



For Immediate Release
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President Bush Meets with Prime Minister Samak of Thailand

Government House
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[In Focus: Asia](#)

7:51 P.M. (Local)

PRIME MINISTER SAMAK: We are pleased to welcome President Bush visit to Thailand on the auspicious occasion of the celebration of 175th anniversary of Thai-U.S. relations. As Thailand has now assumed the ASEAN chairmanship, we will use the opportunity to strengthen our engagement and cooperation with the U.S. both bilaterally and through ASEAN.

President Bush and I had just a very good discussion on several issues of common interest. We discussed the strengthening of the close military and the security cooperation which benefit both countries and the region. A case in point is our military close partnership during the tsunami and post-Cyclone Nargis to facilitate access of American relief and assistance to the effected countries.

We will continue our discussion on the other regional issues over the dinner this evening. President Bush expressed his appreciation for Thailand's humanitarian role in sheltering displaced persons from neighboring countries for over 30 years. I also thanked the President for the United States' understanding on the Preah Vihear issue.

We agreed to enhance the Thai-U.S. relation by focusing on education, public health, sciences, security and law enforcement cooperation. Our two countries share a long and special connection. President Bush -- former President Bush Senior and Mrs. Barbara Bush came to Thailand to pay tribute to His Majesty the King on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of accession to the throne in December 2006.

Looking towards the future we agreed that our alliance and friendship will remain firm and close as in the past 174 years, we need to continue working closely together to further strengthen our relationship and goodwill for the benefit of our two countries and the region.

PRESIDENT BUSH: Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister. Sawtdee Khrab. (Laughter.) Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister, for welcoming Laura and me, and our daughter, Barbara, to your beautiful country. I want to thank you very much for welcoming us on behalf of His Majesty the King and Her Majesty the Queen. We appreciate the opportunity to come back, and we honor the friendship that has been in existence for 175 years.

I want to thank you very much for being such a strong ally in the war against terror. Our nations are strengthening our security and defense cooperation. Thailand continues to host Cobra Gold, which is one of the largest annual multilateral training exercises in Southeast Asia.

Thailand's troops have helped the people of Iraq and Afghanistan as they battle extremists and strengthen their democracy, and I want to thank you for those contributions, Mr. Prime Minister. America and Thailand are coordinating our law enforcement, counterterrorism and counter-proliferation activities so we can do a better job of protecting our citizens from danger.



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The United States and Thailand are working to expand freedom with good governance. I want to thank you very much and congratulate the people of Thailand for restoring its democracy. Through the Asia Pacific Democracy Partnership, our nations are working together to strengthen democratic values and institutions throughout the region. As the Chair of ASEAN, we support your efforts to reduce trade barriers, and to expand economic opportunity, and help Southeast Asia grow in hope.

The United States and Thailand work together to fight disease. I don't think our citizens understand this, Mr. Prime Minister, but we've dedicated \$35 million to help prevent and treat HIV/AIDS here in Thailand, and we're happy to do so. Looking forward to going tomorrow to the clinic where we get to see the efforts of the initiative, it's called the Mercy Center -- and I appreciate you arranging that for me to go see, Mr. Prime Minister.

We're also working on avian flu. I think it's very important for our nations to prepare for the worst. Obviously, we're hoping for the best. And so we've got a good, strong initiative on avian flu.

We're working together to help the people of Burma. We responded very quickly when Burma was struck by the terrible cyclone, and I want to thank you very much for your leadership on that issue. After all, yours was the place where much of the world aid came to be distributed to the poor people there that were deeply affected by the storm.

We want to see prosperity and freedom restored to Burma. Tomorrow, Laura is going to the Thai-Burmese border to visit a resettlement camp where Burmese refugees are receiving health care and humanitarian aid. She's looking forward to the trip, and I'm looking forward to hearing her report from the trip.

So Mr. Prime Minister, I want to thank you very much for your hospitality. I want to thank you for feeding my delegation. (Laughter.) We're looking forward to eating some good Thai food -- which is very famous throughout the world. Please give my very best regards to His Majesty and Her Majesty.

PRIME MINISTER SAMAK: I will.

PRESIDENT BUSH: And thank you very much for being so gracious.

PRIME MINISTER SAMAK: All right. Thank you.

END 7:57 P.M. (Local)



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