



WORDS

of

WISDOM

WORDS OF WISDOM:

SELECTED IMPORTANT POLICY
STATEMENTS BY FOREIGN MINISTERS
IN THE 20TH CENTURY

On the Occasion of the 150th Anniversary
of the Foundation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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FOREWORD

*To defend ourselves the only weapons on which we can
fully rely are our intelligence and negotiating skill*

King Mongkut, 4 March 1867

The twentieth century will be remembered as a century of wars. There were two world wars, a cold war, many regional wars and conflicts, as well as numerous civil wars in all the corners of the globe. Asia as a whole and Southeast Asia in particular witnessed several of these wars and conflicts and experienced the devastation wrought by them right up to the end of the century. Thailand, located at the center of mainland Southeast Asia, could not escape these wars and conflicts. It was drawn into both World Wars and wars in Korea and Indochina. But, although it did not escape unscathed, it managed to survive all the turmoil relatively better than many other nations under similar circumstances.

Many observers would point out that Thailand could have done so because it could adapt easily to changing global and regional situations. For the subscribers of the “Bamboo Diplomacy” theory, it was clearly evident in Thailand’s

changing policy to suit the changing trends and circumstances throughout the period. Thai leaders and diplomats were continuously practicing King Mongkut's dictum quoted above by using their "intelligence and negotiating skill," which are reflected in their thinking, analysis, and policy as expressed in their public statements.

So, on the occasion of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs celebrating the 150th anniversary of its foundation in 2025, the International Studies Center (ISC) would like to present a selection of important policy statements from five Ministers of Foreign Affairs who played a significant role in Thailand's international affairs and diplomacy in the 20th century. The statements were selected randomly but they all reflect the Ministers' ideas and Thailand's positions and initiatives on major foreign policy issues, such as peace and security, regionalism, development and human rights, that remain the foundation or the cornerstone of Thailand's foreign policy to the present day.

The International Studies Center (ISC) hopes that this publication will help to strengthen the public's understanding of Thailand's foreign policy as well as to serve as a source of material on Thailand's foreign policy analysis. Lastly, following the ISC's practice, editorial changes were made only when necessary or prudent and the spelling was kept to the original texts.

International Studies Center

February 2025

LUANG PRADIST MANUDHARM
(PRIDI BANOMYONG)



Luang Pradist Manudharm (Pridi Banomyong)

Minister of Foreign Affairs

February 1935 - December 1938

FOREIGN POLICY OF SIAM

UNIMPAIRED BALANCE IN WORLD FRIENDSHIPS IS
WATCHWORD OF SIAMESE FOREIGN POLICY

In its international policy, the Government of Siam wishes to maintain the valued bond of scrupulously equal friendship with every foreign power having relations with our country. It was on the basis of this sound policy that Siam first launched on a career of modernization years ago, and it must be emphasized that the advent of the new form of government does not mark any departure from this time-honored policy of international amity.

The world is passing through most momentous days in international intercourse, and modern scientific inventions, which provide us with better facilities for transport and communications, have served to bring the far-flung family of nations much closer together than ever before. Nevertheless, world amity and goodwill are threatened in many parts of the civilized world and the situation today remains tense

with suspense and anxiety. But during all these days of generally strained international relations, one may claim with just pride and satisfaction that Siam is among the few nations of the world that have been able to maintain unimpaired balance in world friendships. And that is an especially remarkable achievement, considering the fact that during the past four years, this country has been passing through a period of vital transition from an absolute monarchy to a modern form of government under a Constitution.

In progressing through this vital political transition, Siam is confronted with the most significant task of effecting appropriate reorganization in various phases of nation life and in promoting the nation's political, economic and social advancement. With a much wider horizon of nationhood and international understanding, the New Siam seeks more earnestly than ever before the friendship, goodwill, assistance and co-operation of the entire world. In common with every other progressively inclined country in the world, the national policy of Siam will be dictated by the interests of Siam and the Siamese but, in its foreign policy, the Siamese Government will always endeavor to foster the relations of peace, goodwill and mutual benefit among all the nations of the world.

The Government of Siam is fully cognizant of the geographical and political position of Siam in this part of the world, and it is our principle to maintain equal friendliness in our relations with all foreign powers on the

basis of these considerations. Siam does not, and will not favor any nation or any country in particular; and she does not, and will not, grant any special rights or privileges to one country to the detriment of any other country. Foreigners resident in, or with interests in Siam have always been afforded equal protection and equal treatment by the Government and the people of Siam.

During the recent tour, I had an opportunity of seeing and studying the latest trends in political and economic developments in various countries, and it has been gratifying to realize that the name of Siam is now better known among the world public than it used to be some years ago. In 1932, when the change of government in Siam was carried out in a most peaceful manner, the world press and public hailed the event as the “Bloodless Revolution in Bangkok,” and lauded it as the most remarkable episode in the history of the world. Since then, of course, our country has come through a series of political events characteristic of a transitionary period, but the calm and peaceful manner in which Siam has surmounted all these crucial moments has served to inspire confidence and trust in us.

In Great Britain, Siam has a trusted and powerful friend. Britain and Britons have contributed a most valuable share in the modernization of Siam. British dominions and colonies, which partly surround the Kingdom of Siam, have maintained good neighborly relations with us for years. The

entire world turns to London as the center of world finance and, in the matter of her foreign financial operations, Siam maintains the best of relations with London. In her recent conversion loan and in the fact that her Currency and Treasury Reserves are kept in British securities, Siam pays a glowing tribute to the undoubted regard the world holds for the financial stability and prestige of Great Britain.

In regard to our relations with France, it is a matter of heartfelt satisfaction that the passage of time has removed the difficulties and misunderstanding which had existed between the two countries in the past. Our present relations with France are of the most cordial nature.

Siam's friendly intercourse with other European powers and the United States of America is progressing steadily and satisfactorily.

During the past years, there has been a marked growth in the industrial and commercial connection between Siam and Japan. This progressing commercial and industrial intercourse between the two countries, it must be stressed once more, does not contain the less semblance of a background of political alliance, nor is it capable of having any repercussion whatever on the relations of Siam with other foreign nations.

It is simply a natural economic growth following upon the expansion of Japanese exports to various markets of the world. Thus, it is that Japan has been exporting to this country

very much more than she has been importing from us, and it has therefore become very necessary for us to use every endeavor to increase our exports to Japan in order to redress the balance of trade between the two countries.

This summary statement of facts offers a firm denial of all the sensational news and views often carried by certain sections of the foreign press. Some observers have expressed the fear that Siam is reversing her former policy of sending students for study and education in European countries by sending them to Japan instead. This is an assertion that is not well-grounded. Siam wants to learn all the methods of education and administration from every civilized country, but she takes care to make her choice judiciously and with due consideration of economic and other advantages. Siamese students are sent out to foreign countries according to the subjects they intend to specialize in, and the allowances granted by the Government. They cover almost every country in the Occident—England, France, Germany, Italy, United States, etc, but the Government has deemed it expedient to send certain groups of students to Japan and other countries in Asia. If it is well to study and adapt the systems of commercial and industrial development from a friendly neighbor who has proved successful in these lines also, let it be understood that Siamese students are sent to India, to the Philippines and to other Asiatic countries as well.

A word about relation between China and Siam will not be out of place in the course of this article. Connections between the Chinese and Siamese peoples date as far back as the beginning of the history of the Thai. China and Chinese have played important roles in all aspects of Siamese life and the Chinese immigrants, in addition to being afforded the cleanest, widest and most independent home they have ever acquired abroad, have been amply rewarded for their contribution towards the progress of Siam. It is therefore most regrettable that, of recent date, some subversive elements have been devoting themselves to jeopardizing the friendly relations between the two countries by spreading absurd tales regarding the treatment of Chinese in Siam.

Any misunderstandings between China and Siam are built up mainly on ignorance of the facts and on prejudice. For instance, Chinese newspapers have reported that “The Siamese Ministry of Education forbids the teaching of the Chinese language to Chinese children in Siam.” The primary education law in Siam was enacted years ago but efficiency in its enforcement is more recent. What the Ministry of Education insists on enforcing is that a certain number of hours per week be devoted to the teaching of the Siamese language in Chinese and other foreign-owned and foreign-managed schools. When Chinese immigrants choose to settle down in Siam, it is but natural that their children should be afforded the educational background which will

qualify them for their social and political status and responsibilities as sons of the soil.

As a nation engaged in developing a democratic form of government in which the people will have the predominant voice in the administration, it is but just and right that every future citizen of the land should be acquainted with the national language, at least up to a certain minimum standard.

Thus, it will be seen that if there be any discordant note in the relations between the two Eastern peoples, it is probably based on a misunderstanding similar to the one dealt with above. Sincere goodwill and co-operation, supplemented by mutual exchange of ideas by intelligent leaders and observers, are sure to result in better understandings, for it is just a matter of China and Chinese being apprised of the moral and material benefit accruing to the Chinese immigrant in this country, and through them to China.

Siam is an independent country and her supreme purpose is peaceful progress; and under no circumstances will Siam involve herself in any undertakings that tend to alienate her friends or endanger her national independence. Siam's main ideal is to safeguard her independence and to remain on terms of equal friendship with every other nation of the world. Siam wants to live and let live, to labor on the road to national progress and international amity, and reap the just rewards of diligent toil.

H.R.H. PRINCE WAN WAITHAYAKON
KROMMUN NARADHIP
BONGSPRABANDH



H.R.H. Prince Wan Waithayakon
Krommun Naradhip Bongsprabandh
Minister of Foreign Affairs
March 1952 - October 1958

COMMON SENSE IN DIPLOMACY*

Mr. President, Fellow Rotarians and Guests,

It is kind of the Rotary Club of Bangkok South to ask me to speak. I warmly appreciate the courtesy.

When Paul Harris started the Rotary movement, he wanted each member to tell the others something of his own business or profession, and so I shall tell you something of my own profession – that of diplomacy.

Sir Ernest Satow, in his *Guide to Diplomatic Practice*, has defined diplomacy as the application of intelligence and tact to the conduct of official relations between the government of independent states; or, more briefly still, the conduct of business between states by peaceful means.

* Delivered at Rotary Club of Bangkok South on 28 December 1962.

It is true that nowadays the business between states has become more complicated and specialised and so more technical knowledge is required but it still remains true that the main task of diplomacy is to negotiate, that is to say, to do business, to secure an acceptable arrangement, to get your opposite number to agree to what you want or what you can accept.

Tact needs no explanation because it is the quality which supplies you with the right approach to the person with whom you are negotiating. It is not easy to develop but it must be developed through observation and experience.

Intelligence, however, needs some explanation. I myself willingly subscribe to it, because, to me, it means understanding based on knowledge and that, of course, is what is required. But, with intelligence, one can be too clever and that would not do in diplomacy. So I have used the word *commonsense* in the title of my talk.

I shall illustrate what I mean from my own experience.

I started my career as Secretary of Legation in Paris in 1917, during World War I. The late Prince Nakkhat, then a military student in France, had to go to Italy on an urgent mission and a permit had to be signed by a Director General in the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. My Minister went to see him himself but found the door closed, with instructions not to be disturbed. I was asked to see what I could do. I went to the Ministry and telephoned to the Director General, who then opened the door and signed the permit.

Thailand sent an Expeditionary Corps to help the Allies and so should have two representatives at the Peace Conference. But *Le Temps*, an evening paper, published the news that Thailand was to have only one representative, the final decision to be taken the next day at 3 p.m. I was put on the job. I saw in *Le Temps* that Portugal was allotted two representatives, so I called on the Portuguese Minister and he very kindly showed me the draft of the letter which he had sent. I had a similar letter signed by my Minister and Thailand was allotted two representatives.

In 1919, I came back to Bangkok. In those extraterritorial days all draft laws affecting foreigners must have the approval of the various Legations. We wanted to make the study of English compulsory in secondary schools. The French Legation objected to it as being a discrimination against France. So I suggested one foreign language compulsory which the students themselves were to choose. That was adopted and 85 percent have chosen English.

Language is most important in diplomacy and explanations of words often solve problems. In those extraterritorial days, Consuls could make observations on judgments in cases involving their nationals as accused or defendants. The British Consul General once took exception to a statement by a judge to the effect that he could decide *tham amphoe chai*, which the Consul General translated as *arbitrarily*. As the term *dulya binich* for *discretion* had not yet come into use, I felt that *amphoe chai* might well mean

discretion. I looked up Pallegoix's Dictionary and indeed that was the meaning given. So I drafted a letter to the effect that what the judge said was that he could decide according to his *discretion* and the Consul General was pacified.

In 1924 we concluded a treaty with Japan to get rid of extraterritoriality with that country. What held the treaty up was the most favoured nation clause. The operation of that clause is that if Thailand grants an advantage to a third country Japan will enjoy that advantage too. So far so good. But if the grant is made against an exchange of advantages, there are two forms of the clause; (1) conditional, which means that Japan has to effect the same exchange of advantages if she is to enjoy the benefit of the grant and (2) unconditional, which means that Japan can claim the benefit of the grant without having to effect the same exchange of advantages.

When Japan was under the regime of extraterritoriality herself, she adopted the conditional form or conditional interpretation which Thailand favoured but when she had recovered her full sovereign rights she favoured the unconditional form or unconditional interpretation.

How then could we get over the difficulty? I looked through the League of Nations Treaty Series and I found that not many months previously Japan had concluded with Peru a treaty with the conditional form of the clause. So Japan agreed.

In 1926 I went to London as Minister and, in 1927, I was sent as a Special Envoy to represent Thailand at the centenary celebration of Berthelot in Paris. I asked the Chargé d’Affaires whether there was a message to deliver. He replied in the negative. But when the moment came and we had to go up one by one, every representative had a message to deliver. What was I to do? I could not very well go up empty-handed. That would have exposed me openly. So I picked up the envelope thrown away by the Czechoslovak representative sitting next to me and handed it in, after whispering to the Protocol official that I would give him the message first thing the next morning. I was as heartily cheered as anyone else.

I was also Permanent Delegate to the League of Nations and had to attend all kinds of meetings technical or general. Once I had to attend a Transport Committee meeting which considered an International Labour Office proposal concerning *migration* of people. A linguist objected that *migration* was used only for birds and fishes and that *emigration* or *immigration* should be used for people. But ILO insisted on using *migration* because it applies to both *emigration* and *immigration*. Discussion went on and on as often happens among technicians as well as politicians. So I suggested that as the proposal came from ILO we had better keep the word *migration* but we should put it between inverted commas to show that it was an ILO term and not ours. That satisfied everybody.

I was accredited to the Hague as well and in connection with King Prajadhipok's visit to Java in 1929, I was suddenly instructed to get the Dutch Governor General at Batavia to go and welcome His Majesty on board the Royal Yacht Maha Chakri, which he had refused to do on the ground that he should welcome His Majesty on Dutch soil and not on Thai territory which the Royal Yacht was. Bangkok informed me that the British Governor at Singapore had already agreed to welcome His Majesty on the Royal Yacht. I went and saw the Netherlands Foreign Minister and just asked him as a personal favour to get the Governor General to go on board to welcome His Majesty. The Foreign Minister said he was glad I did not go into the legal aspect of the question because that would have put him in a difficult position. As I had put it on a personal basis, he would send a telegram of personal request to the Governor General, who was a personal friend of his, and he was sure the Governor General would go on board, and he did.

The instances I have given you will, I think, suffice to show you what I mean by *commonsense*. But you may say that they do not yet represent serious negotiations.

I shall now give you a case of serious negotiations. In 1925 I was sent to Hanoi to negotiate frontier questions with the Government of French Indochina. Before I went, of course, we had come to an understanding with Paris that the Mekong was an international river, and I had prepared a draft

Convention on that basis. But when I arrived in Hanoi, the Government of Indochina refused to admit any such basis, insisting that all islands belonged to France under the Treaty of 1893.

Was I to come back with a failure straight away? In practical terms, what the Ministry of Interior wanted above all were some large sand banks close to the Thai bank of the Mekong because of the economic and administrative interest they presented. If I succeeded in securing them, my mission would already be worthwhile. That was what my *commonsense* told me. But how could I get the French to agree? Here I had to have recourse to logic, which always appeals to the French.

First, I got them to admit that the Mekong is a boundary river. That is a fact, so they admitted it.

As a consequence of that fact, where there are no islands, the deep water or principal navigation channel should form the boundary line. Where there are islands, the deep water or principal navigation channel between the island and the Thai bank should be the boundary line. So far so good. But what is an island? An island is a piece of land surrounded by water. But at what time of the year? At the high water season there may be a navigable channel between a certain sand bank and the Thai bank but at the low water season there may not be such a channel. If there is no principal navigation channel, how could it form the boundary line?

By following such logical reasoning. I prevailed upon the Government of Indochina to agree to consider the sand banks which we wanted not as islands but as sand banks attached to the Thai bank and thus belonging to Thailand.

This is the sort of *commonsense* or intelligence we have to apply in diplomacy. As regards tact, I even had to play French billiards with the daughter of the Secretary General.

There is another kind of diplomacy, about which I should tell you a little, that is, the diplomacy of international conferences. The same tests apply, namely, those of intelligence and tact. Tact plays even a more important part or commonsense in negotiations.

