

IIUM Journal of Religion and Civilisational Studies

Volume 8

Issue 2

2025



International Islamic University Malaysia

Patani Sultanate: Struggle for Independence in the Triangle of Siam, Britain, and France

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Article history: Received: 2025-7-25 Revised: 2025-11-26 Accepted: 2025-11-29 Published: 2025-12-31

Abstract: This article examines the Patani Sultanate's struggle for independence within the complex geopolitical triangle formed by Siam, Britain, and France in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. While existing scholarship has largely focused on bilateral colonial relations in Southeast Asia, this study addresses a gap in understanding how competing Western imperial pressures simultaneously shaped local autonomy and indigenous resistance. The research demonstrates that Siam's annexation of Patani in 1902 was not solely a product of Siamese expansionism, but rather a direct consequence of Anglo-French competition for regional influence. Through the analysis of archival materials from Singapore, British colonial accounts, and contemporary sources, this article reveals how the Anglo-French Declaration of 1896 and the Anglo-Siamese Secret Convention of 1897 fundamentally altered the power dynamics that had granted Patani significant internal autonomy despite Siamese rule since 1785. This article contributes to Southeast Asian historiography by illuminating how local Malay resistance under Tengku Abdul Kadir intersected with great power diplomacy to reshape the Malay-Muslim political identity in Southern Thailand. This multilayered analysis offers new insights into how colonial rivalries, rather than outright colonisation, determined the fate of semi-autonomous sultanates in the region.

Keywords: Patani Sultanate, Malay History, Southern Thailand, Anglo-Siam and French conflict, Tengku Abdul Kadir

Introduction

The Patani Sultanate's historical trajectory during the colonial era shows a complex entanglement within Southeast Asia's broader geopolitics. Due to its advantageous location in the northern Malay Peninsula, Patani played a significant role in the power triangle that Siam, Britain, and France established in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The gradual arrival of Western colonial powers—beginning with the Portuguese, then the Dutch, and lastly the British and French—changed the political and economic climate of the area. The British were more interested in tin-rich areas such as Patani after gaining control of Penang, Malacca, and Singapore. In the meantime, Siam's fears of encirclement were heightened by the French expansion into Indochina, which led to attempts to impose control over its southern regions. Following the catastrophic invasion in 1785, Patani, a previously semi-autonomous Malay-Muslim sultanate, came under growing Siamese control. Despite appearing to be loyal to Siam, the Patani Sultanate maintained significant independence until Siam was compelled to exercise more direct control due to pressure from rival Western imperial powers. Siam was forced to defend its borders and carry out internal reforms as a result of British and French interference in regional affairs, which ultimately resulted in the annexation of Patani in 1902.

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The aim of this study is to analyse how Siam's reform policies interacted with Western imperial pressures. It concentrates on Siam's reformist attempts to preserve its independence, the diplomatic tactics used by Britain and France, and the local opposition led by Malay leaders such as Tengku Abdul Kadir. The Anglo-French Declaration of 1896 and the Anglo-Siamese Secret Convention of 1897 were crucial in changing the political landscape of the area. This study advances knowledge of how local reactions and colonial forces impacted the Patani Sultanate's downfall and changed the trajectory of the Malay-Muslim political identity in Southern Thailand.

Methodology

This study adopted a historical-analytical methodology that utilises both primary and secondary sources. Archival materials, such as diplomatic letters, colonial treaties, and articles from current media, provide the main empirical foundation for recreating the political developments that affected Patani. The Anglo-French Declaration of 1896, the Anglo-Siamese Secret Convention of 1897, the British East India Company's reports, and correspondence from British officials such as Frank Swettenham are among the significant documents referred to in this study.

The analysis is supported by secondary literature, including academic monographs and peer-reviewed journal articles on British, French, and Siamese colonial strategies. The commentary places a strong emphasis on comprehending how Patani's destiny was influenced by commercial interests, foreign diplomacy, and Malay resistance. The involvement of regional leaders and the political and cultural elements that influenced their interactions with colonial powers are also taken into account in this study.

