

THAILAND UPDATE**Gist of PM's Briefing on Thailand's Current Political Situation for Diplomatic Corps and Chambers of Commerce, Saturday May 29, 2010**

- **Overall Situation:** State of Emergency is still in place to stabilize the situation; although, the night time curfew has been lifted. Ratchaprasong area and Bangkok in general have returned to normalcy. Volunteer activities which illustrate Thai resilience and willingness to work together to move the country forward have been widely participated, for example, the Big Cleaning Day volunteer activity to clean up Bangkok streets in the aftermaths.
- **Independent Investigations:** There will be independent investigations on the events that took place over these last two months. Due process of law in terms of criminal prosecution and court cases will proceed without any interference. And of course, we will need all the help we can, in terms of the gathering of facts and evidence. We would do it in a manner as open and transparent as possible as far as information on all the events is concerned.
- **Short-Term Relief Measures:** At this level, the RTG is stabilizing the situation and providing short term measures to assist those affected by the protests.
- On May 25, 2010, the Cabinet has approved emergency measures to compensate victims over the last couple of months, authorize aid to individuals, provide grants, low-cost loans to business, and funds to help pay for employee wages and leases, among other initiatives. Arrangement for continued consultation and a special committee set up by the Cabinet headed by Secretary-General Korbsak Sabhavasut have also been put in place to alleviate the impact on those who have been laid off, lost their shops and locations to do their business due to the events.
- **Long-Term Process of Reconciliation:** PM recognizes the need to rebuild the social and economic compact between people and the government. We recognize that psychological rehabilitation must be done nation-wide, and we intend to do this with as much participation as possible. We will convene assemblies, asking people about their needs and wishes. All sectors of society and all networks of people at all levels, are invited to join in – whether at the village level, local authorities, NGOs, volunteers, civil society, and of course all machinery of the government. The entire nation will go through this painful learning process together. We recognize that its success will very much depend on the degree of participation, which we are encouraging from all sides.
- Legitimate grievances of rural poor such as the problem of social injustices is recognized and is the most important mission of the RTG to systematically and participatory resolve. PM believes that his proposed five-point reconciliation plan could serve as a basis of this resolution.
- **O&A session:**
- **Independent Investigations:** After April 10, the Prime Minister's Office set up a committee to collect information and evidence concerning various events. But this committee would not be seen as an independent committee as such. RTG is approaching people to comprise an independent commission to investigate the various events. At the

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same time, the Human Rights Commission of Thailand, an independent organization, has set up two sub-committees to look into these events. The opposition has also lodged their complaints to the National Anti-Corruption Commission, also an independent organization, on these matters. RTG will set up another one. PM cannot specify the timeframe, but when that commission is set up, he will ask for their views. We want this as quickly as possible and at the same time we should not make time too much of a constraint as we have to be thorough. We have to strike the right balance and it is best to hear from people who conduct the investigation themselves.

- **Early Elections:** PM reiterates that the RTG also recognizes feeling of the supporters of the opposition party and has not ruled out early elections. However, given the ways things turn out, November 14, 2010 as the proposed early election date seems unlikely. More time will be needed to build up three basic conditions for early election; (1) economic recovery to 4-5% growth ; (2) agreement and consensus from all political parties on the constitution and elections rules; and (3) peaceful election environment.

- **Public Demonstrations:** PM assures that Thailand will strictly utilize democratic process, rule of law and written constitution in an open and transparent manner in order to resolve its political problems and changes. The RTG is working to build up applicable law and better-equipped police force so that it does not need military to step in for security purposes. The cabinet will table a draft law on public demonstration to the Parliament similar to Public Order Act in the UK.

- **Economy:** If something like this had happened in the past, people would probably, immediately think of a coup d'état around the corner. This time around everybody is determined that the situation could be resolved through parliamentary and democratic process. Despite instability of governments, we now have a clear process written down in the Constitution as to how political changes might occur. Despite differences and divisions, all political parties support open economy and believe that the exports, tourism income, and FDI will continue to be a vital part of our growth. The RTG is putting in place mechanisms and regulations to provide better communication and to continue cooperative and investment projects that have been disrupted by the events.

PM to Send a Special Envoy to the US

- PM will send Mr. Kiat Sitheearmorn, President of Thailand Trade Representative, as his special envoy to the US from June 9-15, 2010. PTTR Kiat plans to be in Washington, DC from June 9-12 to explain about the situation in Thailand and the recent dislodging of protesters in Bangkok. He plans to meet US high ranking administration officials, members of Congress, private sector, think tanks and academics, NGOs, and members of the media. He will travel to New York City from June 12-15 to meet high ranking UN officials, civil society, and the press.

- PTTR Kiat has played an active role advising the Board of Trade of Thailand in proposing policies and strategies related to trade and investment to various government agencies. He has also advised Thai Parliament's House and Senate Committees in the areas of Commerce, Foreign Affairs, Agriculture, Science, Technology and Environment, and Banking and Financial institutions. PTTR Kiat is a graduate in business management, Harvard Business School and has earned Masters of Arts in international affairs from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University.