I was appointed Rapporteur at the Bandung Conference in 1955 and in drafting resolutions. I felt that without having a common basis it would be difficult to come to an agreement. So I submitted the United Nations Charter as the basis, and when that was agreed to, there was no serious difficulty until we came to drafting a resolution condemning colonialism. Most of the delegates were in favour of condemning colonialism in all its forms, namely, both the old form of imperialist domination and the new form of Communist domination. But Chou En Lai objected and his objection was adamant. Until the last moment, the outcome of the Conference was uncertain. I finally suggested *condemning colonialism in all its manifestations* and that was accepted. I do not think many people will see any difference. **Manifestations**

is a word with even a wider meaning but my guess was that to Chou En Lai it might not imply any new form of colonialism but only refer to the manifestations of the old form. In any case, the United Nations Assembly, in its subsequent anti-colonialism resolution, condemns colonialism in all its forms and manifestations so that every kind of domination will be included.

Many people have asked me how to conduct a meeting of the United Nations Assembly. My answer is unhesitatingly a human application of the rules of procedure by giving full liberty of speech even if there is a little loss of time at the beginning because, in the end, matters will come to a vote more quickly and the President can privately appeal to the good sense of the various groups in coming to a rapid decision.

A sense of humour, too, is a useful asset and adds much to tact. When Krishna Menon was fuming away one day and was asking for the floor again and again, I just said I was hungry and adjourned the meeting. He was quiet in the afternoon sitting.

My smile was one of my assets: it won me goodwill, which is indispensable in any international conference. It does not, however, mean approval as I had to warn Mr. Vyshinsky once. In a tense debate on disarmament in the Political Committee, he turned to me and said: *See, Prince Wan agrees with me, he is smiling.* On a point of personal

explanation, I said I had to utter a word of caution: *It is dangerous to interpret my smiles, because I always smile.* That broke the tension.

Thank you.

PSYCHOLOGY IN NEGOTIATIONS*

I consider it a high privilege to be able to take part in this Seminar of the Yale Law School. Having been engaged in the teaching profession myself, I prefer giving an academic talk to giving a political talk, which is usually my lot nowadays, and so I readily accepted the cordial invitation of your Dean.

I should tell you, however, that if I am here with you tonight, it is due in the first instance to a suggestion of Dr. Oppenheimer, one of your alumni and one of the legal array drawn up before me at the World Bank during the recent negotiations of three loan agreements between the Bank and Thailand.

* Delivered at the Law School, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, on 24 January 1951.

Without divulging any State secret, I can tell you for, in any case, I am speaking off the record, that after a very smooth negotiation, during which one point after another was agreed upon, we got stuck on one point: it was a legal point. It concerns the ratification of the agreements.

The Loan Regulations of the Bank speak of ratification by all *necessary governmental* action. I, of course, have no objection to having the Loan Agreements ratified by my Government. But the Bank, in accordance with the practice it has developed through experience, is anxious to have parliamentary approval as well. Here the difficulty arises.

Under our Constitution, the treaty-making power is a Royal prerogative or, in other words, it is part of the Executive Power, but there is a provision to the effect that an international compact requiring legislation for its execution must be approved by Parliament.

Now, in the present instance, we on the Thai side maintain that as the World Bank is not a State, the Loan Agreements are not international compacts in the sense of the above-mentioned provision of our Constitution and that, therefore, our usual procedure for loan agreements should be adopted, namely that Parliament by an Act should authorize the Government to conclude loan agreements with the World Bank, the main conditions of which can be specified in the Act, such as the object, the amount, the rate of interest and the period of each loan. Furthermore, mention may be made

in the Explanatory Memorandum which accompanies the Bill, that the loan agreements have been concluded, and the texts of the agreements can be communicated to Parliament. The only thing we insisted on was that there should be no question of approval by Parliament. And yet, from the point of view of the Bank, there must be some indication of parliamentary approval. How then can the difficulty be gotten over?

First of all, the Bank said that although the Constitution of Thailand does not require the approval of Parliament in this case, it does not preclude it, and so the Government could well ask for it. We on the Thai side had to point out that as the democratic and constitutional regime is relatively new in Thailand, the Constitution had better be applied strictly in accordance with its provisions and that, in this particular case of loan agreements, the Constitution requires that the authorization for raising the loans should come from Parliament but the actual terms and conditions of the loans should be the business of the Government.

The Bank then suggested that a specific mention of the conclusion of the Loan Agreements with the World Bank might be made in the Preamble. But we on the Thai side pointed out that, according to our legislative practice, the Preamble is to say nothing in order to avoid any question of interpretation arising out of it. In this particular case, the Preamble should only read as follows: *Whereas it is*

expedient to raise loans for Government capital expenditures for reconstruction and development.

How then can we get over the difficulty mentioned above? I was optimistic and confident of success, because there was goodwill on both sides, which is not always the case, as I shall have occasion to tell you about later on. But the Bank officials are very well disposed towards us and are anxious to meet our position in any way they can. And there is good understanding too. For we, on our side, well understand why the Bank insists on having some form of parliamentary approval. Governments come and go, but with parliamentary approval the loan agreements will always stand. Is this a legal consideration? No, because I have pointed out that our Constitution does not require a parliamentary approval in this case. It is rather a psychological consideration calculated, quite rightly, to reassure the banking world.

On my part, too, I have to think of how my Government and Parliament would take it, and that too is a psychological consideration.

When once the psychological problem is understood, it is not so difficult to find the necessary legal formula.

The formula agreed upon is the following:

Section 3 of the Loan Act to be passed by our Parliament:
The Government shall be empowered, not later than 31 December 1950, to raise loans amounting to a total value not exceeding (maximum amount), of which

(a) *A part shall be from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, on terms and conditions agreed upon in loan agreements with that Bank, for Government capital expenditures for irrigation, railways and port reconstruction and development...*

I need not point out to you who are students of law, that the wording *on terms and conditions agreed upon in loan agreements with that Bank* does not in itself refer specifically to the three loan agreements actually concluded and that, therefore, no explicit approval of those loan agreements is given by our Parliament, but at the same time, as the texts of the three Loan Agreements are communicated to Parliament together with the Loan Bill, Parliament, in passing the Bill, has had cognizance of the three Loan Agreements and can, therefore, be said, in effect, to have approved those agreements.

My handling of the situation I have related prompted Dr. Oppenheimer to suggest that I might come and give you a talk, one day, on the psychology of negotiation. I welcomed the suggestion, because it would give me the opportunity of recalling my experience in the application of the knowledge of law to diplomacy or the art of negotiation.

In my student days I was much impressed by Aristotle's definition of law as passionless reason. Of course, natural law is, but not always so is positive law as it results from legislation. Nor is it always so with conventions which result from negotiations.

In the early days of my career, I thought that if only I could get hold of the right rule of law to be applied to a question, I had found the solution to that question. But I soon found out that is not generally so in diplomacy. I was then, in 1920, Private Secretary to a Foreign Minister who had held the portfolio for over 30 years.

To test me, he turned over to me a voluminous file on a pending matter with the British Legation concerning the quarantine station. He gave me a free hand to deal with it in any way I thought fit and he would just sign or not sign the letter I drafted for him.

Now I will read out to you what the Medical Officer of Health for Bangkok, who was an Englishman, wrote about the quarantine station in 1908. *The quarantine station is at the island of Koh Phra, in the Gulf of Siam, sixty miles away from the bar of the Menam river. It was found impossible to have it nearer to the port of Bangkok, as, owing to the shallowness of the water at the bar, ships drawing more than 14 feet cannot pass over and have, consequently, to be loaded from lighters at the island of Koh Si Chang or at Anghin, according to the monsoon. Koh Phra is conveniently situated close to both places. The station was erected chiefly for the purpose of controlling the coolie immigration from China ports. About 80,000 coolies reach Bangkok each year in about 200 ships, and all have to be passed by the quarantine inspector before they are allowed to enter the port. Quarantine sheds have been built to accommodate 2,000 coolies. Last year seventy*

people were quarantined, but in some years the number has reached 2,000.

That was a very fair picture of the situation even in 1920, but the British Chargé d’Affaires was not satisfied: he wanted the quarantine station moved nearer to Bangkok. It so happened that the Medical Officer of Health in 1920 was an American, but held the same views as his English predecessor. I thought his arguments were convincing, and so I drew up a long letter setting forth all those arguments in a logical order to show that the quarantine station should remain at Koh Phra.

I thought I was tactful enough because I did not quote the authority of the American Medical Officer of Health to the British Chargé d’Affaires. But when I submitted the draft to the Foreign Minister, he looked through it. He didn’t say anything for a while but lit a cigar and then he said: *Do you see that file of papers now yellow with age? There you will find questions which have solved themselves. Those files contain drafts with good logical and legal arguments but, if sent, they would have continued to bring on interminable arguments in reply without coming to a settlement, so I did not send them; and the other side, knowing quite well that we had a sound legal position, grew tired of pressing me for an answer, and so no one solve those questions but they solved themselves. Now would you like to have another try?*

It was then that I remembered how, in 1893, in spite of

the most valid legal arguments of Rolin-Jaequemyns, a noted Belgian international jurist, who was our General Adviser. French gun-boats came up the River Menam to Bangkok, the Capital, and the independence of Thailand was saved and preserved only by the concessions made in the Treaty of that year.

So I proceeded to draw up a new draft letter saying, in effect, that, of course, Koh Phra was inconvenient in many ways as the site of the quarantine station and that the competent authorities would be looking out for a more convenient site nearer to Bangkok.

The letter was sent and, much to the surprise of everybody, the British Chargé d’Affaires was satisfied. Of course, our competent authorities have been looking out for such a site ever since but they will find it only upon the completion of the Port Development Project, for which one of the World Bank loans was granted and according to which the bar at the mouth of the River Menam is to be dredged so as to enable ships to come up and unload as well as load in the port of Bangkok instead of, as at present, at the island of Koh Si Chang.

You have just heard of the Treaty of 1893 with France and you can well guess that the most delicate negotiations between my country and foreign powers have been with that country.

France was settled in Cochinchina in 1860. She established her protectorate over Cambodia in 1863, but as Cambodia was a vassal State of Thailand, a Treaty was concluded in 1867, by which Thailand recognized the protectorate of France over Cambodia, while France recognized the provinces of Battambang and Siemrap (or Angkor) to belong to Thailand. Then France established her protectorate over Annam and Tonkin and, by 1887, was expanding into Laos. Lao people, who are a branch of the Thai race, inhabit both sides of the River Mekong. Thailand claimed the left bank of the Mekong as far as the Annamite chain and France, now the protector of Annam, claimed the same territory as far as the Mekong. Hence the conflict in 1893 and the Treaty of that year.

According to Article 1 of the Treaty of 1893, the Thai Government renounces all claims on the whole of the territories on the left bank of the Mekong and on the islands of the river. France interpreted this as meaning that the Mekong was a French river, but Thailand maintained that only the left bank was French and the islands were French only as an exception and that, in any case, the river was international. That controversy went on and on for years.

In the meantime, in 1904, France obtained two pieces of territory on the right bank of the Mekong, one in the north opposite to Luang Prabang and the other in the south opposite to Paksé, claiming that they belonged to Laos, and, in 1907, obtained the provinces of Battambang and Siemrap,

claiming that they belonged to Cambodia, although France herself recognized them to belong to Thailand in 1867.

By 1907 the colonial rivalry between France and England had been replaced by an *entente cordiale*, and France had also realised that the Mekong was not navigable up to China. Indeed it is not even navigable, throughout its course to the sea, and so it is not so valuable to her as she once thought.

The relations between France and Thailand, too, improved and the despatch of a Thai Expeditionary Corps to help the Allies in France during World War I further strengthened the friendly ties between the two countries.

In 1925, therefore, the old Treaty of Friendship of 1856, which established the regime of extraterritoriality in Thailand in favour of France, was revised and, in principle, French nationals were thereafter to be subjected to the jurisdiction of the Thai Courts, but for certain categories of French nationals the competent Thai Court was to be the International Court, composed of Thai judges and European judges who were officials of the Thai Government. Even then the French Legation had the right, if it saw fit, to evoke any case in which a French national was the defendant or accused, to be tried and adjudicated by itself.

The Treaty of 1925 was, in principle, an **equal** treaty or, in other words, it was based on the principle of reciprocity, unlike the Treaty of 1856 which was an **unequal** treaty giving unilateral privileges to French nationals in Thailand. But the Treaty of 1925 was between Thailand and France and was not,

therefore, applicable to French Indochina, in regard to which a special Convention was to be concluded.

That was the legal position, but it was difficult to explain it to the Thai public while the Annamites, Cambodians and Laotians as French nationals were enjoying every right in Thailand, the Thais in French Indochina did not have any treaty right there.

My Government, however, accepted the proposal of the French Government that a special Convention relating to Indochina was to be concluded. It was to deal, in particular, with two very important questions, namely those of the boundary line in the Mekong river and the status of Thai nationals in Indochina.

During the preliminary discussions, the French Government in Paris agreed to the principle that the Mekong is an international river and not a French river and that Thai nationals in Indochina should enjoy a treatment which is reciprocal, if not equal, to that enjoyed by the Indochina in Thailand: the treatment cannot be equal, because, obviously, Thai nationals cannot claim extraterritorial privileges in Indochina.

The Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs drew up a draft Convention on the basis thus agreed upon with the French Government in Paris, and I was sent to Hanoi, in 1925, to negotiate the Convention with the Government General of Indochina.

As the fundamental principles had been agreed upon with Paris, I did not foresee much difficulty, but I was soon to meet with one of the greatest surprises of my life and find out that Paris was one thing and Hanoi was another and that the French officials in Paris could be as nice as the French officials in Hanoi, the Acting Governor General welcomed me in the least expected manner: he said that the Government General of Indochina did not want to negotiate with the Government of Siam, but as they had been instructed by Paris to do so, I could talk with his Political Director.

So the next day I saw the Political Director and placed before him the draft we had prepared, explaining that it had been drawn upon the basis of principles already agreed upon with Paris, such as the principle that the Mekong was an international river. Upon hearing the term **international river**, he flared up. *Never in your life, he shouted, the Mekong is a French river: all the islands belong to France.*

That was as far as we could go the first day. Then I had to do some hard thinking, for if I had returned home there and then, not only would my mission have failed but the effect on the growing friendship between Thailand and France would have been lamentable, to say the very least.

So I tried again the next day. I remembered an anecdote told to me by one of our Delegates, whose Secretary I was, at the Versailles Peace Conference. It was about an incident during the crisis in 1893. He was interpreter to the Foreign

Minister, whose interlocutor was a Vice-Consul in charge of the French Legation pending the arrival of the French Envoy the next day. The little man was getting rather excited, thumping away at the table. The interpreter thought he must try to calm him down. So he addressed him as Mr. Consul. That did not seem to produce any effect, so the interpreter addressed him as Mr. Consul General. He noticed it that time and started to calm down. A little later, the interpreter addressed him as Mr. Chargé d’Affaires. That brought a smile and a gentle tap on the shoulder. *Thank you, young man, said the Vice-Consul, for the rapid promotions you have given me, but you mustn’t forget that Mr. Minister is arriving tomorrow.* Nevertheless, he calmed down all right.

I tried the same sort of thing on my Political Director but it did not work. *Mr. Director*, no effect. *Mr. Director General*, no effect. *Excellency*, still no effect and I had to give it up.

The French, however, whether in Paris or Hanoi, are genuinely hospitable, and as I had the good fortune of having studied in France, I was able to win socially the goodwill which I needed politically.

Goodwill is of the utmost importance in negotiations, because it means the will to come to an understanding. We generally talk of international understanding and goodwill. You will find that stated in the fourth object of Rotary International, for instance. But, within my experience, I think we should develop goodwill first, and then good understanding will follow: The trouble at Lake Success is that

there is understanding only of words and not enough of their meaning and true intent.

I was able to develop goodwill among the French officials when they took me on a trip, which they did most hospitably whenever we got stuck in our negotiations. So off we went to the Bais d'Alon. It was a lovely trip, and bright ideas came to me.

In the course of conversations, I was able to detect that what the French officials were afraid of was that if they made far-reaching concessions to us, they would appear to be weak in the eyes of the indigenous populations. So I realized that if I insisted on complete reciprocity or equality, I would have no chance at all, and I might as well pack up and go back home. But, on the other hand, I have my own Government and my own people to think of too. They certainly expect substantial concessions from the French.

Another thing I discovered was that I mustn't mention Paris again. That was easy. But how could I submit a new basis which would be acceptable both to the Government of Hanoi and to my own Government? Then my knowledge of the French mentality and French love of logic come to the rescue.

The Mekong is not only a long river but a large one and some of the islands, especially those near the Thai or right bank, are very valuable for cultivation generally and for the tobacco-growing in particular. The Ministry of the Interior had given me a list of them before I left for Hanoi, and

although my instructions were that I was to secure the adoption of the thalweg as the boundary line in accordance with international law, I knew that if I could get the islands on the list for Thailand, the Ministry of the Interior would be satisfied because it would be able to deal with administrative questions concerning those islands and its police could, above all, pursue criminals on to the islands instead of having to stop short on the bank.

But what is an island? For the French love definitions. An island is an area of land entirely surrounded by water. That is simple enough. But at what time of the year in the high water season or in the low water season, because there is considerable difference so far as the Mekong is concerned. Some areas of land which are entirely surrounded by water in the low water season may be entirely submerged in the high water season; and some areas of land which are entirely surrounded by water in the high water season have no navigable channel between it and the river bank in the low water season. And again one or two pieces of land would become islands for a time and then disappear. This actually happened in a case I had to deal with, for when I asked for a map of the island in question, I was told that it had disappeared, and the French were satisfied with the explanation.

