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Letter from

Caretaker Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra to President George W Bush

Dated June 23, 2006



Office of the Prime Minister,  
Government House,  
BANGKOK.

23 June B.E. 2549 (2006)

Dear Mr. President,

I write to you on the basis of my high personal regard for you and for your leadership to explain the current political situation in Thailand, where I recently assumed responsibilities as caretaker Prime Minister. It is my goal to prepare the best possible democratic path for the next government following new national elections this fall.

There has been a threat to democracy in Thailand since early this year. Key democratic institutions, such as elections and the observance of Constitutional limitations on government, have been repeatedly undermined by interests that depend on creating chaos and mounting street demonstrations in Bangkok as a means to acquire political power that they cannot gain through winning elections. Having failed to provoke violence and disorder, my opponents are now attempting various extra-Constitutional tactics to co-opt the will of the people. If our democratic institutions prove strong over the next several months, these too will be unsuccessful.

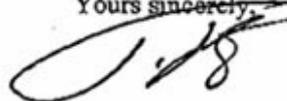
On April 2<sup>nd</sup>, my Party, Thai Rak Thai, won a convincing majority in country-wide elections. Having led Thailand's government for over five years and won decisive victories in two previous national elections, I was confident of strong popular support and the voters confirmed that view. My political opponents, because they knew they would again lose, boycotted the April elections and left the political situation in Thailand in deadlock. With the imminent celebration of the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our King's coronation, I could not responsibly allow this political stalemate to mar this historic occasion. In order to restore calm so that preparations for the royal celebration could proceed, I stepped aside to take a leave of absence, assigning my Deputy Prime Minister with acting executive responsibilities.

In keeping with their independent status, Thai courts have since annulled the April elections on technical considerations and ruled that a new national vote be scheduled, probably in mid-October. Most objective observers believe that my Party will again receive the people's mandate to form a government. In the meantime, I could not allow my country to drift without leadership. Our on-going war on terror must be prosecuted, our economy must be managed, and the basic functions of government must be carried out. For these reasons, I have heeded the calls of many Thais - both within my Party and among the opposition as well - to resume an active role as caretaker Prime Minister.

During this period, I want to assure you that I will take steps to help get the country ready for free and fair elections, and to work to shift the national debate from one that is emotionally charged to one that reasonably discusses the central questions of Thailand's future, including whether the country's political governance will be decided through the ballot box or in the street. The answer to that question, Mr. President, will have an important impact on the future course of democracy in Asia. I know that you agree with me that the rule of law and Constitutional order in Thailand and in Asia more broadly must prevail over demagoguery and mob action.

Finally, Mr. President, please accept my enduring confidence that the relationship between Thailand and the United States, based on shared democratic values and vital national interests, will only grow in the months and years ahead.

Yours sincerely,



(Thaksin Shinawatra)  
Prime Minister of Thailand