The gathered sources were interpreted through a diplomatic-historical lens by examining how treaty negotiations, official correspondence, and colonial policies shaped the political fate of Patani. The analysis employed a comparative approach to understand how the influences of British and French imperial strategies converged on Siamese decision making, while applying a centre-periphery framework to investigate the power dynamics between colonial metropolises (London and Paris), regional powers (Bangkok), and the local sultanate (Patani). Archival documents—particularly the Anglo-French Declaration of 1896, the Anglo-Siamese Secret Convention of 1897, and diplomatic correspondence—are interpreted not as mere legal documents, but as tools for geopolitical manoeuvring. Indigenous perspectives through Tengku Abdul Kadir's petitions were also explored to provide a nuanced understanding of Malay agency and resistance within the constraints of imperial rivalry.

The British and French in Malaya

Western colonial powers began settling around the Malay Peninsula in the early 16th century, and they created extensive trade networks thereafter. After the fall of Malacca in 1511, the activities of Western powers in Southeast Asia, particularly around the Malay Peninsula, increased significantly. The British's first contact with the Malay Peninsula occurred in the early 17th century, and this initial contact was directly with the Patani Sultanate. In 1611, under the leadership of Captain Anthony Hippon and the guidance of Dutch sailors, the British ship *Globe* reached Patani and established a trading office to develop silk trade with China and Japan, but they were unable to sustain it due to fierce competition in the region. The trading office, established in 1611 with great hope, was burned down in 1623, disrupting British trade expectations in Southeast Asia (Winstedt, 1935). After the Portuguese lost their maritime dominance, the Dutch became the most active player in regional trade for a long period. In

particular, with the support of the Johor Sultanate, in 1641, the Dutch captured Malacca from the Portuguese, engaged in extensive trade activities with the Malay sultanates, and gained great success in tin exports (Basset, 1961).

The British, on the other hand, became an important player in regional trade for many years with its East India Company, though they were not very successful in competing with the Portuguese and the Dutch. In fact, the Dutch East India Company worked intensively to prevent the British from successfully trading in the region. For this reason, the British were unable to establish a strong network in and around the Malay Peninsula for a long period. However, in the late 18th century, the British, having guaranteed control of Calcutta, deemed it necessary to establish a port around the Malay Peninsula to ensure trade between India and China as well as to break the Dutch dominance in the region (Hall, 2011).

After the Siamese attack on Patani from 1785 to 1786, the assassination of the sultan and his family, and the capture of thousands of slaves, the Malay sultanates in the north of the Malay Peninsula were greatly alarmed. The sultanates of Kedah, Terengganu, and Kelantan were especially worried that Siam would launch a sudden attack and the disaster that had befallen Patani would befall them. After settling in Penang Island, the British only attempted to establish commercial relations and did not intervene in the internal affairs of the Malay sultanates to avoid a possible war with other powers in the region. This strategy was to avoid confrontation with Siam, especially in the struggle against Burma. During this period, several Malay sultanates requested assistance from the British against Siam, but were ignored (Yamada, 2007).

The British East India Company began to play an active role in trade around the Malay Peninsula, while the Dutch, having lost their former influence during the same period, were no longer able to compete with the British. In addition, the Napoleonic Wars in Europe in the first quarter of the 19th century, and the beginning of French settlement in the regions of Vietnam and Cambodia, forced the British and the Dutch to cooperate. For this reason, the British and the Dutch signed the Treaty of London on March 17, 1824, demarcating the borders of their colonial territories in Southeast Asia. Following this treaty, the Dutch left Malacca to the British and withdrew to present-day Indonesian territory, while the British closed their trade centres in the south of Sumatra Island (Mills 1961). The British went on to take control of Penang Island on one side and Malacca and Singapore on the other, thus having a monopoly not only on trade around the Malay Peninsula, but also on securing the trade route between India and China (Hall, 1955)

Following the Dutch and British, the French made their home in the Indochina region. King Louis XIV made an unsuccessful attempt to impose French authority over Siam in 1680 by sending a delegation to Bangkok. The French attempted to establish control over the Kingdom of Annam (Vietnam) for a long time, but these efforts produced no results. One of their most unsuccessful endeavours was when their naval forces moored off the coast of Thieu-Tri in 1848 and requested privileges from the King of Annam. During the one-month period granted to the king to think over the request, he instead raised a sizable army and attacked the French, severely defeating them (*Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 1863).