I have told you enough to indicate to you how complicated the whole matter was. Now, in order to find a solution, I had,

first of all, to find an explanation as to why I no longer insisted upon the principle that the Mekong is an international river, and the explanation must be acceptable to my Government, while at the same time I must not give the French negotiators the impression that I had yielded to their intimidation.

Under such circumstances, one must have recourse to law and I found the answer I wanted in the Barcelona Convention, which defined an international river as one that is navigable throughout its course to the sea, which the Mekong is not.

So I admitted that the Mekong is not an international river in the sense of the Barcelona Convention, but it is a **frontier river – fleuve frontière** isn't it? And the French negotiators, with their love of logic, had to say **Yes**. Then logical consequences on other points follow as a matter of course. As the Mekong is a frontier river, a boundary line in that river must be established. Now, if there were no islands in the river, how should the boundary line be established? By the thalweg, of course. So, in this case of the Mekong, in those parts where there are no islands, shouldn't the thalweg form the boundary line? Yes. I have thus won the adoption of the principle of the thalweg, and the Mekong is no longer a French river.

When we came to those parts of the Mekong where there are islands, we had to spend a lot of time discussing

point by point but the solution was already found. Of course, the Government of Hanoi refused to discuss any revision of the Treaty of 1893 and insisted that all islands in the Mekong belong to France. So where there are islands – and islands at any time of the year, that is, whether in the high water season or the low water season – the boundary line follows the thalweg nearest to the Thai bank. That was a concession I had to make.

Then it was my turn to get something and the way I had to set about it was to define when an island is not an island and as it isn't an island, so it belongs to Thailand.

This is what the Convention says: “3.– at points where the silting or drying up of the arm of the river nearest to the Siamese bank should permanently attach to that bank islands formerly separated from it, the boundary would, in principle, follow the former thalweg of that arm of the river which has been silted or dried up. Nevertheless, the High Permanent Commission of the Mekong shall be called upon practically to examine each case of this kind which would arise, and the Commission may then propose that boundary be removed to the nearest thalweg of the river, if it deems such removal desirable, as it is from now on decided for fluvial lands enumerated in the following paragraph.

“Are definitely attached to the Siamese territory the fluvial lands known under the names of Don Khieo, Don Kieo-noi, Don Noi, Don Nhiat, Don Ban-phaeng,

Hat Saipeh-Veun Koum, Don Keo Kong-Dinnua and Don Sombong, which may be considered some as part of the Siamese bank and others as just alluvial deposits depending on that bank, rather than as veritable islands.”

The lesson from this is that if I had not changed the formula from **international river** to **frontier river**, my mission would have failed. Of course, I could not have made the change if I did not have the necessary knowledge of international law, but what actually motivated the change was the psychological consideration of winning over the French negotiator in a way which would appeal to their logical understanding.

The argument, when presented, however, was legal in form. But on another occasion, it was not so: it was purely a psychological appeal. The occasion was the Copyright Conference in Rome in 1928. In giving up extraterritoriality in Thailand in 1925, France obtained assurance from the Thai Government that it would adhere to the Copyright Convention and other international conventions.

Writing in Thailand at that time was not a lucrative profession and books do not bring in royalties as they do in this country, especially text books, for which translations from foreign works are necessary. I was, therefore, instructed to reserve the right of translation for Thailand. As you know, the Copyright Convention was revised from time to time, and each time there was a more complete protection for the

author, but for newcomers who join the Convention or, in other words, for those countries which are less advanced in this respect, the option was left of reserving the right to apply one or two of the old provisions.

Now, in the matter of translation, if the same option was still allowed, Thailand would be able to make a reservation whereby she would be at liberty to translate any work ten years after its publication.

I did not expect any difficulty at the Conference, because it had been the practice to allow certain reservations to be made. And indeed I had no difficulty in explaining my case to the American and British representatives. But the French representative Maillard, who was a literary man, proposed that no reservation should now be allowed, because the right of the author is a personal right which should be protected at all times and under all circumstances. He would not listen to the legal argument of the procedure and practice adopted therefore.

So I had to get up and appeal to him in French to help me in spreading French culture in Thailand. Thereupon he agreed to Thailand's right of reservation. He told me afterwards that he was not convinced by my arguments, because I could ask for permission from the author and it would always be given, and as the published translations in the Thai language do not bring in any profit, nothing, in fact, would have to be

paid in the way of royalties. But he yielded because my appeal was eloquent.

Thailand got rid of all vestige of extraterritoriality in 1937 and, for that purpose, treaties with thirteen powers had to be revised at the same time. The negotiations were quite an experience, but the questions which took time were questions of principle rather than questions of law. The reservation of agricultural land to nationals, for instance, had to be discussed from the point of view of public policy, namely, the safeguarding of the public domain from foreign mass settlements or colonisation. But when once the question of principle was agreed upon, there was no difficulty in drafting.

Thus we have the following provision from the British Treaty of 1937:

“The subjects of each High Contracting Party shall be permitted in the territories of the other to acquire, inherit, possess, lease and occupy property, movable or immovable, subject, however, to the right of the latter High Contracting Party –

“(1) to make the acquisition or leasing of immovable property in his territory by foreigners subject to such conditions as are or may be established for reasons of national security or other reasons of public policy.”

It will be noticed that the above provision is reciprocal. But, in view of the Constitution of the United States, some other arrangement has to be made and that arrangement

must be acceptable to the Senate. Thus what the Senate may think is also an important factor in the negotiations.

We in Thailand know very well that the United States is a federation and that each State has got its own land law. We do not expect strict reciprocity, but as the principle of reciprocity is one of the fundamental principles in our new treaties, we had to ask the American negotiators to work out something. It was just a question of finding the right formula. The difficulty lay in finding an expression which would be acceptable to the Senate of the United States and to our own Parliament. Some term must be found to give an atmosphere of reciprocity; and, after many attempts, my suggestion of *in return* was adopted.

The provision reads as follows:

“It is expressly agreed that nationals of the United States of America, including corporation, partnerships and associations, who are legal residents of or are organized under the laws of any state, territory or possession of the United States of America which accords to nationals of Thailand the right to acquire, possess and dispose of immovable property, shall, in return, be accorded all the rights respecting immovable property in Thailand which are or may hereafter be accorded to the nationals, including corporations, partnerships or associations of any other country, upon the principle of non-discriminatory treatment.”

The treaties of 1937 put the relationships between Thailand and foreign powers on a footing of complete equality and genuine friendship. But World War II brought a storm which all but overwhelmed Thailand. The Thai Government tried to weather the storm by concluding non-aggression pacts with Britain, France and Japan in 1940. We pointed out to the French Minister in Bangkok that ever since 1893 there had been a real national resentment on the part of the Thai people against France which it was desirable to eradicate and that, in the opinion of the Thai Government, this could be done if the French Government would return to Thailand two pieces of territory opposite to Luang Prabang and to Pakse so that the Mekong should form the frontier from the north down to Cambodia. The French Minister personally agreed but asked that negotiations should take place after the conclusion of the pact.

The negotiations did not take place. The relations between French Indochina and Thailand deteriorated. Border incidents occurred, which developed into an armed conflict. Japan mediated in January 1941 and I was sent to Tokyo, there to meet Monsieur Robin who, as Secretary General of the Government of Indochina, had negotiated with me in 1925.

As our troops were in the province of Battambang, my instructions were to claim back all the territories ceded to France since 1893. That, of course, I know I could not obtain, but I thought there should not be much difficulty

about the two pieces of territory on the right bank of the Mekong. I thought, too, that we should get back Battambang, which France recognized to belong to Thailand in 1867.

That turned out to be the plan of mediation which the Japanese Delegation issued after hearing the views of the Thai and French Delegations. The two pieces of territory on the right bank did not offer much difficulty but the question of compensation to be paid for French property in Battambang took a very long time.

Much patience had to be exercised because, while logical arguments appeal to the French, they do not appeal to the Japanese, who only listen to personal appeals. I had to be careful, too, not to let the French have reason to put forward the objection of duress or let the Japanese have ground to claim an alliance.

What I have just related is meant to lead you up to the negotiations of the Agreement of Settlement with France which I carried on in Washington in 1946.

At the end of 1945, France even demanded to have the Sacred Image of the Emerald Buddha, but in 1946, through the good offices of the United States Government, she was ready to negotiate. At first, she offered to go to the World Court and, of course, we readily accepted but she changed her mind and said *No*.

Upon my arrival in Washington, the French negotiators gave me to understand that as long as the border dispute between the two countries was not settled, France would

oppose the application of Thailand for entry into the United Nations. But then, as negotiations started, they were co-operative.

The trouble, as usual with the French, was how to find the right formula. In substance, both France and Thailand accepted the points of view expressed by the American and British Governments that the way Thailand recovered the territories concerned left to be desired but there should be some peaceful procedure for considering the question of revision of the frontier provisions in the various treaties between the two countries.

What held us up was that France wanted to have the Convention of Tokyo declared null and void, because the French Government had repudiated it. We said we had accepted the proposal to go to the World Court, but France now refused to do so. We don't mind mentioning the fact that the French Government had repudiated the Convention, but we cannot say **null and void**: we can only say is **annulled**.

In the end, the following text was agreed upon:

“Article 1 – The Convention of Tokyo of May 9, 1941, previously repudiated by the French Government, is annulled and the status quo prior to that Convention is re-established.”

And under Article 3, a Commission of Conciliation was to be set up, composed of two representatives of the parties and three neutrals. It was entrusted with the examination of ethnical, geographical and economic arguments of the parties

in favour of the revision or confirmation of the treaty provisions concerning the frontier between the two countries.

Of course, the Commission of Conciliation could not bring about any final solution of the problem, but the above agreement was considered on both sides to be an honourable settlement.

You will have noticed that everything turns upon the word **annulled**, which to the French means **declared to be null and void** and to the Thai means **rendered null and void**. This is a case of an agreement in ambiguity or an agreement to differ. I do not know whether it is good law, but it is good psychology.

After the conclusion of the Agreement of Settlement, the French strongly supported the application of Thailand for membership in the United Nations, and we thought that the path was clear. Much to our surprise, however, we heard that the Soviet Union was going to veto our application on the ground that there were no diplomatic relations between the two countries. Our young lawyers on the Delegation went through the Charter again and again and assured me that there was no Charter provision to warrant the exercise of the veto on such a ground. So I said that in that case they should have no difficulty in convincing the Soviet Delegation, and I sent them to Lake Success as they volunteered to go. After a few days, they returned to Washington and reported that they did not succeed even in contacting any one of authority

in the Soviet Delegation. They got one telephone number after another and they saw one person after another but nothing came of it. So one day they walked up to Gromyko in the passage leading to a Committee room and were sure they had their man, but his Adviser talked very politely to them, while Gromyko slipped into the Committee room.

And so my turn had come to tackle Gromyko. I left nothing to chance. I got nowhere by telephoning or even by going to his Office in New York. So off I went to Lake Success. He then had an office there. The first secretary I met said she only spoke French, but when I spoke French to her, she said I had better see the English-speaking secretary, who eventually turned up. I prevailed on her to go and see Gromyko in the Committee room. After a long while, she brought back word that Gromyko was going out to lunch after the morning sitting and would come back late for the afternoon meeting. He could see me after the afternoon sitting or if that was inconvenient to me he would fix another appointment.

Of course, I stayed right there at Lake Success and chose a seat behind him in the Committee room. He saw me after the meeting, saying only that he had received no instructions but would ask for them. I saw him again a few days later but he repeated the same thing – no instructions yet.

Time was pressing and I was getting desperate, because the Assembly session was coming to an end, and my Government wanted Thailand to be admitted into the United

Nations during that First Session. The United States, Britain, France, China, Australia and other countries helped us in the Security Council but Gromyko asked for postponement, because he had not had time to study the question.

On the eve of the closing day of the Assembly, I got hold of Gromyko in the lounge at Flushing. This time he said he had received instructions and the matter was quite simple: an agreement for the exchange of diplomatic representatives had been reached, in principle, in Stockholm. So, if Thailand wanted to get into the United Nations, she had only to send a diplomatic representative to Moscow. I used every possible argument, especially the one that it was a physical impossibility to send a Thai envoy to Moscow by the next day.

Seeing that there was nothing else I could do, I got up to say goodbye and he did the same. As he extended his hand to me, he said *So that's all right?* I didn't know what to say. So I burst out laughing and said *No, it's all wrong, because Thailand wants to be admitted this session.* Much to the surprise of everyone standing by, Gromyko smiled.

The next day, which was the last day of the Assembly, the Security Council was to meet at 3 p.m. I told our friends that, as a last chance, I was going to try something on Gromyko I was going to offer him a written assurance that there will be an exchange of diplomatic representatives. Everyone was sceptical. At 2.55 Gromyko came into the lounge at Lake Success. I went up to him and said: *Mr. Gromyko, this*

is the very last chance of getting Thailand admitted into the UN this session. Will you take a written assurance from me that there will be an exchange of diplomatic representatives? He looked at me and asked: *When are you going to give me that assurance? Today? Right now* was my answer, and I sat down to draft it. He asked to change two words of no importance, and Thailand was admitted into the United Nations.

In negotiations psychology is the vehicle passing over the bridge of law. Without law you cannot get over: without psychology you cannot get across.

SPEECH AT THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIGNING OF THE UNITED NATIONS CHARTER*

On this auspicious occasion of the Tenth Anniversary of the signing of the Charter of the United Nations, Thailand is happy to have the privilege of participating in its commemoration. My country is not a founding member in the United Nations but was admitted to membership at the end of the First Session of the General Assembly. My delegation, therefore, has no over expectation due to authorship nor any disappointment that might be due to such over expectation. We try to assess the work of the United Nations at its true value and we most gladly pay the highest tribute to it.

In the first place, Thailand attaches significance to the fact that the Charter was signed in this great and

* Delivered at San Francisco on 23 June 1955.

beautiful city of San Francisco, for it looks across the Pacific to Asia, and Asia has been given the importance to which it is entitled and which it never got under the League of Nations.

Only the Government of Thailand knew the League of Nations, not so the Thai people, who did not know it at all. The United Nations, however, has not only come to Thailand but has come to work among the Thai people.

The Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) is established in Bangkok. It serves the region extending from Afghanistan to Japan and south to Indonesia. It has a Bureau of Flood Control and Water Resources Development, and separate divisions for Industry and Trade Development, Research and Planning, Transport, and Agriculture (jointly with FAO). It has helped the Government of Thailand technically in many matters connected with irrigation and flood control, cottage and small-scale industries, lignite resources development, industrial development and transport.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), too, has its regional office for Asia and the Far East in Bangkok. 28 FAO specialists have worked with Thai scientists in connection with the improvement of the quality of Thai rubber, animal disease control, forestry and fish breeding. Thailand has received over 50 fellowships in the fields of nutrition, vaccine production, agricultural economics,

fisheries, rubber production, market research, veterinary science, cooperatives and irrigation, while regional training centres have been set up, such as the Centre on Land Problems. FAO has also made a survey of Thailand's agriculture and forest resources as well as fisheries resources.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has assisted in the development of projects in which millions of children and mothers have benefited. Under the Malaria Control Project, in 1954, about 4 million people had been protected and it is expected that within a few years malaria in Thailand will be under control. Under the Yaws Control Project, undertaken in cooperation with the World Health Organisation (WHO), in 1954, over 3 million people were examined and nearly 350,000 patients have been cured; and if this rate of examining and treatment can be kept up, there will be every possibility that within another 4 years yaws will have been brought under control in Thailand. In the field of tuberculosis, nearly 5,000 patients are visiting the clinic every month where they are given curative treatment. The prevention of tuberculosis has a high priority with UNICEF and a BCG campaign was started in Thailand early in 1953 with the aim to test within 4 years 5 million children and to vaccinate the negative reactors. By the end of 1954, 50 percent of the work had been done. UNICEF has also helped develop 700 rural health centres to do better and more work. WHO cooperates with UNICEF in all this and also has projects of its own.

UNESCO has helped Thailand to set up an educational pilot project at Chachoengsao with new school administrative procedures, new teaching methods and improved types of instructional materials. It has set up a new type of school – the primary extension school – where rural boys and girls may now continue their studies in such subjects as agriculture, shop work, home economics and child care.

UNESCO has also helped set up the Fundamental Education Training Centre at Ubol, where 120 highly selected young men and women are being trained by UNESCO experts to work, in teams of 5 or 6, among the villages in the less economically developed regions of the country. It will be their function to bring to the people practical, up-to-date information in such matters as health and hygiene, housing, water supply, agriculture and handicrafts. In general, these teams will make effective, at the village level, the various Government services which are intended to help the rural population and thus to raise the standard of living throughout Thailand.

I may mention one more project – the Bangpakong Community Development Project, established in July 1952, with the cooperation of the United Nations and its specialised agencies. It is a self-help settlement, south of Bangkok, to provide landless people with land along the gulf of Thailand for reclamation and cultivation. About 1,000 acres of land have been allotted to 85 families comprising 600 people.

The Development Committee planned to develop the colony into a modern rural community in all aspects of life, economic, social, cultural, educational, physical as well as spiritual for demonstration and training purposes.

