

THAI KING'S PASSING AND CHINA-THAI RELATIONS

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EAI Background Brief No. 1183

Executive Summary

1. Thailand is one of the few countries in the world to be both a close partner of the Chinese and an ironclad ally of the Americans. The Thais are also friendly with the Japanese, hosting a large portion of their foreign direct investments or FDIs.
2. The advantage that Bangkok currently has with its diplomacy with China is its non-involvement in any territorial disputes with the Chinese.
3. Thai Chinese have also been welcomed and successfully integrated into Thai society, especially the Teochew people.
4. Beijing is careful not to stir up ill feelings and to preserve goodwill amongst Thai Chinese and indigenous Thai people.
5. Bangkok's Chinatown is doing well and tourism from China and other ethnic societies appears to be a testament of its success. Chinese tourism to Thailand has been boosted by a Thai initiative to reduce visa barriers.
6. China's expertise offered through the One Belt, One Road and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank will be useful for people to people connectivity.
7. Chinese merchants and business associations associated with Bangkok's Chinatown have become unofficial ambassadors to Chinese investors to continue to invest in Thailand despite the 2014 military coup and monarchical succession.
8. China is Thailand's largest trading partner. The Chinese are also major investors in Thailand and eyeing the country's high speed railway project.
9. Thailand also hopes that the two countries can participate in food industrial and processing parks and infrastructure so as to go into higher value-added high-tech food processing business.

10. Perhaps the most important aspect of China-Thai relations is the personal bonds that were forged between members of the Thai royal family and the Chinese elite leadership over the years. Thai King's passing is not likely to have any major impact on this bilateral relationship.