Napoleon III attacked the Kingdom of Annam in 1857 with the assistance of Spanish troops based in the Philippines. The French forces were able to seize several areas from the Kingdom of Annam as a result of this attack (Prendergast, 1896). Following this event, Christian missionaries were granted authority to work in the area, and trade increased when the French and the King of Annam signed a treaty in 1862 (Hall, 1955). The French gained more power in the area as a result of the advantages they were granted. Cambodia, which had previously paid homage to Siam, was ruled by France by 1864 (Bunnag, 1977). Since then, the French steadily increased their sphere of influence in the area, and by 1885, the Kingdom of Annam was fully

under French jurisdiction. The French conquered Annam's lands and advanced to the Mekong River, which shared a border with Siam (Ferry, 2008).

Beginning in the 19th century, the Industrial Revolution in Europe significantly increased the demand for raw materials. Industrialisation, led by the British, created an increase in the need for minerals such as iron, steel, and tin. Moreover, the profit accrued from these minerals was more significant compared to other products. The Malay Peninsula was rich in tin mines, among many other resources. For many years, the Dutch had been exporting raw tin from the Malay sultanates and developed a strong trade network. Later in power, the British started to make profound efforts to take over the tin mining industry.

After the British established their first settlements in the Malay Peninsula, they made extensive efforts to control all the mines around the region. Patani's tin mines were already known to the British, though no attempt to take control was made due to the agreement signed with Siam in 1824. However, when the French advanced into the Kingdom of Annam and began to put pressure on Siam from the northern borders, the British took advantage of the situation to extend their colonial ambitions into the southern region, which included Patani.

Establishment of the British Administration in the Malay Peninsula and Patani Mines

During the 19th century in the north of the Malay Peninsula, the Malay sultanates under Siam's control (Patani, Kedah, Kelantan, and Terengganu) were relatively safer compared to the southern Malay sultanates, despite occasionally rebelling due to their dissatisfaction with Siam's presence. Siam's influence prevented both internal conflicts among these sultanates and external interventions by foreign powers. In the southern sultanates (Perak, Selangor, Pahang, and Johor), there were ongoing conflicts for power between the sultanates, throne disputes, pirates, uprisings by Chinese workers in the mines, and external interventions. Additionally, due to their inefficiency, these sultanates were unable to collect taxes regularly. All these factors facilitated the British settlement in the Malay Peninsula.

The British benefitted greatly from this internal turmoil in the Malay sultanates and made the first agreement with the Perak Sultanate (Noor, 2011). In the 1870s, a struggle for the throne had the Perak Sultanate on the verge of civil war. The three heirs to the throne, Raja Abdullah, Raja Ismail, and Raja Yusof, declared their sultanates in various regions of Perak following the death of Sultan Ali in 1871. Furthermore, they wanted the assistance of the Malay kings on the one hand, and the assistance of the Siamese and British on the other. While Raja Abdullah sought the British for assistance, Raja Yusof wrote to the Siamese for support (Cheah, 1998).

Taking advantage of Raja Abdullah's plea for assistance, the British established their first colonial presence in Perak in 1874 when they signed the Pangkor Treaty. The Selangor Sultanate was placed under British protection in the same year as the Sultanate of Perak. Internal discontent within the Selangor Sultanate served as the foundation for its acceptance of the British protectorate. Following the rise in profits from raw tin, new mines were established in Selangor, and thousands of Chinese migrants were hired to work in these mines. These migrants occasionally rebelled and provoked disturbances. Furthermore, several Malay administrators refused to pay taxes because they did not recognise the Sultan's legitimacy. The Sultan of Selangor sought the British for assistance in both tax collection and migrant management. By signing a protectorate compact, the British exploited this request (Hall, 1955).

The Malay sultanates frequently experienced succession disputes, which made it easier for the British to settle in the Malay Peninsula. Similar circumstances arose in Pahang, where

Wan Mansur rebelled against his brother, Sultan Wan Ahmad, with British assistance. In an effort to get Sultan Ahmad to accept their protectorate, the British exploited this uprising as leverage. They were unsure of Wan Mansur's support from other Malay chiefs, though, so they refused to acknowledge him as sultan. Initially, Sultan Wan Ahmad resisted British protection for an extended period. However, in 1888, the growing political pressure from the British through Wan Mansur caused him to concede British suzerainty (Noor, 2011).

