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# **FROM PREVENTION TO SEIZING POWER: THE THAI MARTIAL LAW AND THE MAKING OF SPECIAL AUTHORITY BY THE CONSTITUTION IN THAILAND**

### **Abstract:**

Thailand has seen 13 coup d'états since the 1932 revolution that established democracy in the country. This number marks Thailand as one of the countries experiencing most frequent coup d'états. Therefore, the coup d'état and the democracy in Thailand is one of the much-studied topics by many scholars. Some famous pieces of work include Thailand: The Politics of Despotic Paternalism by Thak Chaleumtiarana and The Plan to snatch the Nation: About the Stage and against Stage in the second term of Field Marshal P. Phibunsongkram (1948 - 1957) by Suthachai Yimprasert. Most of these researches focus on the political circumstance and the factors that supported the occurrence of the coup d'état. These studies identify many factors that contributed to the success of the armed forces in overthrowing governments. However, the martial law, one of the important factors, has been always overlooked. Generally, the purpose of martial law imposition is to maintain peace in the society during wartime or in periods of civil unrest or chaos. The particular feature of martial law allows military armies to impose the law without government approvals. Once declared, it gives the ultimate power to the commander-in-chief of the army who becomes the person that everyone in the country must obey. This law precludes the way for the commander-in-chief to seize power from the civil government. Hence, it is unsurprising that the armed forces always declare martial law before it overthrows the government. Martial law has probably, in a way, become military's preparation for coup launching. This research will focus on how the armed forces use martial law to support their coup and how martial law becomes one of the most important military's tools for launching a coup.

### **Keywords:**

martial law, armed force, coup d'état

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