

Behind palace and other walls

Earlier in the week I took the liberty of pointing out a few [interesting parts](#) of Burma that are visible on WikiMapia's satellite imagery. There has been some subsequent interest in what we can learn about other countries in mainland Southeast Asia from these types of images.

Where to start? The average *New Mandala* reader has at least some exposure to Thailand so I figure that a quick survey of some of that country's interesting sites is probably in order.

My inclination is to begin by looking for places that I know exist because I have seen their front gate, or read about them elsewhere. Thailand has a huge number of military bases, palaces and other premises that fit those general criteria.

In a quick exploration of Thailand from above it is possible to peek inside the [Phuaping Palace](#) on Doi Suthep near Chiang Mai, [Bang Pa-In Palace](#) at Ayutthaya, [Chitralada Palace](#) in Bangkok, and the [Klai Kangwon Palace](#) in Hua Hin. It is also possible to zoom in on Thai military installations, such as the [5th Special Forces](#) base on the road outside Mae Rim, the military airport at [Don Meuang](#), and the [naval bases](#) at Sattahip. There is a house at a golf course development outside Chiang Mai that is marked as "[Prime Minister Thaksin's Mansion](#)", a [handsome compound](#) near Bangkok is attributed to veteran politician Banharn Sipla-archa, and with a bit of hunting it is also possible to pin-point Privy Council Chairman General Prem Tinsulanonda's [famous residence](#).

And there is much more...

Around the borders of Thailand there are very clear shots of the "[Golden Triangle](#)" (with the Paradise Casino on Burmese soil), the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army [base](#) across the river north of Mae Sot, the [Chulabhorn Naval Base](#) in the deep south, and the [2nd Thai-Lao Friendship Bridge](#) between Mukdahan and Savannakhet back when it was still under construction.

In the heart of Bangkok we can zoom right in on this [bustling area](#) and it is even possible to get right down to [roof level](#) in sleepier parts of the country.

It is simply amazing what can be seen on these high resolution images. I expect that many of you have your own places of interest to point out. Please feel free to identify any particularly interesting coordinates in your comments.

Finally, it strikes me that there must be a number of important research agendas that could be fruitfully pursued in conjunction with some of these images.