The growing demand for raw tin, particularly from the Dutch and the British, sparked new competition among the Malay sultanates. Tin was largely extracted in the Kroh mines of the Raman region under the Patani Sultanate (Singapore Chronicle and Commercial Register, 1836). It is known that in the 1770s, the Patani Sultanate brought Chinese migrants to work in these mines (Philip, 2013). Boats carried the tin that was taken out of the Kroh mines down the Muda River to Kedah, where it was sold to either the British or the Dutch. In order to acquire the authority to run tin mines, the British started negotiating bilaterally with Malay sultanates in the early 1800s. The British also discovered the tin mines in Raman at this time and began a number of attempts to access them.

The British East India Company and Patani came to an agreement in the 1820s over the operation of tin mines. According to a London report on the subject, the Sultan of Patani made a deal with the East India Company, whereby the tin would be shipped to Kedah via the Muda River (Bradley, 2010). The British commerce in tin from Patani was hampered in 1820 when Siam attacked Kedah. The Burney Treaty, which established Siam's permanent rule over Kedah, finally prevented the British from accessing the Patani mines despite their repeated attempts during this time.

Patani: The Anglo-French and Siamese Dilemma

Following their conquest of Indochina, the French asserted that parts of the Siamese territory, especially Laos, had traditionally belonged to the Kingdom of Annam and hence to them. By using this strategy, the French sought to annex Siam and gain control over its land. Siam and the French were engaged in a protracted fight for control of Laos. Similar to the British, the French attempted to exert pressure on Siam at this time in an effort to acquire further land and rights (Mishra, 2010). A similar tactic employed by the British to take control of the Kroh mines was also attempted by the French along their northern frontiers.

Siam was continuously subjected to commercial and political pressure by the British and French in an attempt to gain additional privileges. It aimed to protect its sovereignty and strike a balance between the two superpowers, realising that both had colonised many nations (Marzuqi, 2010). The British were greatly alarmed when Siam was unable to repel the French forces' attacks on its territory in 1893. On January 15, 1896, British and French representatives met in London and signed The Anglo-French Declaration which put an end to the wars and defined their respective areas of influence. The conflict over the Kingdom of Siam's lands was essentially resolved by this agreement (Jeshurun, 1970). The borders of the Kingdom of Siam were acknowledged as the border between the two colonial powers, and both parties agreed not to attack Siamese territory. The Anglo-French Declaration settled the border disputes between France and Siam and committed both countries to protecting Siam's territorial integrity (*The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 1896b). This treaty not only alleviated Siam's fear of being occupied by both the British and French, but also made the Malay sultanates under Siamese control more resistant to external intervention (*The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 1896a).

The Anglo-French Declaration was once again brought to the attention of the Malay sultanates ruled by the Siamese. Siam sent thousands of troops to areas close to the southern

Malay sultanates shortly after the Declaration because the British and French continued to vie for control of Siam. According to a letter (Suchekomnaty Mionczynski, 1902) and certain documents delivered to Swettenham in 1902 by Australian Comptroller C. de Suchekomnaty Mionczynski, the French were planning an invasion of Siam. The British also placed constant pressure on Siam to bolster its authority over the Malay sultanates as well as to thwart any possible foreign intrusion ever since the Declaration was signed.

The French were not the only nation attempting to gain control of the Patani and other still-partially independent Malay sultanates at the end of the 19th century—the Germans and Russians were also trying to influence these sultanates and build relationships (Mahmud, 2008). To forestall any prospective foreign interference, the British negotiated a secret pact with the Kingdom of Siam on April 6, 1897, exactly one year after the Anglo-French Declaration (Denudom & Hoadley, 2015).

This pact benefitted both parties. On the one hand, the British stopped Siam from making deals with third parties and consolidated its position as the dominant force in the area (Suwannathat-Pian, 1984). Siam, on the other hand, regained its rights over the sultanates of Patani, Terengganu, and Kelantan, strengthening its power over them. Notwithstanding these advantages, the British were nevertheless unable to allay their fears of European nations, especially the French, gaining sway over the Malay sultanates (Koch, 1977).

