

# WikiLeaks cables: You ask, we search - Thai royals in connection with the 2006 coup

Tuesday 14 December 2010, by [KINGSLEY Patrick](#) (Date first published: 13 December 2010).

**We [Guardian] asked last week what we should look for among the leaked US embassy cables. A user asked for mention of the Thai royals in connection with the 2006 coup.**

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The Queen of Thailand encouraged the 2006 ousting of former prime minister and Manchester City owner Thaksin Shinawatra, US dispatches from October 2008 allege.

Queen Sirikit was indirectly “responsible for the 2006 coup d’etat”, according to Samak Sundaravej, one of Thaksin’s successors as prime minister from January to September 2008, according to US diplomats. Samak also claimed, the cable writers add, that Sirikit had a hand in the “ongoing turmoil generated by PAD protests”, a reference to the mass protests by the royalist People’s Alliance for Democracy which have contributed to the downfall of several Thaksin-associated governments since 2006.

Sirikit is the wife of King Bhumibol, the world’s longest-serving current monarch. As a member of the royal family she is in theory expected to be politically neutral.

The cable appears to add to rumours of the scale of Sirikit’s political involvement. While the queen had long been suspected of favouring the PAD, the only significant evidence of her support came when she attended the October 2008 funeral of a PAD protestor, Angkhana Radappanyawut.

Samak alleged the queen “operated through privy council president Prem Tinsulanonda who, along with others presenting themselves as royalists, worked with the PAD and other agitators”, according to a report by US ambassador Eric John, within a cable from October 2008.

There is no mention in the cables of any coup involvement by King Bhumibol himself. But an earlier dispatch written in the week following the coup states Bhumibol called the leaders of the coup to his palace for a meeting the evening after Thaksin was ousted and was “happy, smiling throughout”.

A subsequent cable also claims Bhumibol explicitly ordered Anuphong Paochinda, commander-in-chief of the Thai armed forces, not to launch a coup in November 2008 against the then prime minister Somchai Wongsawat. Bhumibol also expressed irritation at PAD protests, the cable alleges.

Further reports on Thailand from the leaked cables will be published by the *Guardian* later in the week.

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\* <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/blog/2010/dec/13/wiki-leaks-you-ask-we-search>