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Joint statement between the United States of America and the Kingdom of Thailand

George W Bush; Thaksin Shinawatra

December 14, 2001

President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra today reaffirmed the strength and vitality of the alliance between the United States and Thailand, celebrating a mature partnership that spans many fields of endeavor, based on a shared commitment to democracy, open markets with free and fair trade, human rights, and ethnic and religious tolerance. Noting U.S.-Thai cooperation in conflicts from World War II to the war on terrorism, the President and the Prime Minister expressed the conviction that the alliance has been a pillar of stability in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. The two leaders agreed that the scourges of terrorism, narcotics trafficking, and other transnational threats demonstrate the continued need for a robust alliance into the 21st century. Highlighting their vibrant program of joint military exercises and training, including co-hosting the largest multilateral military exercise in Asia every year, the two leaders emphasized their determination to strengthen and revitalize the alliance, while working with partners throughout the region to combat common threats. The two leaders agreed on the importance of a strong and united ASEAN, and President Bush offered all appropriate assistance to support capacity-building within ASEAN. The two leaders pledged to continue cooperation in promoting regional peace and stability through the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).

President Bush expressed appreciation for the Thai Government's support for the campaign against terrorism, including efforts to identify terrorist assets and money flows, reinforce money-laundering legislation, and pass new anti-terrorism measures. The two leaders pledged continued collaboration on money laundering in the Asia-Pacific Group and the Egmont Group, and expressed determination to expand counterterrorism cooperation further through new programs such as the Terrorist Interdiction Program. President Bush welcomed Prime Minister Thaksin's commitment to sign all counter-terrorism conventions as soon as possible in accordance with the constitutional process in Thailand and praised the Prime Minister's leadership in signing and implementing UNSCR 1373. President Bush further welcomed the Prime Minister's offer to participate in the reconstruction of Afghanistan, noting Thailand's successful leadership of peacekeeping operations in East Timor. To further enhance Thailand's peacekeeping capabilities, President Bush announced that Thailand would continue to be a priority country for receipt of assistance and training through the Enhanced International Peacekeeping Capability Program.

President Bush expressed strong appreciation for Prime Minister Thaksin's outstanding leadership in combating narcotics and promoting quadrilateral counternarcotics cooperation among neighboring countries. The two leaders discussed cooperative efforts to fight drug abuse and trafficking, noting that Thailand hosts one of the largest and most successful U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) operations in the world. After nearly four

decades of close cooperation, the U.S.-Thai partnership on counternarcotics continues to expand and mature, as characterized by the successful DEA-sponsored Sensitive Investigative Unit program, and by ongoing training and relationships between the U.S. Pacific Command and the Thai counternarcotics units. The primary mission of U.S. and Thai counternarcotics assets is to stop the transnational flow of heroin and methamphetamine, which Prime Minister Thaksin has established as his number one national security priority.

The two leaders highlighted the major contribution that the U.S.-Thai International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in Bangkok has made to enhancing the effectiveness of regional cooperation against drug trafficking and transnational crime. Noting that over 2,000 criminal justice professionals from Asia have been trained at ILEA since its joint establishment in 1998, the two leaders were pleased to announce that they have identified a permanent site for the ILEA training facility in Bangkok and will be cooperating closely to develop the site and further expand ILEA's activities.

Underscoring their strong mutual commitment to open markets as the basis for expanding economic relations, the leaders endorsed the Framework for Economic Cooperation, signed by Secretary of State Powell and Foreign Minister Surakiart. The Framework is an expression of resolve to intensify the rich economic relationship between the United States and Thailand and addresses opportunities for future cooperation in trade and investment, intellectual property protection, transportation, education, telecommunications and the environment. Moreover, the Framework also highlights Thailand's commitment to customs reform and broad liberalization of civil aviation, progress that would pave the way for Thailand's further emergence as a regional aviation center and cargo hub. Prime Minister Thaksin emphasized Thailand's openness to foreign direct investment and continued commitment to liberalization and reform. The two leaders acknowledged the continuing vitality of the Treaty of Amity and Economic Relations as a catalyst for increased bilateral trade and investment. In the spirit of the long history of warm relations between their nations, the two leaders resolved to work closely to expand trade bilaterally, regionally, and globally, particularly in the context of the Doha Development Agenda.

President Bush recognized Prime Minister Thaksin's role in promoting closer economic cooperation, both ASEAN-wide and among Thailand's immediate neighbors, and praised Thailand's commitment to the ASEAN Free Trade Area.

To deepen U.S. ties to both the public and private sectors in Thailand, and in recognition of Bangkok's significance as a regional hub, President Bush announced that the U.S. Trade and Development Agency (TDA) will open a regional office in Thailand in January 2002. This office will work to support the development and financing of priority infrastructure projects in Thailand and throughout the region. The President and the Prime Minister reaffirmed a commitment to continue to address a range of economic development issues through the work of the Kenan Institute Asia, a public-private partnership supported by both governments. Kenan will continue to support programs to strengthen Thailand's economic competitiveness, including its Business Advisory Center for small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Both leaders also committed to continue addressing critical needs in education, including through development of a community college system and expansion of

successful educational and cultural exchange programs, including the Fulbright and Peace Corps programs.

Both leaders affirmed their shared commitment to protect the environment and agreed that the two countries would soon sign an agreement to establish a Tropical Forest Conservation Fund, which would enable cooperation under the U.S. Tropical Forest Conservation Act (TFCA) of 1998. TFCA provides for the cancellation of a portion of concessional debt owed to the United States in exchange for a commitment to make local currency payments to support domestic forest conservation activities. To further enhance cooperative efforts on the environment, the two leaders agreed that the United States and Thailand would co-host, and the Trade and Development Agency (TDA) would fund, a conference to promote better water management policies, reduce water pollution, and increase water supply in Thailand and throughout the region. TDA looks forward to working with the Thai Government to fund additional environmentally-- sound projects in Thailand.

President Bush and Prime Minister Thaksin celebrated the substantial achievements of more than 50 years of institutional, collaboration involving the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the U.S.-Thai Armed Forces Research Institute of Medical Sciences, and the Ministry of Public Health on a wide variety of tropical and infectious diseases, including HIV/AIDS. Citing Thailand as a model for other countries, President Bush congratulated Prime Minister Thaksin for the success of Thailand's programs in dramatically reducing the levels of HIV/AIDS infection. The leaders praised the unique bilateral collaboration to develop vaccines for prevention of HIV/AIDS and welcomed the plan to hold the world's largest HIV vaccine efficacy trial in 2002. President Bush and Prime Minister Thaksin welcome Thailand's inclusion in the Leadership and Investment in Fighting an Epidemic (LIFE) initiative, which is being implemented through the CDC's Global AIDS program and which will complement the research CDC and the Thai Ministry of Public Health have been pursuing jointly since 1990.

To reinforce the mature partnership between their two countries, President Bush and Prime Minister Thaksin pledged to continue regular and close consultations and strengthen cooperation for the mutual benefit of both countries and peoples.