The Committee also declared that the guiding principle in all the activities should be **self-help** – *One should never try to work for the people but rather work with them. It is through their own organisations that the farmers are trained and local leadership is developed. No programme should ever be imposed on the people. The ultimate goal of the community development is to bring about better farms, better homes and a better community by the people themselves, through the realisation of their own strength and making use of whatever services they can obtain from the Government.*

UNESCO, FAO, ILO, WHO, UNICEF and the United Nations Technical Assistance Administration cooperate with the Thai Government in this work, and coordinate their efforts with the assistance programme of the United States FOA.

Mr. President, I have deliberately entered into these details even at the risk of being tedious, because I think the splendid work of the United Nations in the field of Technical assistance deserves to be better known. It is appreciated by all the nations concerned; and, in my opinion, it constitutes a true form of co-operation, characteristic of the United Nations and calculated to bring home to the people of each

country the determination of the United Nations *to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom*.

Economic assistance is a more delicate matter. The World Bank grants loans for self-liquidation projects, and Thailand has already received 3 loans for irrigations, railway and port developments. But the underdeveloped countries have still to wait for a Special United Nations Fund for Economic Development and an International Finance Corporation for private investment.

The fact, however, that the Charter of the United Nations has specifically established the Economic and Social Council shows the importance it attaches to the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples; and the establishment of the Trusteeship Council likewise shows the importance it attaches to the progressive development of trust territories towards self-government or independence.

The Charter thus realises that economic and social well-being and freedom are essential to peace; and by *freedom* is not meant just individual freedom in the sense of fundamental human rights but national freedom in the sense of the right of self-determination, be it for self-government or independence.

National freedom will come. The only question is whether it shall come by the evolutionary process of progressive development or by the revolutionary process of armed struggle. In the latter event international peace and

security would be threatened and the competence of the United Nations would be clear. But does the United Nations have to wait for such a contingency before it can deal with the question? Surely, the United Nations is a world organisation for peace and peaceful adjustment of situations.

The authors of the Charter were profoundly wise in laying down as the fourth purpose of the United Nations 1. *To be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends*, the second purpose being 2. *To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace.*

The question of non-self-governing territories would not arouse such emotional reactions if it were not considered or discussed under the legal aspect of Article 2 (7) of the Charter concerning non-intervention in matters within domestic jurisdiction. For, after all, what the United Nations should seek is the harmonizing of actions of nations by developing friendly relations among them based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples. In other words, the United Nations should apply a spirit of friendship and goodwill in bringing about the attainment of self-government or independence as rapidly as possible.

This is not to say that law and justice shall not prevail. Thailand is a strong supporter of the International Court of

Justice and the International Law Commission. But the fact remains that the best means available to the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security is to develop friendly relations among nations and to be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations.

It is true that the principle of collective security under the Charter was effectively applied in the case of resistance to aggression in Korea, and Thailand, for its part, promptly answered the United Nations call for economic and military assistance in that case. But, in view of the existence of the veto power in the Security Council and the cumbersome procedure in the General Assembly, it is difficult to expect prompt United Nations action. Regional arrangements for collective self-defense under Article 51 of the Charter have, therefore, become necessary as a supplement to the collective security of the United Nations. The Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty is such an arrangement. Purely defensive in character and entirely within the framework of the United Nations Charter.

This does not at all minimize the responsibility or importance of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security. Only, in order to bring about effective action on the part of the United Nations, the overwhelming weight of world public opinion must be brought to bear on the Organisation so that unanimity among the permanent members of the Security Council may be secured.

Take, for instance, the question of disarmament. The world now realises that, with the hydrogen bomb, the next world war would be annihilating to mankind and that, for the good of mankind, nuclear energy should, as suggested by President Eisenhower, be used for peaceful purposes. With the support of world public opinion, the realisation of this truth should lead to an agreement on the regulation of armaments, especially after the summit meeting of the Big Four.

Nor do differences in ideology between nations preclude the possibility of their maintaining peaceful relations with one another. The Charter of the United Nations has indicated the way out of the difficulty. It is to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours. This can be done by conforming to the ten principles of the Declaration made by the Asian-African Conference at Bandung.

Indeed, tolerance or *let live* is an essential condition. But tolerance is a thing of the spirit. It emanates from faith, faith in the brotherhood of man, faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small.

Several nations, many of them in Asia and Africa, are still excluded from membership in the United Nations. Any restraint against them should be removed and they

should be admitted into the Organisation so that they may make their effective contribution to the cooperative effort for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The General Assembly would then completely fulfil its role as the forum of world public opinion and the United Nations Organisation would then become a universal centre for harmonising the actions of nations and for developing friendly relations among them in a spirit of goodwill, which is the will to peace, real positive peace in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, that is, peace with freedom, justice and economic and social well-being.

It is this ideal, Mr. President, of peace with freedom, justice and economic and social well-being that we are celebrating on this solemn occasion of the Tenth Anniversary of the signing of the Charter of the United Nations; and thanks to the cordial hospitality of the City of San Francisco and the congenial atmosphere of peace and freedom in the United States, the celebration is taking place in a real spirit of friendship and goodwill.

It is in this spirit, Mr. President, that, on behalf of the Government and people of Thailand, the Thai Delegation pledges its firm support to the United Nations and rededicates itself to its service with unshakable faith in its cause, praying for its growing strength as the only instrument for the promotion of world peace and cooperation for the good of mankind. Long live the United Nations.

OPENING SPEECH AT THE 11TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS*

Fellow delegates, Mr. Secretary General,

I am deeply moved by your kindness, fellow delegates, in electing me to this high office of President of the eleventh regular session of the General Assembly. I thank all of you sincerely, for this is a great honour not only for me but also for my country, which is a firm and steadfast supporter of the United Nations. I also see in my election a recognition of the increasing importance of Asia and Africa.

I consider it a privilege to take over the gavel from the chairman of the delegation of Chile, for Mr. Maza during the regular session and Mr. Ortega, during the emergency special sessions, have presided over our proceedings with efficiency, impartiality and patience - qualities so greatly needed now in these times of trial for the United Nations and for the world.

* Delivered at New York on 12 November 1956.

The tragic situations which have occurred are still grave and grim, and all our thoughts of compassion go to the afflicted people of Egypt and of Hungary. It is a matter of reassurance, however, that the United Nations, for its part, has stood out as an efficient and effective instrument of peace, in moments of gloom, when thoughts of the possibility of war – atomic war – weighed heavily upon the hearts of men and women, the United Nations spread a bright ray of hope for peace throughout the world.

The United Nations machinery came instantly into operation and it has worked well. Two emergency special sessions of the General Assembly were convened, in accordance with the *Uniting for Peace* resolution (378 (v)), within twenty-four hours of the exercise of the veto power in the Security Council.

The General Assembly promptly took measures to deal with the situations. Thus, in the Middle East there is now a cease - fire, with an agreement for the immediate withdrawal of foreign forces from Egyptian territory, while an emergency international United Nations force to secure and supervise the cessation of hostilities has been established. With regard to Hungary, however, a report is being awaited.

For the settlement of these two situations, therefore, much still remains to be done by the United Nations. I am confident, however, that the General Assembly can be relied

upon to play its full part, and my confidence is strengthened by the knowledge that we can count on you, Mr. Secretary General, and your associates for invaluable assistance. The diplomatic role of the Secretary General is a welcome and fruitful development, and the outstanding abilities and remarkable efficiency which you have shown. Mr. Secretary General, in undertaking it, deserve a warm tribute of appreciation and admiration from us.

And, we must not forget that we have ourselves to count upon, too. We are now representatives of seventy-six Member States, with more to join us during the present session, and we have among us many members of Governments to share in our deliberations. The United Nations is not only a world organization for peace, but it is practically a world-wide organization for peace, and the General Assembly is now truly a world forum for the discussion of any problem of peace in any part of the world.

Of course, there is diversity in our Organization and in the General Assembly, but out of diversity there can come harmony. Indeed, the United Nations is a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations for peace and international cooperation.

The unifying influence of the United Nations Charter was clearly demonstrated at the Asian-African Conference at Bandung. We can be certain that, if the purposes and principles of the Charter are adhered to, the world will enjoy

peace not only in the negative sense of non-war, but also in the positive sense of happiness in tranquillity, which is the sense of peace in my country and in the United Nations Charter.

The world must be saved from the scourge of war. The recent establishment of the International Atomic Energy Agency reminds us that the use of atomic energy is for peace and not for war, and if a real attempt could be made to bring about a positive step forward in the matter of disarmament, it would be hailed by all mankind.

The world must also be given the blessings of peace, namely, freedom on the basis of the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, justice on the basis of international law, and social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

The present session of the General Assembly is starting its work in an atmosphere which, in the United Nations as in the country in which we meet, is one of renewed dedication to the cause of peace, and I am confident that with a united spirit of tolerance and good will, our deliberations will be blessed with successful results for the peace, freedom, justice, and economic and social well-being of mankind.

CLOSING SPEECH
AT THE 11TH SESSION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE UNITED NATIONS*

Fellow Delegates, Mr. Secretary General,

As the Eleventh Session of the General Assembly is about to adjourn, may I, first of all, thank my colleagues I shall not name them most warmly for the very kind and generous words of appreciation which they have just addressed to me. I shall long cherish, with gratitude, the great honour and privilege which the General Assembly has bestowed upon me to serve as its presiding officer during this memorable session.

To me the General Assembly is a world forum and a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

* Delivered at New York on 12 November 1956.

For its success I consider it essential that there should be full liberty of discussion and consultation in a mutual spirit of tolerance, cooperation and goodwill. It has been my earnest endeavour to ensure this liberty and foster this spirit in the General Assembly.

As regards the measure of its success, I think we can report to the peoples of the United Nations, in whose name the Charter is concluded, that the General Assembly has shown itself to be a resourceful and conciliatory instrument of peace, dedicated to moral principles, which it is determined to uphold with the support of Member States and of world public opinion.

The General Assembly is certainly a world forum, for not only is its membership worldwide but it discusses all questions of world interest.

The agenda of the Eleventh Session comprises a comprehensive programme of normal activities for the promotion of peace, freedom, justice and economic and social well-being for mankind, as well as the two special items of Hungary and the Middle East.

The increase in membership from 60 to 80 Member States gave rise to some misgiving as to the efficient working of the General Assembly. But the apprehension has not been justified by the event. I have even welcomed the increased social activities, because they have enabled me to keep in constant touch with the various delegations. Of course,

increased membership in the United Nations involves consideration of the composition of its principal organs and also of some improvement in the procedure of the General Assembly. Certainly, group activity has increased but I find that it has facilitated mutual consultations within and among the groups, with a view not to blocking solutions but to seeking them.

Thus there have been a number of unanimous resolutions. Take, for instance, the resolution on Disarmament, recommending that the Disarmament Commission and its Sub-Committee give prompt attention to the various proposals submitted. This is a clear indication of the earnest desire of the General Assembly to see a positive step forward taken in this matter in the interest of peace.

Again, take such questions, as those of Algeria and Cyprus. It is remarkable that they have been discussed during the present session and, after discussion, general agreement has been reached for achieving peaceful, democratic and just solutions in conformity with the Charter.

Freedom in non-self-governing territories and in trust territories is also welcomed. Thus the General Assembly expresses its approval of the union of Togoland under British administration with an independent Gold Coast or Ghana, now our 81st Member State, and looks to further progress toward freedom of Togoland under French administration.

In the interest of justice, the General Assembly, accepting the advisory opinion of the International Court of

Justice, has authorized the Committee on South West Africa to grant hearings to petitioners; and, in the interest of international law, a conference to examine the law of the sea has been called.

The promotion of economic and social well-being, too, is a principal task of the United Nations, and I am glad to see that, in addition to technical assistance and investment facilities, progress is being made toward the establishment of SUNFED for the development of underdeveloped countries. I am glad, too, that consideration of the draft Covenant on Human rights is being activated, and a Convention of the Nationality of Married Women is already open for signature.

The establishment of the International Atomic Energy Agency augurs well for the peaceful uses of atomic energy which will, in time, promote better standards of life in peace and promote peace itself.

Another asset for peace is the diplomatic role of the Secretary General, it is of the utmost importance when we pass from the normal and unspectacular work of the General Assembly to a consideration of the special item on the Middle East.

The General Assembly must deal with the item and must succeed in dealing with it, because the peoples of the world only know of the United Nations and cannot be expected to differentiate between the responsibilities of the Security Council and the General Assembly.

Nevertheless, it is a fact that the General Assembly only has powers of recommendation and not of coercion. It only has moral authority and can rely only on moral force, the force of moral principles and the force of world public opinion.

Having regard to these circumstances, the General Assembly has acted promptly. Powers, great and small, have taken the initiative and come forward with constructive proposals. Thus the United Nations Emergency Force came into being. The General Assembly rapidly passed resolutions couched in general terms and the Secretary General has implemented them by delicate and arduous negotiations, supported therein by the force of world opinion.

The efficacy of Assembly action depends on its moral force, which in turn, depends on the understanding by world opinion of the moral principle underlying each Assembly recommendation, and this may take time and may involve progressive steps being taken before success is secured.

In the case of the Middle East, the General Assembly has stopped a war and is building up a foundation of peace based on the principles of the Charter and not on expediency. This is no mean achievement and the General Assembly can now adjourn with a feeling of satisfaction at the reward of its determined and laborious efforts.

And now it only remains for me to express my deep gratitude to all who have afforded me their unstinted cooperation and assistance.

I am sure my fellow delegates join with me in extending our grateful thanks to the Secretary General and his Executive Assistant as well as his associates, Secretaries of Committees, and all the members of his staff, both those whom we see and hear and those who work in the recesses of the Secretariat. The Secretary General is to be congratulated not only on his own prodigious contribution to the work of the United Nations but also on his administration of an international service which is impartial and well-coordinated as well as devoted, competent and efficient.

Our cordial thanks also go to the United Nations officers as well as United Nations and other correspondents who, through the press, radio and television, have helped to mobilise world public opinion in support of the United Nations.

And finally I would ask the Vice-Presidents, Committee Chairmen, Vice-Chairmen and Rapporteurs, as well as all my fellow delegates to accept my warmest thanks for their cooperation and goodwill. It is the spirit of cooperation and goodwill that I prize the most, for it is this spirit added to your tireless and determined efforts that has brought us the successful results of this session. May I now wish each and all of you a well-earned rest so that, after it, you may resume your work with renewed vigour for the United Nations cause of peace, freedom, justice and human welfare.

THE THAI IDEA OF FREEDOM*

When the late Dr. Smith, then Chairman of your Program Committee, asked me to speak to your Association again, I was very glad to accept, because I welcome every opportunity of bringing about a still better and closer understanding between our two peoples, and talking to you gives me such an opportunity.

As a tribute to the memory of Dr. Smith, whose untimely death we all deeply regret, because he was doing such good work in the field of political education, I have chosen a subject of political science but, of course, in a talk after lunch I shall not deal with it academically but just to let you have a taste of some dessert for thought. That is why

* Delivered at the Meeting of the American Association on 26 January 1954.

I have not called my subject *The Thai concept of freedom* but *The Thai idea of freedom*.

The question has often been asked, and is still being asked, whether free democracy can work in Asia, because it is distinctly a western concept and development. Very serious doubt about this has been raised and is being raised. Hope in this respect, however, has been expressed for the Philippines, thanks, among other factors, to American guidance and example. But what about Thailand? Here I would submit that in Thailand, too, free democracy has a very real chance of permanent success. It is true that the democratic regime in this country has been established and developed by the Thai people themselves, without the direct guidance of a foreign democratic power, but the Thai leaders, of course, have been and continue to be influenced by western concepts of free democracy. On the other hand, it may well be that because the Thai people have been working out their own democratic regime themselves, such regime will have a good chance of success. At any rate, those of you who have heard me talk before this Association last year would remember how adaptable the Thai people are to a western way of life.

On the present occasion, I shall endeavour to show you how receptive the Thai people are to the western idea of freedom.

I suppose I can take President Roosevelt's formulation of the Four Freedoms as a comprehensive statement of the western concept of freedom. I shall leave aside the freedom from fear and the freedom from want.

For the freedom from fear I would just reaffirm our earnest support of the United Nations and our faith in that world organisation as well as our determined policy of close cooperation with the United States and other free countries in defending ourselves against the danger of aggression.

As regards the freedom from want, the Thai people are grateful for the bounty of Nature but plenty is a relative term and, through contact with the modern world, the needs of both the Thai nation and the Thai people grow from day to day. The Government of Thailand, therefore, has to pursue a more and more active policy in developing the natural resources of the country and in providing greater welfare facilities and assistance. Nevertheless, it can, fortunately, still be said that the freedom from want is not yet an acute problem in this country.

The freedom of conscience need not detain us long. Buddhism, which is the religion of the vast majority of the Thai people, has been well known, throughout the centuries, for its tolerance.

Turpin, in his *History of Siam*, has this to say on tolerance: *Although superstition has corrupted all their minds, they tolerate every religious cult. Their respect for the traditions of*

their ancestors does not inspire into them any aversion to alien ceremonies. This stubborn attachment to error makes them believe that they have superiority over the other nations that do not think like themselves; but they only pity those who have the misfortune of being deprived of the light which shines for them; difference of opinion never engenders hatred, and ambition is not at all covered by the veil of religion in order to light the torch of civil discords. A French traveller, who had long studied their character, remained convinced that they were all born philosophers.

