



Thailand

ABAC Poll Research Center, Assumption University

Globalization and Trade

Thais generally view globalization favorably and believe that international trade benefits their country's economy and companies, as well as both workers and consumers.

- Three-quarters (75%) of respondents in Thailand call globalization “mostly good” for their country.
- Most Thais think international trade is good for their economy (79%) and for Thai companies (70%).
- Strong majorities also say trade benefits individual Thais: 65% say it helps consumers in their country and raises their standard of living (59%). About three out of four say international trade is good for creating jobs in Thailand (74%) and nearly two out of three say it helps keep Thai jobs secure (64%).
- Fewer Thais believe that trade is good for the environment, though this is the most common view by 45% to 35%.
- 69% say “minimum standards for protection of the environment” should be included in trade agreements.
- Thais have somewhat mixed opinions about what their government should do if the World Trade Organization rules against it on a complaint: 34% say it should comply as a general rule, while 17% say it should not and 25% believe it depends.

Climate Change

Most Thais agree that global warming is a problem that needs to be addressed and believe that improving the environment should be an important foreign policy goal.

- Nearly seven in 10 (68%) say measures should be taken to deal with climate change, including 41% who consider global warming a gradual problem requiring only low cost measures and 27% who say it should be addressed quickly “even if this involves significant costs.”
- Thais believe overwhelmingly (83%) that “improving the global environment” should be one of their government’s foreign policy goals.
- Thais tend to favor (49% to 9%) a deal requiring developing nations to limit carbon emissions in return for foreign aid but nearly half (43%) declined to answer.

Genocide and Darfur

The Thai public supports a UN right to authorize the use of force to stop genocide, though less than other publics polled. Many appear to be uninformed about the situation in Darfur.

- A majority of Thais (62%) believe the Security Council has the right to use force in order to prevent human rights violations such as genocide. This is the lowest level of support among the 12 publics polled. But only 23% are opposed and 15% do not answer.
- A plurality (44%) thinks the Security Council has the “responsibility” to authorize military action to stop genocide, though 22% do not and 33% decline to answer.
- Asked about intervention in the case of Darfur, Thais show high levels of uncertainty: 34% say the Security Council has either the right (17%) or the responsibility (17%) to authorize the use of force in Darfur. Only 12% say the UN does not. But more than half of those polled (54%) declined to answer.
- Thais are evenly divided about whether their troops should participate in an international peacekeeping force to stop the killings in Darfur: 37% say no, 35% yes.

Future of the United Nations

Thais feel strengthening the UN is important and are among those most in favor of a UN standing peacekeeping force. Their support for other new UN powers is more modest.

- Four in five Thais see “strengthening the UN” as a very (45%) or somewhat (34%) important foreign policy goal.
- Nearly three-quarters of Thais (73%) support a standing UN peacekeeping force, one of the largest majorities in all countries polled.
- A majority (52%) supports a UN right to go into countries to investigate human rights violations.
- Pluralities support measures that would permit the UN to impose a small tax on international arms or oil sales (48% to 29%) and regulate the international arms trade (44% to 37%).
- Thais feel the UN Security Council should have the right to authorize the use of force to stop countries from supporting terrorist groups (71%), to defend a country that has been attacked (67%) and to stop genocide (62%).
- Thais (46% to 29%) lean toward the view that the Security Council should have the right to authorize the use of force to restore a democratic government that has been overthrown.
- A slight majority of Thais (52%) believe the Security Council should have the right to authorize the use of force to prevent new countries from acquiring nuclear weapons and a larger one (59%) thinks it has the right to do so to prevent a country from producing nuclear fuel that could be used to produce weapons.
- Thais tend to agree (48% to 25%) they should work within the United Nations even if this means their government would have to compromise on preferred policies.
- Thais show warm feelings (average 71°) towards the United Nations and very warm feelings toward the World Health Organization (81°). They feel slightly less favorably toward the World Court (66°).

US Leadership

Thais tend to believe the United States should adopt a cooperative approach in world affairs. Many do not trust the United States to act responsibly.

- Only 18% think the US should withdraw from most international efforts and very few (8%) say it should continue to be the preeminent world leader. Nearly half of Thai respondents (47%) say that the United States should do its share in cooperative efforts with other countries.
- A majority of Thais (56%) say they do not trust the United States to act responsibly in the world, including 32% who do not trust it “at all.”
- Nearly half (49%) say the United States fails to take their country’s interests into account when making foreign policy, though 23% disagree.
- Thai opinion is mixed about whether the United States should maintain or change the number of its overseas military bases: 25% say it should have fewer bases, 18% the same number, 16% more. But 41% declined to answer.
- Views are similarly mixed about the issue of whether the US military presence in East Asia increases or decreases stability in the region: 25% say it increases stability, 16% decreases, and 19% neither. But 40% decline to answer.
- The most common view in Thailand is that relations with the United States are improving (37%), although significant numbers (28%) believe they are getting worse. Only 10% say relations are staying about the same.

Rise of China

Thais tend to believe that China’s economy will eventually catch up with the United States’ economy and they lean toward a positive view of this. They have warm feelings toward China but do not trust it.

- A plurality (39%) of Thais believe that China’s economy will reach the size of the United States’ while only 16% believe that the US economy will always be larger than China’s. Many would not answer (45%).
- Thais tend to see China’s economic rise as mostly positive (34%) or equally positive and negative (25%). Few see it as negative (10%).
- Thais express on average warm feelings toward China (73°). They feel equally warmly about Japan (73°) but slightly cooler toward the United States (69°).
- A majority of Thais do not think China can be trusted to act responsibly in the world (59%) but they feel the same way about Japan (60%) and the United States (56%).
- Modest majorities think that neither China (53%) nor Japan (51%) takes Thailand’s interests into account when making foreign policy. A plurality thinks so about the United States (49% to 23%).
- Pluralities say that relations with both China (48%) and Japan (47%) are improving, while only one-quarter (24% in both cases) say they are worsening and very few that they are staying the same (3% both).
- Thais believe that China and Japan have about equal influence in the world, giving both 6.9 on a 10-point scale. Like most other countries, Thais see the United States as having the most influence in the world, giving it an 8.3.
- Majorities favor entering into free trade agreements with China (61%), as well as Japan (63%), and the United States (60%).