

Ambassador Pisan's letter to the Editor of The Washington Post

On 21 February 2015, Ambassador Pisan sent a letter to the Editor of The Washington Post in response to the latter's editorial published the day before. The text of his letter appears as follows:

Dear Editor,

Your 20 February editorial "Thailand's rule by force" grossly misrepresents actual situation in the country.

Thailand has not wavered in its commitment to democracy. Progress is being made consistent with the announced Roadmap. The drafting and consultation process of the new Constitution must by law be completed by September. After its enactment and that of necessary organic laws, Thailand will hold multi-party elections early next year. To prejudge the new Constitution's contents or even presume a referendum will not be held is not appropriate. The talk of election delay was precisely in anticipation of necessary time to organize a referendum.

As with every country, Thailand has to balance protection of national security with respect for civil liberty. Hence, martial law is necessary to maintain environment conducive to public safety and reconciliation. Fed up with prolonged street protests and random violence, the Thai public is not affected by this act of deterrence. Martial law will however have to be lifted before elections to allow vibrant and participatory campaigning.

There is no political prisoner in Thailand, and ex-premier Yingluck Shinawatra will be accorded with courtesy and due process of law in Thailand's respected Supreme Court.

Thailand's goal is to achieve a democratic rule without major flaws – particularly when it comes to good governance, transparency and accountability – as seen in the recent past. Meanwhile, bills to further improve human rights protection such as on anti-human trafficking and child pornography are being pushed into law.

Thailand looks forward to working with the U.S. to advance our mutual interests in fighting extremism, supporting human security, global health security, climate change and many more.

Yours sincerely,

Pisan Manawapat

Ambassador of the Kingdom of Thailand to the United States