Whatever truth there may be in this last assertion, the fact remains that there is complete tolerance in this country. The Kings of Thailand have even granted lands to missionaries for the building of their churches, schools and hospitals.

Buddhism, in fact, is a religion which upholds the dignity of man and promotes human rights and freedom. It teaches a universal Law of Karma or Action, which is applicable to all human beings. The law of Karma is simply stated thus: *Do good and you will get good; do evil and you will get evil. When a person is born, he or she starts with the Karma or Deed from past life. The Karma is improved by good deeds and is worsened by evil deeds. Thus you must help yourself by doing good. As, in action, there is an exercise of the will, man is not bound by predetermined fate but by Karma which he can modify by his deeds. He is, therefore, free to work out his own destiny on the basis of his past Karma. Herein lie the dignity and freedom of man.*

Buddhism is also a religion of humanity and the brotherhood of man. As Christianity is a religion of love: *Love thy neighbour as thyself*, so Buddhism is a religion of compassion: *As a mother at the risk of her life watches over her own child, her only child, so also let everyone cultivate a boundless friendly mind towards all beings.*

Having given you the above background I can now deal with the remaining freedom, namely, the freedom of expression, for it is not sufficient for you to be able to believe whatever you think and feel is right, but you must be able to express whatever you think and feel is right as well. This is the crucial but difficult and delicate test of individual freedom as against the claims of public authority.

Such individual liberty has been growing for centuries in the West, and in the United States it has reached a very high peak: it is a very live force in the way of life of the American people, because it was not just granted to them but they won it and they had to fight for it; and they fought for it on the right principle of no taxation without representation. Thus representative government has been very fully developed in the United States; and with representative government, authority and liberty meet on the common ground of responsibility: no power is exercised without responsibility nor is any freedom exercised without responsibility. In a country, however, where the democratic regime is newly established, it is only natural that the talk

one hears is usually that too much power is being exercised and not enough freedom: there is little talk of responsibility on either side, and yet responsibility is the crucial element to look out for.

I will now proceed to put this test to the various stages in the political development of Thailand.

First, there was the period of Sukhothai, which means the Dawn of Happiness. That was the first Thai kingdom in this country. Let me read a few lines of the stone inscriptions of Sukhothai to you.

After describing the prosperity and freedom of trade of Sukhothai, the inscriptions say: *At the gateway there is a bell hung up. If anyone of the public has a complaint or grievance of body or of mind to place before the King he only has to sound the bell that is hung up. King Ramkhamhaeng, on hearing it, will call him up for an upright investigation.*

The people in this city of Sukhothai are, therefore, glad to cultivate plantations of areca-nut and betel everywhere in this city. Coconut plantations abound in this city. Jack-fruit plantations abound in this city. Tamarind trees also abound in this city. Whoever cultivates them owns them.

The people in this city of Sukhothai are charitable, pious and devoted to alms-giving. King Ramkhamhaeng, the ruler of Sukhothai, as well as princes and princesses, gentlemen and ladies of the nobility and men and women all have faith in the Buddhist religion...

You can see that it was a real age of freedom, freedom based on justice and religious faith. Only it could not last because the regime was suited to city states rather than to countries.

In the Ayutthaya period, that is to say, from the middle of the fourteenth Century, the regime was one of absolute monarchy on the Cambodian model, but the divine right of kings was not accepted in this country. It is true that we use the word Omkar-Divine Utterance for Royal Command, but in the king's style and title given to him at his coronation there is a phrase in Pali อเนกชนนิกรสโมสรสมมติ, which means *elected by the people in assembly*. The king solemnly promises to rule with righteousness and justice. He has to observe the ten Buddhist kingly duties-liberality, piety, charity, freedom from wrath, mercy, patience, rectitude, mildness, devotion, and freedom from enmity.

It will be noticed that the emphasis is on the duty side of government and not on that of power. In other words, there is a religious check of responsibility on power.

Of course, when the traditional check on absolute monarchy was not observed, there was trouble, as indicated by the Thai Prime Minister to Townsend Harris, the American Envoy in 1856, who writes in his Journal: *On being asked if there were often changes in the dynasty, he uttered the real republican sentiment that kings who claim their title by right of birth, often forget they originated from the people, consider*

themselves as superior beings and don't lend an ear to the sufferings of their subjects – so there was often a change at the fourth generation of princes of the same dynasty.

But, normally, the king would have the welfare of his people at heart. The Thammasat or Book of Fundamental Law describes the act of judgment by the king in this way: *He intently listens to the case justly tried by the judges; and with this as a magnifying glass and with the Book of Fundamental Law as his eyes, he duly looks at the prevailing condition of the country. Then, with his presence of mind as his right hand, he takes the sword of reason and cuts the knot of all cases of the people justly.*

The Thammasat itself constituted a check on the king. It makes a distinction between Thammasat or Fundamental Law, or in the language of the West, the Law of Nature and Rachasat, the Royal Law. Every command of the absolute monarch was law but only Rachasat or king-made law. The king, however, was to prescribe the law only as it flows out of, and conforms to, the Thammasat or Fundamental Law.

The modern Fundamental Law is, of course, to be found in the Constitution, in which both authority and liberty are defined in accordance with western principles. The Constitution is revered by the Thai people, but if it is to have life, it cannot be a mere legal instrument: it must be a living and inspiring spirit.

With the historical background of the spirit of freedom of the Thai people which I have sketched to you, I am

convinced that the institutions of freedom provided for in the Constitution will grow and thrive, especially as they are safeguarded by representative government.

I have dealt with the traditional check of responsibility on power. I have not done so with the restraint of responsibility on the exercise of freedom. The simple reason is that the freedom of expression, such as the freedom of the press, is of relatively recent growth, and I might even say that it has been imported into this country. The credit for setting up the first printing press and for establishing the first newspaper in Thailand goes to the American missionaries.

Overjoyed by the establishment of the democratic regime, the Thai people acclaim their newly acquired liberties. It is quite natural, too, that the Thai press should wish to write and say whatever it pleases. But it will learn in time that the restraint of responsibility attaches to the exercise of the freedom of expression and that what it should write and say is what it sees fit and not what it pleases. The voice of the people is the voice of God. Yes, but a voice is something articulate and modulated with pitch and tone. Otherwise, the sound uttered is mere noise.

That is what we have got to learn and develop. I am confident of the successful outcome, for I believe with Chief Justice Warren that the power of free peoples lies in freedom of thought and of research and that in a free system dissenters can let off steam. Such liberty will surely abide in Thailand.

THANAT KHOMAN



Thanat Khoman
Minister of Foreign Affairs
February 1959 - November 1971

A POLICY OF REGIONAL COOPERATION*

The principal reason that prompts men and nations to move ahead, sometimes with great difficulty and not without sacrifice, is that we all want to be free, to remain masters of our own destiny and not to be under the boots of some foreign power. Through the centuries that the Thai nation has maintained its independence, our national existence was often challenged but ultimately saved by the skills of its leaders and the indomitable courage of the people. It remains therefore the primary duty and fundamental responsibility of the Thai Government and people to continue to safeguard their country's independence and cherished heritage of freedom. In the past, our forebears were successful against heavy odds and in the face of grave threats or actual

* Published in *Industrial Review* 1968. A Bangkok Post Supplement.

encroachments by hostile forces; today, the danger has not diminished but has, on the contrary, become intensified and more widespread. Survival and orderly development are the keystones in both domestic and foreign policies of the nation which has already possessed a substantial fund of experience to draw upon. Consequently, Thailand is confident that it is sufficiently equipped to look after its own interests and at the same time to work with its friends and allies who would want to cooperate with it for fulfilment of the common interests of maintaining peace and promoting progress in and outside the region.

In the conduct of foreign affairs, smaller nations, particularly the countries of South East Asia, do not have many policy choices. It was not so long ago that almost all of them had no choice at all but had to obey the commands of their colonial masters without being able to consult with their friends and neighbours. It is not difficult to see why they emerged from their dependent status unprepared for the challenges, open as well as insidious, of the post-independence era. Indeed they find themselves racked with violence at home instigated by ruthless agents of international communism and are caught in the throes of the Cold War struggle in the international or global context, while all they want is to be allowed to pursue freely their economic development and national consolidation. In such a predicament such a nation can adopt a policy of not being involved with one side or the

other. Or it can choose to be on good terms with the sources, real or possible, of danger to its internal stability and national security. Or it can try to face the threats and dangers with or without the aid and assistance of friendly powers.

To choose not to be on one side or on the other is not always easy, because the sides move and the middle line, the median, is not always perceptible. Therefore, one is inclined to lean either to the left or to the right, or at least to zigzag, and zigzagging is not exactly non-involvement or non-alignment. And perhaps the bitter lesson that may be seen in the recent past is that non-alignment is not a cure-all, it is not even a safe device, because those who chose to follow a non-aligned policy have been the first to be subjected to attacks and also to threatening dangers. Thus it would be difficult to see Thailand follow such a policy which has not proven to be very beneficial to those who have tried to follow it. If one looks left and right, north and south, it is apparent that those who followed the policy of non-alignment or non-involvement were those who suffered most from that policy. Because to play the non-alignment game, one has to have either the explicit or tacit agreement of both sides, that they will not trample upon one. If both or one of the sides are not willing to recognize those who want to stay in the middle, then one is in the line of fire and non-alignment is impossible under such conditions.

The second policy choice is to seek to mitigate the danger, to go to the sources of danger and to try and come

to terms with them. This could be a practical situation, which should receive a lot of thought. But from practical experience, it has not been possible since those who have been trying to deal directly and face to face with the sources of danger have lost a few feathers. The last one who just came out from there was the distinguished European diplomat who took more than a year to obtain permission to leave the country to which he was accredited. Many others have had to experience similar difficulties. Therefore, it would be very difficult for a small country like Thailand to venture out and to try to court danger at its source. However, Thailand does not lose hope. If tomorrow there are straws in the wind and if the wind begins to blow and the straws begin to fly, Thailand may decide to go directly and face the danger, and try to reason and see what is going to happen. Thailand cannot produce the straws and make the wind blow, but the possibility is there and Thailand continues to keep the vision of a future when all the nations in this part of the world can get together and try to work out a solution to the problems facing them.

The last alternative is one that is thought to be better than the foregoing possibilities, namely that the nations of South East Asia should put their heads together, to pool their resources and try to reap maximum benefits from working together by means of cooperation in all fields including frequent political consultations which may be termed "collective political defence." This is not to say that the nations

which are willing to contribute to such a partnership for mutual benefits need to establish a military alliance or organization. The countries in this area cannot make worthwhile military contributions to help shore up their common defence, as none of them is regarded as a military power. On the other hand, our experience has shown that the existing collective defence organizations have been weakened by the divergences of interests and differences in attitude among their members which are separated by political, geographical, cultural and linguistic barriers. A more closely-knit association of nations with common aspirations and similar aims appears to offer the best way of achieving security and progress for its individual members as well as for the region as a whole.

In the light of recent developments in East Europe, it may also be mentioned that even if one swore allegiance to one camp and even declared one's eternal friendship for the fellow inmates, one is not entirely safe from tanks, guns and troops and the crushing yoke of socialist imperialism, in a Marxist paradise.

Confronted with the realities of international life and the necessity of making a choice among various alternative policies in order to safeguard the peace, stability and integrity of this part of the world, the peoples of South East Asia have come to recognize that they have to work together, to pool their efforts in a partnership of equality and mutual benefits.

This realization by the leaders of a few South East Asian nations at first may be said to have acquired wider adherence and support. The first concrete result dated back to 1961 when the then Federation of Malaya, the Republic of the Philippines and the Kingdom of Thailand jointly launched the Association of South East Asia, or ASA – the first experiment in regional undertaking which may be attributed to as a source of stimuli for greater cooperation in a wider area, embracing not only a major part of South East Asia but also the Asian and Pacific region. The establishment of the Asian and Pacific Council, or ASPAC, and that of the Association of South East Asian Nations, or ASEAN, bear testimony the fact that an entirely new path has been charted for the otherwise disparate countries of the areas to organize themselves into an entity. The course may not be entirely free from impediments and obstacles. However, in spite of all the difficulties, great strides have been made. In less than three years, dating from the end of the ‘confrontation’ which took place in our capital city, we have brought about a consciousness that South East Asian nations must come together, close their ranks and work with each other in common endeavours; otherwise they will perish. This is the stark reality of life which will never disappear from this part of the world. This change of vision has begun to materialize after many years of efforts, many moments of trials and tribulations, on the part of many South East Asian nations. It should be made clear that the adoption of

the choice of regional cooperation is not motivated by an acceptance of one, or a rejection of another political ideology or economic dogma. It represents a culmination of thoughts that have been weighed against the vicissitudes of international life.

After examining the whole range of problems facing the region, it may be logical to conclude that the nations and peoples of Southeast Asia are in need of regional co-operation and solidarity today more than ever. It offers us the best possible way for not only surviving as free nations and peoples but also for progress and prosperity for our respective peoples. It will render us more immune to the winds of change in far away places which may be friendly places but which offer comfortable sanctuaries for many who would like nothing better than to lead us to the sacrificial altar in order to pacify their so-called “liberal” conscience. Furthermore, through regional co-operation based on equal partnership and mutual benefit, a power base can be set up for the nations in the area to deal more adequately and more advantageously with both foe and friend, with outside powers and with powers inside the region. This power base will help our group to become respectable in the eyes of our foes and at the same time serve as a entity for our friends to co-operate with on a more equal footing to preserve peace and stability in this region in a more meaningful manner. Alone, each nation in South East Asia is a tiny speck on the global landscape,

but, united, they will become a viable entity of more than 200 million people with an abundance of resources. One of these days, the ASPAC may extend to the extreme east of the Pacific region to encompass great powers and larger nations beyond the horizon. That is our vision, our concept of a concentric circle, from South East Asia to the extreme shores of the Pacific community – but, as one success inspires another, the achievement of the present regional undertakings will soon turn it into a reality.

With the support and encouragement from friends, both near and far, we shall succeed in what we have been striving to do for the past many years.

RECONSTRUCTION OF ASIA

The ancient continent of Asia has been a cradle of many civilizations some of which have left indelible imprints on the cultures of other continents. Asia has also witnessed through the centuries many catastrophes, devastating wars and violent convulsions which have left untold sufferings and widespread ravages in their wake. While empires have crumbled into dust, the dreams of a peaceful, stable and prosperous Asia have continued to inspire countless generations to undertake noble and gallant deeds in the hope of turning dreams into reality. Yet those dreams have thus far been largely unfulfilled. As the world turns, peoples of Asia who are steeped in tradition and imbued with wisdom of the ages continue to survive but hardly to prosper amid teeming millions in underprivileged and uneducated masses separated from one another by barriers partly of their own

making and partly imposed on them from outside. Nations which were once powerful and wealthy have been subjugated, divided and exploited by external forces which sought to extend their own rivalries for wealth and power to this part of the world. Under the western colonial rule, the masses were subdued and emasculated for decades, but there were always dreamers and visionaries for whom the sustaining force and moving spirit was the idea of Asia restored to its dignified, and worthy place in the world. Under their leadership, movements for self-determination took firm root in the soil of many former colonies and vassal states on this continent. A union of aspiration and pragmatism was forged, not without sacrifices, to produce independent statehoods for peoples who have tasted but little freedom in the latter part of the most recent world-wide conflict, when the retiring invaders gave a measure of independence to some of the occupied territories. Although, subsequently, the western colonialists returned and sought to reimpose their hegemony over those lands which they had formerly governed, the shackles have been irreparably shattered and after further sacrifices the Asians have finally earned their right to live as free, sovereign and independent peoples.

AFTER WORLD WAR II: PROBLEMS ALONG THE WAY AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

After the end of the second world war, struggles for independence ensued and, in some cases, were prolonged, costly and aggravated by certain nefarious elements which nurtured their own evil designs in support of an alien ideology, Marxism. They also deceptively used the banner of nationalism as their flag of convenience. Once independence was assured, however, their real motive became evident, and taking advantage of external support they succeeded in some instances to gain control of the reigns of government and have since consolidated their power and authority. By such initial successes their appetite has been whetted for further conquest and expansion. It was then discovered by the newly-independent peoples that a new and much more serious danger is posed by the militaristic and totalitarian communist regimes in Asia which endeavour to turn the clock back to the days when small nations along the periphery of a continent could exist only in bondage or under the suzerainty of a powerful middle empire. To carry out their scheme of conquest and domination they have resorted to the new tactic of so-called “wars of national liberation” or “revolutionary wars” against the legitimate authorities of neighbouring countries. Such a concept of warfare takes a composite form of propaganda, infiltration, subversion,

and insurgency, and involves co-ordinated struggles at the economic, political, and military levels all at once. The new tactic was put to use after open communist aggression in Korea had proven a failure for its instigators and supporters, and has, at least in the beginning, shown some results in South Vietnam, Laos, and, at earlier stages, in Burma, Cambodia, the Philippines, and other countries of South-east Asia.

The situation in the area is still dominated by aggressive and expansionist thrusts on the part of Asian Communists over the entire South-east Asian peninsula. These forward thrusting moves which deeply affect the peace and security of the area may be analysed and classified into four principal categories as follows:

First, there is the so-called war of national liberation or revolutionary war of the Vietnam type, which aims at securing an absolute domination and control over the entire territory by force of arms. This, of course, is fully in evidence in Vietnam and represents the final stage of **military** conquest to wrestle control from legitimate authorities and implement the scheme of communist conquest of free nations.

