

Joint Statement for the United States--Thailand Defense Strategic Talks

Building on nearly 180 years of relations and 60 years as security allies, senior delegations from the United States and the Kingdom of Thailand met today at the Pentagon to conduct the United States -- Thailand Defense Strategic Talks. The U.S. delegation was led by Assistant Secretary of Defense for Asia Pacific Security Affairs Mark Lippert. The Thai delegation was led by the Permanent Secretary of Defense General Thanongsak Apirakyothin. The Defense Strategic Talks are the two allies' premier forum for coordinating security policies and consulting on a wide array of security issues. These discussions reflect enduring American and Thai commitment to cooperation and consultation on security issues based on shared priorities and mutual respect. Both sides resolved to continue strengthening the alliance as a true 21st century partnership that aims to promote a peaceful, secure and prosperous region and contribute to global stability.

The Defense Strategic Talks were structured to facilitate discussion in four broad areas:

Both sides underscored their dedication to strengthen the Asia-Pacific security environment. The delegations emphasized the need for continued coordination on regional issues such as emerging threats to regional stability, transnational issues, maritime security and the situation on the Korean Peninsula.

The United States and Thailand underscored the importance of continuing to partner on contributions to regional and global security, including by building on successful cooperation on peacekeeping deployments, such as the Royal Thai Army's successful mission in Darfur; and on anti-piracy operations, such as the Royal Thai Navy's continuing leadership and deployments to the multinational Combined Task Force 151 in the Gulf of Aden. Both sides affirmed the importance of continuing to collaborate on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to improve regional capacity, building on the legacy of U.S.-Thai cooperation the wake of the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami and 2008 Cyclone Nargis.

Both delegations reaffirmed the importance of bilateral and multilateral interoperability and readiness, especially through world-class military exercises, sales of defense equipment and services and continuing military education and exchange programs. Both sides agreed to continue work on defense modernization to sustain high levels of interoperability which allow for advanced U.S.-Thai operations and exercises.

The U.S. and Thai delegations look forward to next steps for the alliance, including their commitment to continue senior defense dialogues and future senior defense official visits.

Both sides benefitted greatly from consultations on these topics of shared strategic interest. The Defense Strategic Talks augment existing coordination mechanisms such as the Thai-American Consultations (TAC), the Senior Staff Talks, and service-level staff talks. Taken together, these efforts reflect the commitment of both sides to sustain a robust level of senior leader engagement on security issues. To that end, the Thai Ministry of Defense agreed to host the next Defense Strategic Talks in Thailand in 2013.