation led to the KNU suspending the project in October 2013 (Karen News, 2013a). Despite this, the company has continued to mine, and even threaten villagers through Burmese military units (Karen News, 2013b).

In October 2014, sent a petition letter to the Myanmar government’s Division Chief Minister and the Karen National Union’s Megui/Tavoy District chairperson (KNU 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade) signed by 125 representatives from 46 villages and various civil society groups (Shaung, 2014). The

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<sup>33</sup> Mining in this area has taken place since the British colonial period. Pongpipat Company began operating the project in 1999, and reportedly escalated the rate of extraction and the environmental damage caused since 2006.

<sup>34</sup> 10 villages in total are affected by the project.

petition was against tens of thousands of hectares land concessions that have been granted since the ceasefire. Some concessions are up to 10,000 hectares in size, according to the petition, and are displacing villagers from their land. A spokesperson for the group said:

*“Our Karen villages and our plantations are sometimes not on existing maps and when the lands are granted as a concession to businessmen, its location is in our villages and our plantations. We call on the authorities to stop giving out [land concession] permits.” (Shaung, 2014)*

The petition states that flooding caused by development and business projects such as mining, rubber plantation and logging began in 2012 after preliminary a ceasefire agreement was reached between the government and the KNU. Yet, the joint secretary of the KNU’s Megui/Tavoy district responded that there were no new development projects granted in the area under KNU control during the preliminary ceasefire agreement and if there were any, the companies have to apply for permission, have to follow the policies, rules and regulation laid down by the KNU.

Regarding the East Star Mine, he said:

*“We have never put pressure on civilians [on development projects]. The government granted permission for coal mining before the ceasefire agreement was signed. It is in both government and KNU controlled areas. Sometimes, we can’t go according to KNU policies if the project is in the government control area. For cases like that, we need to discuss among us – KNU, local villagers and the government.”*

However, in November 2014, as villagers sought to block two roads used by the company to truck out roads, it was reported that KNU soldiers were deployed to clear the roads (Eleven Newspaper, 2014b). The situation reveals the complexities of dual-system of government in the post preliminary ceasefire era, including how it shapes development in the border areas.

According to our fieldwork, most villagers that we interviewed are still hurt and traumatized from the previous conflict between the ethnic armed groups and the Myanmar Military. They hope that at this time the preliminary ceasefire agreement will ensue to a long-lasting peace. The access road, together with mining projects, have affected local peoples access to land and natural resources, negatively affecting their livelihoods. The changes are reconfiguring the relationships and balances of power amongst existing actors. The area has become more open to – and is attracting – increasing small- and large-scale investments, in particular from Thailand. Conflict is transforming from armed conflict to contestation over visions of development and allocation of its benefits, including access to natural resources and business opportunities. Existing powerful actors, including the KNU, regional and national government, and local and cross-border (mainly Thai) investors, are realigning themselves, leaving communities along the access road vulnerable to land and resource grabbing with limited access to justice and means of recourse.

One NGO activist, reflecting on the changes, said that:

*“Land registration is not arranged with guns and bullets nowadays, but with political deals among the elites and business interests.”*

### **7. Conclusion: Military Brotherhood - Political legitimacy and economic prosperity**

Given the influential role that the Thai and Myanmar militaries play in their respective countries public politics, and the upcoming elections in 2015/16, both militaries are in need of building their legitimacy. To this end, they aim to demonstrate that they can generate economic prosperity and provide national security. This paper has argued that under the current political context of military government, there has been a shift from governing the border through hard power, namely building control over the border through military strength, towards exercising soft power through cross-cooperation on economic development projects and initiatives.

For Thailand and the government of Prime Minister Prayuth, priorities include: recovering Thailand's flagging economic growth, including through infrastructure investment that includes the Dawei SEZ in Myanmar; the return of refugees located in camps in Thailand; better regulating economic migrants, including creating SEZs in the border regions; and other considerations, such as controlling the illicit flows of drugs. Meanwhile, for Myanmar and the government of President Thein Sein, priorities include: industrialization and national economic growth; and closing a deal on the peace process for a permanent ceasefire and towards a national political agreement, which relates to the ability of the Myanmar military to govern ethnic states and the armed groups within them.

