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A Century of Challenged Democracy in Thailand

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Abstract

Thai democracy is stuck in a dialectical process of two competing political orders, pitting the Cold War-raised establishment and its associated interests and institutions against an inchoate order unleashed during the Thaksin years. The constellation of institutions and interests that took root during state-building processes in the Cold War is incompatible with the post-Cold War demands and dynamics of an awakened citizenry catalyzed by advancement in information technology, international norms of democracy and demographic patterns. The inherent tension between a Cold War monarchy-centered hierarchy and bottom-up democratic expectations of the early 21st century can only be reconciled through mutual accommodation.