

THAILAND UPDATE**Foreign Minister Kasit Piromya visits the US, his first since the “Red Shirt” incident**

- Foreign Minister Kasit will visit New York and Washington, DC, this week. He is scheduled to hold talks with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, USTR Ron Kirk, Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg, Deputy Secretary of Defense William Lynn, Rep. Howard Berman, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Senator Jim Webb (D-VA), and other key members of Congress.
- With members of US Administration and Congress, FM Kasit is expected to raise bilateral and regional issues such as the Third Strategic Dialogue between Thailand and the US, Thai political and economic situations, key trade issues, defense cooperation, ASEAN, and other regional issues.
- While in Washington, DC, FM Kasit will attend a Business Roundtable co-hosted by USABC and Asia Society. Finance Minister Korn Chatikavanij will join the Business Roundtable as part of Thailand’s economic roadshow, an effort to promote understanding and cooperation with the business community in the US. Mr. Korn is expected to address interests and field questions from the US companies with strong trade ties with and investment in Thailand.
- FM Kasit will deliver a keynote speech at his alma mater Georgetown University titled “Thailand-US Partnership: Re-engaging the US in Southeast Asia. FM Kasit will convene an Embassy’s Team Thailand meeting and meet members of the Thai community from greater Washington, DC, Maryland, Virginia area on Friday.
- In New York, FM Kasit will deliver a speech, titled “Why ASEAN Matters” at the Asia Society. He will join a reception with Permanent Representatives to the UN of ASEAN + 6 countries (China, India, Japan, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand) as well as meet Mr. William C. Dudley, Chairman of New York Federal Reserve Bank.

Bangkok returns to normalcy after a period of political conflict

- Since an emergency situation was declared in Bangkok on April 12, 2009 in response to demonstrations by the United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship (UDD) or the “red shirts,” the situation has now returned to normal. The demonstrations had been called off and most of the demonstrators had returned to their homes.
- The Thai Government has deemed it necessary to remain vigilant to ensure that the situation in Bangkok remains calm. The emergency situation will remain in effect for the time being, and the Government will closely review the situation. Be that as it may, this should not disrupt people in their normal activities.
- In the incident, there were 135 injured, 45 of whom were admitted into 13 hospitals. There were two deaths due to clashes between UDD protesters and local people who came out to oppose them, and it has been confirmed by forensic and medical evidence that these were not caused by weapons used by the military.
- Legal actions will be taken against those who broke the law on the basis of non-discrimination and justice for all concerned. Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva has reiterated his readiness to listen to people’s views regarding democracy as well as to invite all interested parties to discuss political problems to find appropriate ways out of the current political conflict for the benefit of all Thais.
- The Government has requested that a joint sitting of the National Assembly be convened on 22-23 April 2009 as a venue for the Government to take views and clarify the situation and its operations.

Islamic Committee of Bangkok asks United Arab Emirates to terminate shelter to Pol. Lt. Col. Thaksin Shinawatra

- In an unprecedented action following the recent violence against Thai Muslims in Bangkok by the “Red Shirts,” the Islamic Committee of Bangkok delivered an opened letter dated April 14, 2009, to Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to Thailand, calling for the Ambassador to convey to the Ruler of Dubai that Thaksin Shinawatra, former Prime Minister of Thailand, has instigated unrest among Thai people which resulted in hatred and division among Thai people and that UAE stop providing shelter to Thaksin Shinawatra. The former Prime Minister is convicted and sentenced to a prison term in a conflict of interest court case.

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