Following the Anglo-Siamese Secret Convention of 1897, the Singapore office received a telegram from British Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain alerting them to the dangers of not carrying out projects pertaining to the Malay sultanates under Siamese protection. Additionally, he cautioned against any action that would raise Siam's suspicions. The hunger for the Malay Peninsula's mineral riches at the start of the 20th century nearly put Western nations in direct rivalry with one another. The United States attempted to enter this race as well in 1901, presenting the Sultan of Terengganu with a number of ideas for commerce and cooperation (Malek, 2000).

Tengku Abdul Kadir and a Rebellion Plan

Tengku Abdul Kadir Kamaruddin was the son of Sultan Sulaiman Sharifuddin Syah of Patani (d. 1899). Following the custom of his forebears, Tengku Abdul Kadir wrote to Bangkok to seek recognition as the new Sultan of Patani after assuming the throne. However, due to an unforeseen circumstance, Bangkok took a long time to recognise Tengku Abdul Kadir's takeover of Patani. Following a year of waiting, the King of Siam travelled to Patani as part of a state visit to the Malay sultanates. There, he met Tengku Abdul Kadir and gave his approval for the latter's accession to the Patani throne.

Tengku Abdul Kadir was a youthful, enthusiastic, and intelligent man who ascended the throne as Sultan of Patani at the age of 26. Furthermore, he developed close ties with the British authorities and spoke fluent English. These attributes guaranteed his recognition as the legitimate heir to the Patani Sultanate and won him the respect of other regional leaders outside of Patani. On June 26, 1901 (*The Straits Times*, 1901a), Tengku Abdul Kadir, his family, and 40 companions travelled to Singapore to meet the King of Siam, who was coming from Java Island shortly after assuming the throne. The Siamese inspectors in Patani used force to collect taxes from the local populace while Tengku Abdul Kadir was in Singapore. Upon returning from Singapore, Tengku Abdul Kadir became aware of the issue and directed that taxes be provided to him at the appropriate time rather than to the inspectors. However, the inspectors were not pleased with this order, so a squad of 600 troops began to police the area near Tengku Abdul Kadir's residence.

Tengku Abdul Kadir wrote to Prince Damrong, Siam's Interior Minister, in 1901, asking that the inspectors sent by Siam be removed and that the Malays be ruled by Malay rulers, as had previously been the case. However, he did not receive a favourable answer (Marzuqi, 2010). Tengku Abdul Kadir further held talks with authorities in Bangkok and Singapore in an attempt to find a peaceful solution to the Patani problem. However, when these negotiations failed, he and other Patani-based Malay rulers made the decision to overthrow Bangkok. Tengku Abdul Kadir ordered guns in anticipation of the insurrection and intended its commencement by the end of 1901. Support from the French was also to be sought as part of the planned uprising against Siam. The Siamese army would be sent to the area when the southern Malay cities revolted. It was anticipated that the French army would use the opportunity and move northward into Siamese territory during this period (Mahmud, 2008).

While preparations for the uprising were in progress, British colonial officer R. W. Duff, who was in Patani at the time, learned the details of the uprising. He was concerned that the British presence in the Malay Peninsula may be in danger if such a revolt spread across all the Malay sultanates. Before the uprising, Duff advised Tengku Abdul Kadir to write a petition to Swettenham in Singapore for a possible amicable settlement of this dispute, and the latter agreed. In his petition to Swettenham, Tengku Abdul Kadir described the circumstances in Patani and stated that if the issue was not resolved, a rebellion would undoubtedly break out (Mahmud, 2008).

Siam also started to carry out its ambitions to seize total authority over Patani's lands during this time. To restructure Patani's provinces under two administrative divisions, a Bangkok committee travelled to the area in 1901. Sai, Rangae, and Phra Anachak were to be placed under one administrative zone, while Patani, Nong Chik, Yaring, Yala, and Raman were to be united under another. The Bangkok government planned to designate a chief inspector to each of the two newly established regions and remove the inspectors who had previously been assigned. They also intended to pay these chief inspectors more than what they were given by their predecessors (*The Straits Times*, 1901b).