Second, we have the *de facto* control through consolidating military, political and administrative measures after having gained an initial foothold. This is the situation in Northern Laos where the Chinese Communists and the North Vietnamese Communists have been active in building their communication networks and administrative structure

in the occupied provinces of Phongsaly and Samneua. Such a foothold has been gained after the Geneva Accords of 1954 had been concluded. The Asian Communist regimes were parties to these and subsequent Geneva agreement but failed to honour them. Instead they continued to entrench themselves in these Laotian territories and have in fact been exercising administrative and other controls as if the territories were under their own jurisdiction.

Third, the military operations and control by Hanoi authorities in Southern Laos to keep the life line and supply channel open to support their war of aggression in Vietnam. The actions in this category may have a limited primary objective or may start with an end other than permanent territorial control in view, and therefore may be differentiated from the second category above. However, they may also be used as a bargaining point by the communists in any negotiations involving peace and security in the region, despite the fact that it constitutes in the first place a blatant violation of previous agreements. Caution must therefore be exercised so as not to admit a unilateral concession in return for yet another empty promise by the communists of merely agreeing to uphold existing obligations which they have adamantly failed to fulfil but have taken every opportunity to violate. In any event, it should be noted that a temporary advantage by the communists will usually be converted into permanent gain, and an expanding one as well.

Fourth, the subversive activities as seen in Burma and Thailand, and regarded at the preliminary or initial phase of a “revolutionary” war which may or may not be followed by subsequent stages depending on the reactions and resistance of the victims. Similar activities are being developed against India in the Northeastern border region of that country. In Thailand, it is also noted that the communists have increased their infiltration and intensified their subversion of the hill tribes, some members of which are being used against the legitimate authorities. Similar developments are taking place in certain parts of Laos, particularly in areas adjacent to the border between Laos and Northern Thailand.

In the case of Laos, the North Vietnamese communists have been and are using Cambodian territory to support their war of aggression in South Vietnam. This fact has supplied added military and political pressures on Prince Sihanouk’s regime and obliged it recently to resort to the devious tactics of showing an apparent inclination to reconcile its differences with the West in order to extort concessions from the Marxist regimes, particularly North Vietnam. Such tactics involve possibilities of reversals and thus a great deal of uncertainty and unpredictability. That is why the Thai government has maintained a reserved and wait-and-see attitude vis-à-vis private offers of reconciliation with Cambodia through third parties.

In their individual search for ways and means of facing up to events as they – the nations of Asia – envisage upon

re-emerging from their colonial past, many possibilities and approaches were explored. Although in some cases the search is still continuing, the courses which have been tried can be shown to have failed to yield the desired results. For example, some countries have resorted to what is called a policy of non-alignment which is predicated on the belief that mutual understanding, good neighbourliness and peaceful co-existence are possible, between them and the Asian communist regimes. But for non-alignment to be effective, the practitioners must endeavour to be genuinely impartial and neutral in the conduct of international affairs, which is not always the case. Moreover, good faith is needed on the part of the contending powers as well, which is often lacking on the communist side. The events in Laos both before and after the Geneva Agreements of 1962 have tended to confirm the truth of this statement. A few of these countries have even tried to befriend the Asian communist regimes and have been more than generous in dealing with them. The unhappy outcome was that they were left defenceless against the communist onslaughts, and were directly or indirectly attacked one after another. Other countries have sought to rely on outside help and, disappointed with the collective security machinery set up by the United Nations, have established for their self-defence military organization or arrangements. Thailand was one of those nations, but the experience has not been entirely satisfactory. However,

the South-east Asia Treaty Organization or SEATO which maintains its headquarters in Bangkok still has a useful role to play in helping to strengthen the capability of its members to resist overt aggression. The grave defect has been that it is unable to take any collective action as a body. Furthermore, as is well known, there is little, if any likelihood that a new and more effective security arrangement can be arrived at under present circumstances. The countries of the region themselves are not strong enough militarily to establish a viable defence organization, and given the evidence as presented by such bodies as SEATO it is doubtful they would be interested in forming any new military alliance at all, whatever the composition of its membership. Another alternative must be found which merits the support of the countries most concerned with the security and well-being of the region.

The newly independent Asian Nations also discovered that it was not easy to reconstruct their countries according to the vision they had entertained during their period of servitude. They have been compelled by force of circumstances and sheer necessity to maintain economic ties with their former masters who had heretofore exploited their man-power and material resources with hardly a thought about their welfare. Upon attaining independence, they found that they lacked experienced administrators, qualified teachers and skilled technicians, as well as the necessary capital for

immediate expenditures and long-term development. Under such a severe handicap, some Asian nations had to temper their rejoice at having become masters of their own houses with austerity and reforms. But most of them felt the need to develop their economies and had to accept aid in the form of capital funds, expert skills, and technical services and equipment from the more affluent nations. Such aids are often said to be without strings attached, but the recipients are well aware that they are expected by the donor countries not to be oblivious to the latter's policies and interests. Furthermore, the sources of foreign aid are dwindling as fast as the rise on cost of the wherewithals needed for economic development and for implementing development projects. Private foreign investments certainly offer a valuable alternative as a means of channelling needed capital to a developing economy and constitute, therefore, a significant source of funds. But, in order to attract private foreign investments, a country must be prepared to offer many incentives and, above all, must be in a position to offer the right investment 'climate.' Many Asian countries which badly need capital investment are not in such a position and themselves at a distinct disadvantage. Such a sorry state of affairs has also been partly or, in cases like Vietnam, wholly brought about by the disruptive actions of the communist expansionists who employ every opportunity to undermine the legitimate authorities with a view to gaining absolute control over a country or territory.

It is apparent, therefore, that wars and conflicts instigated and carried out by the Asian Communist regimes in such places as South Vietnam, Laos, and other countries in the area have seriously hindered progress in the reconstruction of Asia to fit the image of an enlightened and progressive continent, and have tended to becloud the prospects of achieving world peace for Asia is after all an area of conflicting interests with wide-ranging repercussions. The policy alternatives that have been tried do not seem to work or to be capable of bringing us closer to our goals. And yet there must be an alternative, for we cannot bring ourselves to accept any fatalistic attitude or outdated geo-political concepts proffered by the prophets of doom. One thing seems certain, as it is logical and reasonable, namely that there is a growing necessity for nations to try to find a common path and not to go their separate and sometimes opposing ways, at least in the interest of self-preservation. Neither can we afford to indulge in the doings of the legendary three monkeys who see no evil, speak no evil, and hear no evil, while the continent which is our home is drifting apart or being torn asunder. And if we set our sights beyond, obeying the animal instinct of survival, and on the human aspirations of upholding our dignity and values as men and women who have been endowed with a higher intellect and of achieving spiritual advancement as well as material progress, then we must work together to create and develop a sense of cohesiveness and solidarity among ourselves.

GOALS REDEFINED

There should be no difficulty in defining the goals which countless generations of Asians have been striving for. One does not have to be conversant in the interpretation of dreams to realize that the Asian people of today will not accept any rigid mould in which their way of life may be cast by alien ideologists or foreign-inspired ideologies or by concepts which are not indigenous to the conditions and thoughts in this part of the world. They do not want and have no need for any attempt to create or recreate Asia in the image of foreign ideology or alien philosophy. Neither do they want to see their future shaped according to the thoughts or notions of any particular individual, Asian or otherwise, unless it is according to their own free will as well. It is therefore unfortunate that the minds of some have failed, wittingly or unwittingly, to grasp the significance and fundamental truth of this inevitable development, and have sought to devise a nefarious scheme to upset and disrupt the natural course of things for their own selfish ends. The havoc that the communist aggressors have wrecked on their victims will require not only rehabilitation of the latter but also a renewed and more determined effort on the part of the international community to grapple with the problems of general settlement and reconstruction on the Asian continent.

What Asia wants is a harmonization of efforts, guided by the Asian spirit of tolerance and partnership, to better the impoverished conditions of its masses. Internal convulsions and internecine conflicts will succeed only in aggravating the situation and prolonging the sufferings. What a rich nation can do single-handed, poor nations must accomplish in concert. Sources of friction and tension must be minimized and, if possible, neutralized. The heinous concept of domination and subjection, in particular, must be replaced by that of cooperation on a basis of equality. Helping hands from outside the region are welcomed if they are motivated by genuine friendship. Nevertheless, the Asian peoples themselves must be prepared and willing to shoulder a greater burden of responsibility in coping with their own problems if they are ever going to take their rightful part in world affairs. For to have a voice that is heard as well as appreciated in international affairs especially when they directly affect Asian interests is the stuff of which the Asian dreams are made. Asia will resist with vigour any attempt by outsiders to dominate and worse, to control its political life as well as its economic and social development. It will likewise reject the tyranny of foreign mass media which seek to shape and mould Asian national and regional thinking to their own selfish image as they are wont to do in their own homelands. Such journalistic imperialism should not be tolerated.

REGIONAL COOPERATION: THE TRUE AND ONLY ALTERNATIVE

A new beginning has already been made even while conflicts are still raging in many parts of Asia, particularly in Southeast Asia. Thailand is proud to play an active role in trying to promote regional consciousness and solidarity by means of beneficial cooperation in the political, economic, social and cultural fields. Beginning with the Association of Southeast Asia (ASA), such regional efforts have expanded and attracted a larger number of interested countries, thus making it possible to establish such organizations as the Asian and Pacific Council (ASPAC), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Secretariat (SEAMES), the Conference of Ministers for the Economic Development of Southeast Asia, and the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

One of the above-mentioned regional organizations will be discussed in greater detail here to show some of the accomplishments, namely the Asian and Pacific Council or ASPAC.

In June 1966, the Foreign Ministers of Australia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Republic of China, the Philippines, Thailand and the Republic of Vietnam met in Seoul to form the Asian and Pacific Council, with Laos as observer. It was agreed at the outset that the

grouping would be non-military and non-ideological. It was not set up to carry out activities against any nation or people, but is founded on the earnest desire and readiness of the member countries to work in close cooperation with each other on peaceful and constructive undertakings for the economic, social and cultural advancement of the member countries themselves as well as of the region.

The Asian and Pacific Council convened its second meeting in Bangkok in the following year. Prior to that and during the course of the year, its standing committee had held regular meetings in Thailand's capital to study various proposals and conduct business on the Council's behalf. Last year, the standing committee and, subsequently, the Council itself met in Canberra, the capital of Australia. Early this year, the fourth council meeting was held in Kawana, Japan.

In the economic, social and cultural fields, ASPAC's modest but encouraging achievements comprise the establishment of a Registry of Experts in Canberra, an ASPAC Social and Cultural Centre in Seoul, a Food and Fertilizer Technological Centre in Taipei, and, in principle, an Economic Cooperation Centre in Bangkok. But at least equal significance should be given to the usefulness of ASPAC as a forum for close consultation and frank exchange of views on political matters of interest to Asia, and this purpose has not thus far been marred by political differences between member countries.

Therefore, one may be justified in taking the view that, despite certain difficulties and setbacks, there seems to be no better alternative or any likelihood that the clock can be turned back with equanimity, but to pursue with greater vigour every possibility of peaceful collaboration by Asian countries in all fields of human endeavour. It is not uncommon for new ventures to be beset with teething troubles, but as long as the basic unity of purpose remains unsullied by discouraging turns of events, the efforts must continue to gain momentum and make more meaningful headway. If the aggressive forces can be persuaded to change course and to join in our constructive pursuits by the attractive prospect of ample rewards to be gained thereby, a weighty obstacle to progress in performing the task of reconstruction of Asia will be effectively overcome. We shall then be able to make the Asian dreams come true, and the Asian and Pacific region will become, in the words of Prime Minister Sato of Japan, "Pacific Asia."

GENERAL SETTLEMENT AFTER VIETNAM

It is imperative that the right of the people of South Vietnam to determine their own future free from external interference and coercion of any kind be upheld, or otherwise similar rights of peoples of Asia, and perhaps also elsewhere, will be endangered. If aggression were allowed to reap its evil

fruit, the Asian dreams would turn into nightmares. But it is also becoming increasingly apparent that, whatever the ultimate outcome of the war, a shift in the scale of forces has taken place and may be more keenly felt as time goes by. To restore peace, and not simply maintain an uneasy truce, will require a general settlement involving the participation of Asian countries including Communist China. Thus it may be a long way off, since Peking has recently, at the ninth Communist Party Congress, confirmed its hostile attitude and bellicose policy towards neighbouring countries. Such negative pronouncements from Peking can only make the road towards settlement more arduous and painful, for they are blatantly reactionary and run counter to the mainstream of Asian life and thoughts. But the improbable is not impossible, and it may be worthwhile to explore all avenues for a chance of establishing a sensible dialogue without compromising the basic tenets and fundamental principles of enlightened Asia. The potential and actual role of the Soviet Union as an Asian Power, and the presence, military or otherwise, of the United States as a Pacific power also cannot be ignored. The former has made noteworthy inroads in South and Southeast Asia, and the Sino-Soviet conflict which has recently erupted into violent actions will compel the Soviet Union to be increasingly preoccupied with East Asian affairs with certain repercussions in other parts of Asia. The latter, the US, is now less inclined to get involved in a

land war on continental Asia, but will likely continue to have stakes in this part of the world. Japan, with her industrial and technological achievements, is destined to exert a growing influence in the political sphere. It is hoped that such influence will be a benevolent one, a welcomed extension of her esteemed participation in the existing regional frameworks of cooperation and constructive undertaking.

It is also expected that the general settlement will be arrived at in conjunction with the rehabilitation of the economies of South East Asian countries ravaged by wars and conflicts, which will require active participation by nations both in and outside the region. Japan, and other developed countries, have an interest in developing new markets for their industries and other products, and should, therefore, find ample opportunities to assist the less fortunate nations along the road of recovery.

If rehabilitation and general settlement are brought about, each and every nation this continent stands to benefit, and the Asian dreams will be brought closer to fulfilment. But such advantages will never accrue, if aggression is rewarded, for no rule of law or reign of peace will be possible then. And the Asian dreams will vanish, perhaps never to recur.

CONCLUSION

It is hoped that Asian leaders have learnt the lessons of the past, and if they persist in the right course, then perhaps in not too distant a future Asian Nations will be able to dispense with external assistance and to stand together on their own feet free from the whims or dictates of other nations. And at the same time they will be able to regulate their conduct towards each other on the basis of equal partnership and mutuality of interests. They will not have to accept any solutions imposed by outsiders with little understanding of or sympathy for their problems. Perhaps they will then be in a position to contribute in generous abundance their undoubted energies, time-proven values, and enormous reservoirs of resources which lie untapped on the world's biggest land mass, for the betterment of mankind as a whole. If they succeed in bringing to fruition only a small part of their dreams, a new horizon will open up from sea to sky and across the vast expanse of human experience. Asia will then recover its true identity and a fitful place on this shrinking planet of ours.

PROSPECTS OF A NEW PAX ASIANA^{*}

OPENING REMARKS

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is for me a privilege and pleasure to be speaking before such distinguished and friendly audience this evening in this impressive John F. Kennedy Hall on the picturesque campus of this great institution of high learning, the Center for Cultural and Technical Interchange Between East and West.

The East-West Center enjoys worldwide renown and the enviable reputation of being truly an academic landmark. Of course, East and West here do not carry the same meaning as East and West in the Cold War context; nor does East

^{*} Delivered at the East-West Center, Hawaii on 9 October 1969.

connote the East of Kipling's time, but a more dignified and better understood East. For, significantly and Kipling notwithstanding, the Center endeavours to create and perpetuate an interchange of useful ideas, of knowledge and information, and, above all, of better understanding and mutual respect and appreciation, between East and West, in the hope of bringing the twain closer together if not actually meeting each other. Indeed the fact of being together may be of less significance than to reach a meeting of the hearts and the minds. I hope I shall succeed in deepening our understanding after this enjoyable visit to Hawaii.

For the brief but meaningful and memorable opportunity of making it all possible, I should like to thank the sponsors of the Dillingham Distinguished Lecture Series and the East-West Center, as well as all of you who are here this evening and to whom I bring the cordial greetings and good wishes of the people of Thailand.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

It may perhaps be assumed that the people of the State of Hawaii tend to feel a certain sense of affinity toward the ancient continent of Asia, for after all there are many among you who are related by ties of blood to Asian people and who may sense the ebb and flow of Asian sentiments coursing

through your veins. The humane and age-old cultures of Asia have made an indelible impression and found significant expression in the midst of these verdant islands; and thus Hawaii is justified in staking the claim to be a link between East and West, the old and the new, the spiritual and the technological. Moreover, Hawaii is a constant reminder that the United States is also a Pacific power and that the Second World War in this part of the world erupted first in Hawaii on that fateful Sunday morning when the rain of destruction left scars on the rich volcanic soil. Hawaii standing at the Pacific crossroads then became the most important link in the chain of command and line of supply stretching to the East, as is today, this time in support of the allied efforts to stem the tide of communist aggression in Vietnam and to ensure freedom and independence for the South Vietnamese people. However, that first traumatic shock on 7 December 1941 and the ubiquitous presence of the War during the following three years must have inflicted unforgettable hardship on the Hawaiian people for it had seemed at that troubled moment in history that the world was rent apart and a chasm developed that would divide Asia and America for many years and perhaps decades to come.