However, as explored in the case study of Tanintharyi Region, the so-called peace process is better named a process of conflict transformation. Wide-ranging economic investments by Thailand, increasingly enabled by the democratization process in Myanmar and the Myanmar's government's preliminary ceasefire with the KNU since January 2012, are reshaping the economic, political, social and environmental landscape across the border and in the border areas. Alliances amongst powerful political and economics elites are shifting, and the local communities left vulnerable to new forms of insecurity. The types of projects being developed involve control of land and natural resources, which are resulting in community resource dispossession with limited recourse to participation, compensation or justice.

Whilst both the Thai and the Burmese military still believe in the demarcation of the national border, they have also crossed a line by cooperating to govern it through a “military brotherhood”. Promoting economic development of the border ultimately also serves the interests of both militaries in a more traditional security sense. At the same time, it facilitates established and new elites to capture economic benefits. Thus, whether the shift towards governing the border for development is also a shift towards a more human security-centered approach is highly debatable.

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### Appendix: Interviews conducted

Date	Research Sites	Stakeholders	Method
<b>Year 2013</b>			
<b>10 OCT 2013</b>	Dawei City, Tanintharyi Region	City Livelihood	Observation
	Dawei Special Economic Zone,	Italian-Thai Development	Area Observing and Interview
	Upper Bawah Village, Tanintharyi Region	A local family at relocation site	Area Observing and Interview
	Dawei City	Dawei Development Association, Kamoethway Former Village head,	Interview
	Dawei City	Tanintharyi Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Dawei Tourism Committee	Interview
<b>11 OCT 2013</b>	Dawei City	Local National League for Democracy (NLD) Secretariat	Interview
	Dawei City	Karen Women's Organization	Interview
	Kahlonehtar Village	Sayar Daw Pyinna Wonta, The Abbot of Dama Rakheta Temple and Local villager	Interview
	Kler Pu Village (KNU Territory)	Villagers from Kler Pu, Bha Yu Chau, Myitta and Ka Saw Wah	Focus Group Discussion (40 – 50 participants). Participatory observation
<b>12 OCT 2013</b>	Myaung Byo Village	Local communities	Focus Group Discussion 12 participants
	Ka Saw Wah Village	Local communities	Interview, Participatory observation
<b>13 OCT 2013</b>	Hte Kee Border Checkpoint	Myanmar Custom Official	Interview
<b>14 OCT 2013</b>	Yangon	National League For Democracy (NLD) Economic Committee	Group Discussion
<b>15 OCT 2013</b>	Yangon	The Voice Weekly Media	Interview
<b>Year 2014</b>			
<b>29 APR 2014</b>	Tham Hin Camp, Suan Phueng District, Ratchaburi Province, Thailand	Local Administer, Camp Doctor, Camp Committee, Karen camp communities who flew from Myitta.	Interview and participatory observation
<b>26 SEPT 2014</b>	Yangon	Paung Ku	Interview
		Myanmar Academic Research Society (MARS)	Discussion
<b>27 SEPT 2014</b>	Yangon	Renewable Energy Association of Myanmar (REAM)	Discussion
		Former UNESCO	Interview
<b>28 SEPT 2014</b>	Thilawa SEZ, Thanlyin-Kyauktan Area, South Yangon	Local Leaders and Local Community, Villager at Relocation Site.	Interview, Focus Group Discussion, Site Observation

	Yangon	Dawei Development Association	Interview
29 SEPT 2014	Yangon	Representative of Land Action Working Group	Interview
		The Voice Weekly and Thanintharyi Post Editor	Interview
		Myanmar Peace Center	Interview
30 SEPT 2014	Yangon	Myanmar Peace Center	Interview
1 OCT 2014	Yangon	Rector and Pro-rectors of Yangon University	Interview
21 OCT 2014	National Human Rights Commission of Thailand, Bangkok	Dawei Development Association	Public Hearing
	Foreign Correspondent's Club of Thailand	Dawei Development Association, Local Villager from Kler Pu Village, Civil Society from Dawei, Commisioner of NHRCT, Healthy Public Policy Foundation, Kasetsart University	Press Conference