Siamese Interior Minister Phraya Sri Sahathep arrived in Patani on October 23, 1901, bearing a paper that Tengku Abdul Kadir needed to sign. According to the document, the Sultan of Patani was to cede all of his powers to the Kingdom of Siam. Tengku Abdul Kadir declined to sign the document since it was written in Thai. However, Phraya Sri Sahathep had Tengku Abdul Kadir sign the incorrectly translated version after hiring a translator to translate it into Malay. Thereafter, Phraya Sri Sahathep went to Singapore and showed Swettenham the signed document as evidence that the Sultan of Patani had given up his rights. Upon learning that he had been duped, Tengku Abdul Kadir wrote to Bangkok to protest, but Siam disregarded him (Bunnag, 1977).

Swettenham was concerned about the letter that Tengku Abdul Kadir had dispatched to Singapore. In a letter to Bangkok dated November 20, 1901, Swettenham stated that the 1897 pact benefitted both Siam and the British Empire. He also noted that the treaty, which benefitted both parties, was now in jeopardy since Siam was unable to rule the Malay sultanates. Swettenham added that the inspectors dispatched to the area had only exacerbated the Malays' discontent and that Siam had failed to establish effective authority over the Malay sultanates. He claimed that Siam was not abiding by the conditions of the treaty and that, as a result, Malay rulers had begun looking for European assistance outside of the British (Koch, 1977).

Swettenham's letter to Bangkok prompted action from Siamese officials. Not long after Tengku Abdul Kadir sent his letter to Singapore, Phraya Sri Sahathep from the Siamese Interior Ministry arrived in Patani. In his meeting with Tengku Abdul Kadir, Phraya Sri Sahathep informed him that any complaints should be addressed directly to Bangkok. Tengku Abdul Kadir responded that he would be happy to provide copies of all his sent letters. As a result, all

the letters previously sent to Singapore were seized by Phraya Sri Sahathep and transported by boat to Bangkok (Davies, 1902).

Patani's Quest for British Mandate

The Malay sultanates under Siamese rule kept a careful eye on the region's economic advancements and the British Empire's growing power over several sultanates in the Malay Peninsula in the 1880s. Notably, a major economic shift was brought about by the British government's construction of railways throughout the peninsula (Anuar, 2018). Furthermore, from the 1870s onwards, the British began to recruit Tamil migrants from India to work in the mines as an alternative to the Chinese workforce. The Malay Peninsula's Indian population grew by 188% between 1870 and 1880. This development offered a less expensive source of labour, in addition to providing the Chinese with an alternative labour force (López, 2001). All of these elements contributed to events that brought in large sums of money for the British-occupied sultanates. Furthermore, the British were especially careful not to meddle with the Malays' beliefs and customs following the murder of James W. W. Birch, the first British Resident in Perak.

Inspectors dispatched by the Kingdom of Siam had taken over tax collection in Patani during this time and even started to interfere with the customs and religion of the Malay Muslims. Malay rulers were forced to seek British protection as a result of this circumstance. The British were asked to open an office in Patani by the Sultan of Patani in a joint meeting in August 1889 (*The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 1889). An article published on October 15, 1889, in London asserted that the Patani Sultanate wanted to become a British colony; this article was later discussed in newspapers in Penang and Singapore. The article stated the following about the issue:

This week's Pinang newspaper is talking about a London-based article that details the Patani people's wishes to be protected by the British Since Kedah only recently came under Siamese rule, it continues to be an independent sultanate in our eyes. However, Patani's situation is different. We are uncertain how long it has been under Siamese control. Therefore, the only course of action we can take for Patani is to adhere to the borders drawn several years ago through the efforts of Singapore, London, and Bangkok. We see the likelihood of Siam voluntarily allowing Patani to come under British control as extremely low. (*Straits Times Weekly Issue*, 1889)

The Bangkok administration replied fiercely to these charges made by the British publications. On October 28, 1889, *The Bangkok Times* (*The Straits Times*, 1889) expressed great surprise at the news published by the Penang newspapers that the Patani Sultanate under Siamese domination desired to come under British rule. According to the article, people who opposed Siam's supremacy over the Malay sultanates were probably the same ones pushing this absurd notion. The publication went on to state that the Sultan of Patani had just visited Bangkok with a number of his troops to pay bunga mas (tribute in the form of gold and silver trees). Consequently, it considered such a claim to be unjustified and irrational.