Thus it may appear to some that the winds from the East have neither been benign nor soothing, for there have been such times within living memory which were undoubtedly difficult and stormy for the people of Hawaii

and the United States, and any thought of Asia may now be linked with unhappy memories of wars and conflicts. It will not entirely surprise me if there are in this distinguished gathering not a few of you who look toward Asia with uncertainty, or even apprehension and foreboding, while forgetting that the two World Wars actually started in Europe and that other parts of the world have had to endure the consequences of its rivalries and conflicts.

FORCE OF POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES: COLONIAL EXPERIENCE

A most unfortunate and regrettable fact concerning Asia is that the more recent chapters of its annals are replete with occurrences and developments not of Asian making, since the destiny of Asia reposed in the hands of external powers for decades, or even centuries, during which time important decisions affecting the size, boundaries and growth, political system, economic status, social well-being, trade and foreign relations of the erstwhile Asian vassal states were made in western capitals and dictated almost entirely by western political interests, mercantile opportunism, and territorial aggrandizement. As a result, the intercourse between the Asian peoples which had been the essential vehicle in disseminating the teachings of the great Asian religions and traditional precepts across the length and

breadth of Asia was disrupted and forced to remain in a state of suspended animation for the period of colonial rule. In former times, the vastness and rugged terrain of the Asian land mass acted as a natural barrier to contact and communication between the Asian nations, but was unable to hamper or hinder the interchange of cultural values and trade in silks and spices. However, on the advent of colonialism, the flow of Asia's wealth of natural resources was diverted and channelled instead to far-away metropolitan capitals to support the Industrial Revolution, and the finer treasures from the Orient were displayed to the wondering gaze of people in distant lands who may or may not have fully appreciated the dynamic interplay of multinational forces which was instrumental in moulding and refining them. Such interplay has indeed through the centuries resulted in the marked similarity of forms and harmonization of aesthetic expressions to be found in different countries of the region, and in the noteworthy talent of their peoples for adaptation and assimilation of diverse cultural traits to suit their own genius. Under the stifling yoke of colonialism, the process of acculturation in the region was brought to a virtual halt while the Asians were lured towards the glittering images of the West rather than their century-old cultures and traditions. Free rein was thus given to their capacity to absorb such external influences and to try to fit them into their ways of life and social patterns; but without any traditional base or

time-proven foundation to shore them up, such efforts often proved to be futile or at best inconsequential and unenduring.

SECOND WORLD WAR, ITS AFTERMATH AND DECOLONIZATION

Among the deleterious effects of foreign domination the most painful to bear was perhaps the injury done to Asian pride and dignity. Nevertheless, with the exception of a few, like Japan and Thailand which were able to escape foreign domination, the subjected Asian peoples, though debilitated by the deprivation of their liberties and freedom managed to survive by a judicious exercise of patience, resilience and fortitude and eventually to regain mastery over the ordeal. With the balance of forces in the region upset by the Second World War, the subjugated nations of Asia regained their independence and re-emerged as sovereign states one after another, although, in many instances, not without struggle and sacrifice or experiencing the pangs of rebirth. Upon attainment of independent statehood, the Asian countries were faced with a multitude of problems which they were left to tackle almost single-handedly, as there was little help coming from their erstwhile colonial masters or other industrially advanced nations also ravaged by the war or already burdened by the weight of other responsibilities. The situation in Europe, grave as it certainly was in the

aftermath of the war, was eased by the enormous injection of much-needed capital assistance and other forms of external aid. The European nations, victors and vanquished alike, thus appeared to be relatively better off than their Asian counterparts who had to cope with the entirely novel experience of trying to stand on their own feet for the first time in many a decade, and facing variegated disruptive forces while exerting painstaking efforts in the reconstruction of their backward economies. In so doing they had to count on the residual strength of their people's unbroken will and pray for the blessings of nature to provide them with necessary food supply to sustain them, to help consolidate their pitifully slow national growth and, almost by sheer force of exhilaration, to fulfil their long-suppressed yearnings and legitimate aspirations.

To the perplexing array of problems confronting the newly independent countries must be added the short-lived attempts by the former colonial powers to reimpose their hegemony and more importantly the insidious and ruthless campaign waged by the forces acting under the banner of an alien ideology, namely Marxism, to undermine the freedom and independence of the new states.

POST-INDEPENDENCE TENSIONS AND CONFLICTS

If those Asian nations were left alone to pursue unhampered their destiny and to consolidate their hard-won

independent existence in peace and tranquillity, they might have gained greater self-confidence in dealing with their own problems, with their neighbours and the outside world. However, soon after they emerged into sovereign statehood, they had to face tensions and pressures from all sides. These tensions cannot be the results of the decolonization process as suggested by certain observers. In fact, despite the different backgrounds and a history of intermittent conflicts, there exist fewer remnants of the traditional feuds and still fewer bitter memories of past struggles among Asian nations towards one another than between the nations of other continents. Indeed, any disruptive tendencies that may exist today between certain Asian countries should be attributed not to decolonization, but rather to the relics of the colonial era. The Asian peoples have been accustomed to a life of hardship and modest circumstance, and have consequently acquired a certain degree of tolerance and pragmatism unknown in the more fortunate parts of the world. Therefore, the few problems which have their origin in the pre-colonial period would have ceased to be live issues had they not been exacerbated during the period of alien rule. The process of decolonization was, on the other hand, responsible for creating a power vacuum in the area and giving the new predatory forces seeking to expand their power and influence the opportunity to embroil the situation for their own selfish purposes. It is a patent fact that the Asian Marxists have done

and are doing all they can to heighten tensions and create turmoils. The blatant armed aggressions perpetrated by the Asian communists against the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Vietnam, India and Laos, their violent but unsuccessful attempts to take over the then Malaya, the Philippines and Indonesia, their subversive activities against the legitimate authorities in practically all the countries of South and Southeast Asia, including Thailand, Burma, Malaysia and Cambodia, contravene every international agreement and understanding, from the United Nations Charter to the Bandung Declaration, and violate the generally accepted principles of international law and morality. And it was not so long ago that the Asian communist regimes and their sympathizers tried – almost successfully – to set up a power axis cutting across the Asian continent, to put obstacles in the way of a peaceful and united free Asia with a view to preventing it from being in a position to thwart their expansionist designs and to resist their encroachments on the freedom and independence of the nations of the region.

POLICY CHOICES IN A BI-POLAR WORLD AND ACCOMPANYING RISKS

As events took a more hazardous turn, one of the questions uppermost in the minds of the new Asian leaders has been to find out which is the best course to follow in

order to minimise the risks to their newly won independence and to enable their nations to move ahead in peace, freedom and progress. Contemporary international life does not allow many choices, all of which seem, in any case, to be fraught with difficulty and risk, contingent as they are on developments which are well-nigh impossible to predict and certainly not under the control of the weaker nations. The Cold War, together with the resultant polarization of the world into two opposing camps, came into being without, so to speak, the advice and consent of the smaller powers, but carried with it the unprecedented danger of massive destruction for one and all. The Asian countries, no less than others, were caught in the maelstrom which has oftentimes threatened to suck them into its vortex. Thus, in retrospect, the choice between the two power blocs appeared to be somewhat less than crucial and afforded uncertain guarantee of safety.

In the last resort, small nations may find that it is in their own interest to limit the degree of their involvement in the light of their assessment of the situation. Thus the advisable choice which may emerge will probably be a kind of non-involvement policy if indeed such a policy option remains ultimately possible. That is why, being in doubt of what would be the most beneficial course for them to adopt, many smaller nations have chosen to follow the line of least resistance which the policy of non-involvement in fact represents and, if for no other advantage, gives the

protagonists a wait-and-see approach allowing time to observe and postponing the decision to a future date. In practice such a policy seems to have brought its followers appreciable benefits, both from the material and political standpoints, provided of course that the opposing sides in the ideological contest observe the rules of the game and respect the wishes and aspirations of those who elect to be in the middle. In other words, if the contestants continue to woo favours of the non-involved nations and seek to draw them to their side by persuasion and other incentives, the latter may have the best of both worlds. However, if one of the antagonists, like the large Asian Marxist power, fails to play the game properly and goes so far as to assault the non-involvement practitioners, then the tenets of such a policy are shattered beyond recovery, and the victims have no other remedy than to have recourse to the old-style balance of power device.

These are not idle speculations but concrete instances of what actually occurred in real life. One after another, ardent protagonists of non-alignment policy fell victims to either direct armed attacks, as in the case of India, or of devious machinations to take over political control as in the case of Indonesia. Still a few others who were as faithful adherents of the same policy as the abovementioned two countries had to face similar if less pronounced attempts at subversion or encroachment on their internal affairs, with

of course the same objective of undermining or overthrowing the legitimate authorities and of replacing them with the ones in the image of the interventionists. Burma, Cambodia, Ceylon, Nepal and Malaysia, to mention only the proponents of non-alignment, have had to struggle against the insidious activities blatantly destroying the basis on which rests the non-alignment policy, so much so that what remains of it is only a spectre of past ideals and aspirations of quite a few newly emerging nations.

In contrast to those who chose to adopt the non-involvement or non-alignment attitude, there is another category of countries which prefer to sacrifice material and other benefits for what they hope will be a greater security asset for them and, as a consequence, they choose to commit themselves to one side or the other. The results after a few years of intense experimentation have proved to be far from conclusive. Rather they have created if not dubious situations at least a few searching questions. On the one hand, when a member in good standing of the Warsaw Pact began to reveal even modest inclinations for freedom of action and discreetly to follow his own destiny, the fraternal tie of the "Socialist Commonwealth" immediately tightened around his neck and limbs so as to remind him that the road to Socialism, unlike the roads to Rome, can only be a single path. Few liberties and especially the national liberty will be allowed and tolerated only if they are in strict conformity with the norms

and directives of the central socialist metropolis. As a result, it is doubtful that such a treatment coincides with the objective which that unfortunate committed member nation sought to achieve for its national security and independence.

On the other side of the fence, there are also cases of nations, among which figures Thailand, which accepted to curtail their national discretionary power for what they hoped to be an assurance of greater security for their people and consequently have cast their lot with the side of freedom. However, the vicissitudes and vagaries of international happenings have tossed them into the whirlpool and the eddies of big-power domestic politics. As communist aggressive actions force them to work closely with more powerful countries, they have regrettably become the practice targets and objects of vilification and malicious attacks by elements within those powers which oppose the policy of their own administration. At the height of their irresponsibility and aberration, these elements would not hesitate to bring about the defeat of their own side, the destruction of lives of their countrymen and those allies fighting alongside them, and ultimately the glorification and victory of the enemy. In the midst of these turmoils and confusions they would strive for the abrogation of the treaty commitments and obligations which their government has validly accepted to enter into. In any case, their unprincipled pronouncements and actions have had the effects of raising serious doubts concerning the

validity of certain treaty commitments. Unwittingly they seem to bring confirmation to the contention that parties to mutual security pacts can hardly indulge in the illusory belief that such agreements are endowed with ironclad binding value. In this connection, what I wrote in *Foreign Affairs Quarterly* in July 1964 may still be relevant:

“The question which arises then is: Will the help (to a threatened nation) come? To ask the question does not imply an intention to reflect on the moral integrity of one’s allies and partners; it is rather an expression of realism and prudence. History, particularly of recent times, is strewn with examples of lesser nations being sacrificed by their allies on the pretext of preserving peace of the world but actually because the national prestige and vital interests of those allies were not directly affected. International conferences were sometimes resorted to in order to afford a more or less honourable way out of the obligation. Or else the unfortunate victim was simply left to face either destruction or surrender.”

Obviously, responsible governments can hardly disregard the facts of international life except at their own peril. As can be readily seen, the “constitutional processes” clause provides a convenient escape device in case the discharge of the treaty obligation does not appear to serve national interests or becomes too onerous. “In such event, it would not be too difficult to leave it to the legislature to stall or even to prevent action from being taken.” Be that as it may,

it is clear that choosing one camp over the other is not a definite insurance against contingencies threatening national security.

Despite the untoward developments, Thailand, being a nation with a long and uninterrupted tradition of freedom and sovereign existence and dedicated as it has always been to upholding and enhancing its own freedom as well as the freedom and independence of those around it, will not be discouraged from pursuing the path of co-operation with all like-minded governments and peoples who also seek to achieve stability, freedom and security for all nations. Concerning the United States in particular, Thailand takes pride in having been the first Asian country to conclude a treaty of amity with the then newly independent United States. Since then, the two countries have consistently maintained mutually beneficial relations of close co-operation and cordial friendship. Therefore, the unwarranted and immature remarks of a few misguided individuals, though in high positions but possibly affected by senility or mental atrophy, can in no way change the many centuries-long status of Thailand or compromise the solid foundations on which the friendship between the United States and Thailand is based. In this connection, the Thai people have been encouraged to see that hosts of enlightened Americans, indignant at the way some of their elected representatives behave, courageously came out to defend Thailand's good

name. One of them is the distinguished and well-known scholar on Southeast Asian affairs, Professor Richard Butwell of the American University who feeling that certain political figures have rendered a disservice to their country, wrote the following:

“While President Nixon imaginatively attempts to give new meaning and direction to American policies toward Southeast Asia, United States Senator X (name omitted) seems to be going out of his way to destroy the existing pattern of friendly relations between our country and important nations in this part of the world ... Thailand is one of only two nations in all Southeast Asia (the other being the Philippines) ... which have made major contributions to various American diplomatic and military policies in this part of the world. Frankly, I cannot imagine any adversary of the United States registering more damage to the interests of the United States in Southeast Asia than such statements as that of Senator X (name omitted). When will certain American politicians stop behaving and talking like God in relations between the United States and its friends abroad that are supposed to be relations among equals. There is a limit to how frequently – and how grossly – Americans can insult other people and still maintain their friendship.”

OBJECTIVES OF THAI-AMERICAN CO-OPERATION

Because there have been far too many regrettable misunderstanding, or at least a lack of proper understanding, concerning the co-operation between Thailand and the United States – oftentimes such misunderstandings have been fostered and cultivated by certain ill-wishing quarters – it seems that the time has come to spell out in unequivocal terms the reasons and motivations which have led a smaller nation like Thailand to enter into close collaboration and deep commitment with a great power like the United States. In so doing, it is hoped that because the relationship is not secretive and is open for all to see, it will in future be more smooth and less undisturbed.

The fundamental objective is, of course, to achieve peace, security and stability in Southeast Asia and to pave the way towards a Pax Asiana which should be the aim of the present and future generations of Asians.

To attain such an objective, Thailand needs not lure the United States into committing itself in Southeast Asia. As a world power with worldwide responsibility, it has, and undoubtedly will always have, interests in ensuring peace and stability in Southeast Asia as in other parts of the world. Particularly if we believe, as the leaders the world over seem to do, that peace is indivisible, then the preservation of peaceful conditions in Southeast Asia is of paramount importance to great powers for the simple reason that local

conflicts present the risks of spreading into worldwide conflagrations.

For that reason, and probably that reason alone, did the United States decide to step into Vietnam to halt the then budding aggression which threatened to develop into large-scale hostilities. To halt that aggression the United States needed Thailand as Thailand needed the United States, so that the dangers and threats of aggression would not spread further to adjacent territories and finally to its own homeland. Obviously, Thailand did not and could not drag the United States, a world power, into the Vietnam war. If anything, the reverse may be closer to the truth. But if Thailand consented to be drawn into the vortex of the Vietnam conflict, by allowing the United States to station a large contingent of its forces and to use Thai territory to conduct operations in support of the war in Vietnam, and later on decided to send its own combat troops to South Vietnam, it was because of the earnest desire to see the aggressors repelled, a small nation – South Vietnam – survive as a free and independent nation, and to begin a new era in which nations of the region may pursue their destiny and their way of life in complete freedom and dignity. Such conditions would be a preliminary and precursor to a wider and epoch-making Pax Asiana which would come into being only if such necessary groundwork has been laid.

Unfortunately, an international matter of such importance has been either misunderstood or misused for petty domestic political gain. Instead of presenting it in true light as a co-operation with such great promise for future peace and well-being of millions of people, it was deceptively pictured as an attempt to entangle the United States into an inextricable alliance. Statements and press reports propagating falsehood then began to fly, thus hiding the true and worthy meaning of the joint venture. A resolute and unequivocal statement became necessary to cleanse the atmosphere and return it to a healthy condition of sanity. The Thai Government then had to state that the United States forces presently stationed in Thailand have not and will not be used for the defence of that country against communist activities. In such struggles, Thailand has relied, and will rely, only on its own manpower. And to reinforce the sincerity of its intentions as well as to confirm the policy of self-reliance, the Thai Government declared its willingness to enter into discussion with the United States for the reduction of American forces in Thailand as the United States may as appropriate.

This rather eventful episode was summed up with great clarity by Mr. Crosby S. Noyes of the Washington Evening Star who wrote on 27 September 1969, in his column, the following:

“Our alliances around the world are coming to be looked on as devilish devices designed to embroil us in as

many conflicts as possible. The better the ally, the greater the chance of being dragged into ‘another Vietnam.’

Thailand, up to this point, has been the chief victim of this strangely inverted thinking that is characteristic of American neo-isolationism. That really serious damage has not been done is more to the credit of Thai leaders than to the astuteness of the government in Washington.