Siam's power over the Malay sultanates grew stronger with the signing of the secret treaty in 1897. The Malay monarchs, however, were troubled by this circumstance and regularly turned to British authorities for support. Swettenham wrote to London on January 10, 1899, to inform them that the Sultan of Patani had asked for British rule over Patani's territories (Suwannathat-Pian, 1984). However, these requests frequently had unfavourable outcomes and even increased tension with Siam. The events in Patani were mostly disregarded by the British government. British newspapers started disseminating erroneous information about the

situation in Patani, especially following the covert deal with Siam, which propagated the idea that Siam had ceased its tyranny and atrocities in the area (*The Straits Times*, 1900).

As Siamese pressure mounted in the early 20th century, the Patani sultans persisted in their pursuit of British support. Tengku Abdul Kadir repeatedly asked the British to take the Patani Sultanate under their protection in a letter to Swettenham dated August 31, 1901, but to no avail (Denudom & Hoadley, 2015). In addition to this failure, the Patani monarchs' attempt to gain British favour only served to inflame Siamese resentment. Siam was forced by this circumstance to look for a long-term solution in Patani.

The Siamese-Kelantan Treaty of 1902 and the Administrative Restructuring in Patani

After the Anglo-Siamese Secret Convention of 1897, the British, following a long hiatus, entirely left the administration of the Kelantan and Terengganu sultanates under the sovereignty of Siam. Siam, in turn, dispatched inspectors to these sultanates to enhance its control in governance. Nonetheless, this circumstance threatened British interests in the Malay Peninsula and infuriated the Malay rulers. As a result, the British started working to regain control of these Malay sultanates. Among these initiatives, arguably the most noteworthy was the endeavour of R.W. Duff.

R.W. Duff had worked for many years in the Malay sultanates under the British East India Company and, after retiring in 1900, established a company in his own name (*The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser (weekly)*, 1902). Following his retirement, Duff returned to Kelantan and held discussions with the Sultan of Kelantan. Observing that the Sultan wished to completely free himself from Siamese rule, Duff entered into an agreement with him. According to this agreement, in exchange for liberating Kelantan from total Siamese control, Kelantan's mines would be operated by Duff's company for a period of 40 years (Wannamethee, 2014). Following discussions in Kelantan, Duff travelled to England to seek political support for his efforts. His meetings proved successful, and the British decided to officially recognise his agreement with the Sultan of Kelantan since this would create a new opportunity for them to have Siam accept this agreement as a trade arrangement (Suwannathat-Pian, 1984).

King Chulalongkorn of Siam visited Singapore on March 8, 1902, and met with Swettenham to discuss the Malay sultanates' predicament. However, the meeting did not proceed smoothly. The Siamese king was threatened by Swettenham, who insisted that Siam accept the deal reached with Duff or the Malays would be enraged and rebel against Siam. Consequently, the Malay sultanates' destiny was completely in the hands of the British. Due to Duff's efforts, the long-standing British-Siamese border dispute, which had previously gained attention due to the Kroh mines, resurfaced. Beginning in March 1902, British-Siamese negotiations lasted for nearly the entire year. In the context of British-Siamese ties, the extent of negotiations over the Malay sultanates was unparalleled. Following protracted discussions, both the Siamese and British authorities agreed on the status of the sultanates of Kelantan and Terengganu in October 1902. Siam, however, declined to sign the deal with Patani, though it agreed to give Kelantan and Terengganu autonomy in their domestic issues while maintaining authority over their international affairs (Suwannathat-Pian, 1984).

Siam initially tried to convince the Malay rulers through pressure and discussions since it knew that the choice to establish complete control over Patani would cause a severe reaction from the Malays. The discussions with the British in 1902 concerning the Kelantan and Terengganu sultanates marked the beginning of these initiatives. Siam began by meeting with

the seven Malay rulers and pressuring them to sign papers giving it full control over their rights. Under duress, a few rulers, such as the Legeh region's administrator, agreed to hand over their rights to Siam by signing the documents. Meanwhile, Tengku Abdul Kadir was among the numerous Malay rulers who resisted such pressures (Koch, 1977).

The 1902 treaty fundamentally sealed the fate of Patani by creating a sharp divide in Siam's attitude towards the Malay sultanates. Kelantan and Terengganu gained internal autonomy to meet British demands, while Siam tightened its grip on Patani as compensation for these concessions. British connivance with Siam's refusal to include Patani in the treaty effectively sacrificed the sultanate in the broader Anglo-Siamese diplomatic bargain. The arrest and imprisonment of Tengku Abdul Kadir during these treaty negotiations in 1902 was part of Siam's calculated strategy to eliminate Malay resistance in Patani and appease British interests elsewhere. This disparate treatment shattered Patani's traditional governing structure, paving the way for its formal annexation and culminating in the 1909 treaty that finalised the territorial arrangements between Britain and Siam.

Pressures and Detentions against Malay Rulers

The Sai region's ruler, Tengku Mutaleb, was coerced by Bangkok to sign a document on February 8, 1902, handing over all rights to Siam. Two weeks later, on February 22, 1902, Tengku Abdul Kadir's home was visited in the evening by Phraya Sri Sahathep from Siam's Interior Ministry, who was accompanied by one hundred individuals. They insisted that Tengku Abdul Kadir give Bangkok the same privileges he had in Patani (Davies, 1902).

Phraya Sri Sahathep said he barely had five minutes to spare and declined Tengku Abdul Kadir's plea for a few days to consider the situation. Tengku Abdul Kadir thereupon declined to sign the document that was presented to him. Both he and Imam Haji Abdûllatif of the Tiga Mosque were subsequently taken to Singora by Phraya Sri Sahathep (Teeuw & Wyat, 1970). Tengku Abdul Kadir was detained for a while in Singora before being sent to Bangkok's Phitsanulok Prison.

The other Malay sultanates were extremely alarmed by the arrest of Tengku Abdul Kadir. In particular, the Sultan of Kelantan was worried that Siam may force him to sign a similar document (*The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 1902). King Chulalongkorn of Siam travelled to Singapore in March 1902 to discuss the state of affairs in the Malay sultanates. Although Swettenham sought for Tengku Abdul Kadir's release during this visit, according to King Chulalongkorn, Tengku Abdul Kadir was a Siamese Kingdom official and would be punished as well as not be allowed to leave since he had disobeyed the law and caused disorder (Suwannathat-Pian, 1984). Patani came under Siam's direct rule on March 6, 1902, when Tengku Abdul Kadir was imprisoned in Bangkok. After being held in Phitsanulok Prison for approximately 27 months, he accepted Siam's conditions and was released on March 5, 1904. Shortly after his release, he moved to Kelantan, marking the end of Malay rule in Patani.

In 1907, French pressure on Siam to cede some of its eastern territories prompted action from the British in the south. Long engaged in border disputes with Siam, the British expressed their intention to return to the negotiating table to seize territory from Siam. Siam, eager to resolve its longstanding issues with the British and relieve itself from pressure, engaged in negotiations with the British, beginning in 1907. After two years of negotiations, both parties reached an agreement on March 10, 1909. As per the terms of this treaty, the Patani territories were annexed by Siam, while Kedah, Kelantan, and Terengganu came under British sovereignty (Marzuqi, 2010).

Conclusion

The most significant factor shaping Patani-Siam relations from the late 19th century onwards was the establishment of colonies in the region by Western colonial powers, specifically the British and French. Through the lease of Penang Island and its straits, the establishment of Singapore, and the purchase of Malacca from the Dutch, the British began to establish themselves as a significant player in the area in the late 18th century. They then proceeded to start colonising the Malay Peninsula in the late 1800s. Internal strife in the Sultanates of Perak and Selangor was exploited by the British in 1874, and both were placed under their protection. During this period, they also gained access to tin mines in Patani, making their relations with the Patani Sultanate increasingly significant.

From the 1880s onward, the British accelerated their colonial activities, with the primary reason being to counter the beginning of French presence in the region through Vietnam and Cambodia. The British made considerable efforts to prevent the French from expanding their sphere of influence in the region and settling in the Malay Peninsula. Their attempts to colonise the Malay Peninsula were further pushed by the prospect of French protection for Siam. In the meantime, Patani was under constant pressure from Siam, which aimed to offset the territorial demands and pressures from both the British and the French. As a result of this pressure, Siam first forcibly stripped Malay rulers of their rights and then annexed the territory of Patani.

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