The Thais believe with reason, that they have been good allies of the United States for many years. They have accepted the proposition that their interests and ours in Asia are parallel.”

In another part of the same article, Mr. Noyes wrote as follows:

“It was left to the government in Bangkok to set this matter straight. And the Thais, who had no intention of letting themselves play the role of punching-bag in an American domestic political dispute, moved decisively to quell any doubts about the American military presence in their country.

It was all over in the space of one brief press conference called by the Thai Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman. If there was any question in Washington, Thanat said, about the advisability of keeping American military forces in Thailand they could be withdrawn at any time. So far as Thailand was concerned, negotiations aimed at an American troop withdrawal should be held forthwith.

This was not, as it was widely interpreted in the United States, an outburst of temper on the part of the Foreign Minister. It was rather the clearest and most forceful way of reminding Americans of the reality of their military presence in Thailand.”

After this rather hectic intermezzo, the two governments have now agreed on a modest reduction of United States military personnel from Thailand “consistent with operational requirements relating to the Vietnam conflict” which has been the principal purpose for which such personnel have been introduced into Thailand.

FUTURE EFFORTS TOWARDS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PAX ASIANA

In spite of that unfortunate episode and other obstacles which may arise in the future, Thailand is intent upon pursuing further the course of realizing the age-old dream of opening up the era of a future Pax Asiana.

How could this be done?

In our opinion, certain prerequisites are needed.

The foremost imperative is to prevent a communist takeover in Southeast Asia, particularly in South Vietnam and other neighbouring territories, such as the Kingdom of Laos and Cambodia. For if the Marxist powers were allowed to gorge themselves on such victims, they will become a serious danger menacing other countries of Southeast Asia.

In trying to achieve that objective it is not necessary to rely solely on United States forces. As the Korean War has been a turning point in communist worldwide strategy and has opened a new chapter in communist methodology by substituting the so-called “wars of national liberation” for the conventional warfare system as a means of conquest, the Vietnam war has already produced the lesson which the countries concerned can ill afford to ignore. The Vietnam conflict, if anything, has bared the fact that the great powers with their nuclear might have become incapacitated, almost impotent, because of their size and their mighty arsenals, in dealing with insidious, hardly visible revolutionary wars which rely on fighters and supplies moving stealthily through jungles and swamps. Moreover, the drafted soldiers of the present-day democratic countries have shown their reluctance and even their unwillingness to fight for other countries except their own, even though they may have performed, up till now, their duty conscientiously and in many cases, with gallantry. For the future, even though soldiers from faraway countries may be available, they may not be physically, mentally or psychologically conditioned and suited for combat duty in future revolutionary wars. Local forces will have to be trained, equipped and readied to do the job. This is the truth that Thailand has learnt since many years past. That is why, in meeting the dangers of communist subversion and insurgency against their country, the Thai

have never called on their allies to provide foreign manpower. They have relied solely on their own people, both military and civilians, to combat communist activities against their country. The only things they expect from their friends are weapons, equipments and the necessary wherewithals which will allow them to fight successfully.

Likewise, in Vietnam nowadays, there should be a prompt transfer of American responsibility to South Vietnam shoulders while providing the latter with the means to support them in their struggle. If that can be done properly, the United States may soon be relieved of a load which has become too burdensome internally because of domestic political pressure.

From now on, and provided that the Vietnam conflict reaches a satisfactory conclusion, preparations for the Pax Asiana should be initiated forthwith. To achieve success a number of conditions will have to be fulfilled: the most important among them will be, firstly, the realization of a minimum standard of economic and social development; secondly, the establishment of a cohesive Southeast Asia in the first instance and thereafter a meaningful cooperation among the countries of the Asian and Pacific region; thirdly, a pan-Asia and Pacific, peaceful and perhaps co-operative co-existence among the countries of the area irrespective of ideologies or political systems; and, finally, a tacit or explicit agreement among larger powers to refrain from interfering

or intervening in the internal affairs of smaller nations with a view to upsetting the present precarious international balance.

BLUEPRINT FOR A PAX ASIANA

The essential task to be performed for the purpose of bringing about the much desired peaceful condition and particularly the long lasting Pax Asiana will be to raise the present abnormally low economic and social standards to a level which is compatible with human decency and dignity.

The basic problems facing the Asian countries today are associated with national development and the raising of their economic and social standards. Their governments are committed to long-term industrialization as a means of fulfilling the rising expectations of their people.

It will be closer to reality to characterise present-day and future economic relations between the more advanced countries such as the United States and the developing countries of Southeast Asia as “cooperation for mutual benefits.” Clearly, there are benefits to be derived by all concerned, donor and recipient countries alike. In every imaginable transaction, it could be said without departing from the truth that there are benefits accruing to both sides.

Even in the type of assistance that could be called pure grant or grant aid where the recipient country receives the

full benefits of the grant without the obligation of repayment, the donor country may be expected to derive long-term benefits from the economic growth and resulting stability of the receiving country either directly or as potential market, not to mention other political implications.

In regard to loans, whether development loans or suppliers' credits, the mutuality of benefits is self-evident. Care should be taken, nevertheless, to maintain proper equilibrium of benefits and reciprocity of advantages for all parties concerned. Development loans should be made on truly concessional terms having regard for the primary interests of the developing nations. Credit assistance should likewise be offered as a means to ease the balance of payment burden of developing nations rather than to boost the export of the advanced countries.

Technical assistance is another field where caution should be exercised, lest the advantages accrue more on the donor side without adequate compensations to the developing nations. The fields of technology should be of genuine interest and direct benefit to the recipient country, taking into account the needs for planned harmonization and co-ordination. What a technician or expert could learn in a developing country with local facilities and expenses paid could also be of incalculable benefit to the sending country.

In Asia, the developing countries need capital goods and foreign investments to accelerate the pace of their

economic growth. On the other hand, the capital-exporting countries also need new areas for more gainful and more productive investment. There could be a sufficient degree of reciprocity of benefits with primary consideration being given to the vital interests of the developing economy.

As economic conditions improve through national efforts of the Asian nations themselves or through co-operation with well-intentioned outside nations, further efforts should be devoted to strengthen the social fabric of the Asian society by removing manifold social injustices and by developing the consciousness of social service. The young and the progressive youth can play a most active and prominent role to gain experience as well as to propel themselves into useful components of the society. With greater stability, the local or national society may exert in turn stabilizing influences in the nation as well as in the entire region.

The other factor with no less importance is the necessity to forge the sense of Asian solidarity.

In this connection, I said the following in my statement before the 24th General Assembly session of the United Nations:

“Now, more than ever, we realize in the depth of our hearts and minds that our strength lies within ourselves, our nations and our ancient lands. Outsiders come and go; they do not take roots, while we the people of Asia are

unalterably anchored to our eternal soil. We and we alone have and shall always have the primary responsibility of making it fertile, peaceful and prosperous. This is exactly what we have set ourselves to do and intend to do to the best of our ability. That is why we have devoted our time, energy and dedication to forge a much needed sense of solidarity and cohesiveness, to lay down the basis for working profitably together and to replace the outmoded imperialistic concepts of domination and subjection with the humane and progressive philosophy of co-operation and partnership.”

Their efforts have resulted in the establishment of useful frameworks for regional undertakings, and my country, Thailand, has been in the forefront in taking the necessary initiatives and actively participating in these efforts. Since the formation of the Association of Southeast Asia (ASA) almost ten years ago, the regional scene has experienced gradual maturity and growing solidarity of member states as evident in the establishment of numerous regional bodies and organizations, such as the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Asian and Pacific Council (ASPAC), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the South East Asian Ministers of Education Council (SEAMEC), the Ministerial Meeting on Economic Development of Southeast Asia, and the Mekhong Committee of the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East. It is even envisaged that regional co-operation will grow to encompass

the Eastern as well as the Western shores of the Pacific ocean in a community of like-minded and forward-looking nations for the benefits of each and every one.

As regards the hope of establishing a peaceful or possibly a co-operative co-existence of all nations in Asia irrespective of ideologies or political systems, it may seem far remote from realization and indeed in the realm of a utopian dream. For the present-day realities do not appear to be conducive to the realization of such a dream. Nevertheless if the peoples of Asia are determined to lay down the foundations of peace for their own future generations, the fulfilment of such an objective must be predicated upon the joining of all nations in a peaceful Asian concourse. While the undertaking may seem to be an uphill task to realize with almost insurmountable obstacles, it should not be forgotten that once, some fifteen years ago, a similar meeting could have been held in Bandung, Indonesia. Why then should Asian nations despair of achieving what could prove to be momentous and meaningful for their own well-being and progress. Asian people are known to be endowed with wisdom and farsightedness. If only they can adjust their age-old cultures and civilizations to the modern technical and technological requirements, they can well-nigh become the greatest nations on this earth. With two-thirds of the world population living in Asia, a modest increase in individual and national productivity can translate into

gigantic geometrical progression. That is why no peace-loving Asian, and indeed no peace-loving citizen of the world, can afford to neglect even the slightest effort to bring about good understanding and peaceful, possibly co-operative, co-existence among all the peoples of the Asian continent.

Finally, no thoughtful student of international affairs can disregard the realities of our life on this planet which, in spite of claims for democratic equality in organizations such as the United Nations and elsewhere, is still dominated and influenced by those countries endowed with great economic wealth and military might. The fact that one country succeeds in sending some of its people to land on the moon, while others cannot do that and have to content themselves with keeping their feet on the ground, is a grim reminder of the existing inequality between men and nations. What we can hope for is that the possession of wealth and power will spur such nations towards a keener wisdom and insight for the cause of its own progress and prosperity as well as for the peace and well-being of the world at large. That is why the Pax Asiana as well as the Pax Mundi will greatly hinge on the actions of the great nations of this earth. If they can agree between themselves to renounce all attempts to enlarge their territorial domain by impinging on the territories of others, to interfere and intervene in the affairs of smaller and weaker nations and finally to control and dominate them by guile or by force, then the Pax Asiana and perhaps the Pax Mundi

may be closer to realization. In Asia, in particular, as perhaps in other parts of the world, there seems to be no craving desire for seeking a guarantee from the great powers which may or may not be forthcoming or lastingly valid. A declaration of intent will go a long way to help weave a resilient fabric of peace in Asia. If such agreement can come into being, the age-old continent of Asia will flourish into a liveable and desirable place on earth. This appears to be a worthy goal for all of us in Asia and elsewhere to pursue. If we can combine boldness with wisdom, daring with reason, and pragmatism with vision, that illusive goal of a truly lasting peace may be within our reach.

ALTERNATIVES FOR SOUTH EAST ASIAN SECURITY*

As the 1960's grind to a close and a new decade is ushering in, there is a distinct consciousness and premonition that an era is folding up and new leaves are being turned to open a new chapter in the history of South East Asia or perhaps of the entire Asian hemisphere. This ancient region, cradle of lofty spiritual faiths and subtle civilization, where two-thirds of the world's population live, has been for well over three hundred years overshadowed and ruthlessly dominated by the military and political might of nations vastly different in race, religion and historical background. It is now more or less completely wriggling out of the alien grip and control and trying to lead a life of its own.

* Delivered at a gala dinner given by the Board of Trustees of the Asia Society at the Plaza Hotel, New York, on 24 February 1970.

That the western colonial rule has been debilitating for South East Asian people is beyond any possible doubt. Not only has it deprived them for long years of their inherent right to lead an unfettered existence, not only has it taken a great deal of local riches to increase metropolitan wealth and prosperity, but more than anything else, it has stifled the spirit of freedom, independence and self-reliance. The many-century long period of alien domination has left deep imprints in the political and social fabric of the nations of this area, which a quarter century of liberation and self-government has not succeeded in erasing. At present time and undoubtedly for the foreseeable future, South East Asia will probably have to shoulder the burden of past colonial legacy and to struggle with the problems left over by centuries of western rule. The question of Sabah and that of recent confrontation between Indonesia and Malaysia, the uncertainties in the Kingdom of Laos and in Burma, and particularly the devastating Vietnam war, not to mention the Kashmir problem in an adjacent area, are irrefutably to be traced to the colonial era. There are the crosses left over for the South East Asian peoples to bear. The burden is now all the heavier because most of the latter, despoiled of their natural wealth, have neither been trained nor equipped in any adequate manner to meet their new responsibilities, still less to solve the thorny difficulties which have been strewn like hurdles along the path of independence. They lack the

men, the means, both economic and political, to tackle successfully the issues and problems facing them.

Such was the inglorious past and such the difficult present. How does the future look?

Despite liberation and independence and the considerable burden added to the new responsibilities of self-government, the political and military pre-eminence of a few outside powers continues to prevail in the new setting of recently-emerged sovereign nations. At a number of strategic locations, such as Singapore, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Japan and Korea, western powers still maintain their mighty presence, for some to preserve the stability of the area, for others to keep watch on their remaining and long accumulated investments, while those who, through protracted struggle lost their political and administrative control, chose to withdraw for good the vestiges of their imperial presence seeking, in some cases, to preserve only a cultural influence.

Recently, however, financial stringencies which undoubtedly resulted from heavy sacrifices imposed by sustained efforts during the last world conflict and, later on, the difficulties in bringing about adjustments of its economy after the loss of colonial territories, forced the British Government to decide on the withdrawal of its military forces east of Suez, except those stationed at Hong Kong. Subsequently, but for entirely different reasons the United

States Government has been under increasing pressure from its domestic public opinion to envisage and even to begin the implementation of a policy of retrenchment, if not yet of total withdrawal from South East Asia. The reasons, in this latter case, have less to do with financial considerations than with political and psychological factors. The main reason is undeniably the frustration with the Vietnam war and the perplexing realization that even a mighty power, endowed with the most destructive nuclear and conventional arsenal as well as an unmatched economic strength, may not know how to win the war or to wrestle the peace from the enemy who uses the bullets with less decisive results than the psychological weapons which excruciate the nerves and erode the will powers.

It is true that the enemy has been, to a considerable extent, aided by those aberrant and opportunist elements in political, academic and mass media circles which thought it fashionable and even ethical to abet and encourage the antagonists while weakening and undermining their own side and those co-operating with it. In this respect, they have accomplished a remarkable job unequalled by any other precedent in history.

Unlike the United Kingdom which has publicly announced its decision to withdraw all its forces from east of Suez, the United States does not seem to have reached a definitive position as to what it wants to do in the near future.

Official statements from responsible leaders and a few prominent Congressional figures stress only that the United States will not fight a major land war in Asia but that it will honour its present treaty commitments while seeking to leave the primary responsibility of dealing with communist inspired 'revolutionary wars' or insurgencies with the nations of the area. The United States may stand behind to furnish the wherewithals for the victims of aggression to defend themselves in ways not dissimilar from the role played by the USSR and other communist regimes in providing North Vietnam with the necessary support which, in this case, helps their sister socialist nation to launch and sustain aggression against South Vietnam. How this new approach baptised as the 'Nixon Doctrine' will operate will be examined further on. Other less far-sighted and less perceptive persons, unable or unwilling to consider the effects on the over-all position and interests of their country in the world, advocate complete United States withdrawal from Asia.

For the time being, one may say that, in general, President Nixon's new policy has met with approval from the non-communist Asian nations, perhaps for the simple reason that they themselves have put forward similar ideas for many years past. Thailand, in particular, has been all along practising such a policy of self-reliance and self-help and, contrary to many regrettable misrepresentations, has not used a single one of those 50,000 GI's now enjoying the

hospitality of the Thai nation in combat duties against current communist subversion and insurgency. It has meanwhile initiated discussions on the withdrawal of these forces. So far some 4,500 troops have been repatriated. Undoubtedly, the bulk of them is still needed for Vietnam war efforts and has to remain in Thailand. As they are now prohibited by a recent United States Senate Resolution from engaging in any combat activities presumably even in defensive operations against enemy attacks, their presence poses not a small security problem for the host country.

To many impartial observers, a policy of withdrawal or, mildly speaking, of disengagement, can hardly be taken as an indication of strength. If anything, it is rather a sign of weakness, financially, politically or psychologically. It stands in glaring contrast with the outstanding success of the moon landings which were performed with calm courage and consummate skill by the astronauts breaking off their earth-bound ties and reaching out into the infinite outer space.

As new policies begin to shape up, the nations of South East Asia have to try to assess with as much objectivity as possible the results and repercussions of forthcoming policy changes on the region and the world at large and draw whatever pertinent conclusion for all concerned. The relevant question then seems to be how South East Asia will fare when those who have for so long cast their shadows over the region will have gone from the scene.

But first, what is the security picture which now obtains in Asia and the Pacific? It is, at present, featured by the bilateral agreements between the United States and Japan, between the United States and the Republic of China and between the United States and the Republic of the Philippines. The United States also maintains its military forces in South Korea under the aegis of the United Nations. Then, on a multilateral basis the United States has, on the one hand, security commitments with Australia and New Zealand under the ANZUS Treaty, and with these two countries as well as with France, the United Kingdom, Pakistan, the Philippines and Thailand in the South East Asia Collective Defense Treaty.

While the mood of frustration appears to be general, there have been little talks about disengagement from all the above-mentioned commitments. The targets of pressure and repeated Congressional assaults seem to centre on SEATO and certain countries of South-East Asia like Laos and Thailand. The latter country, Thailand, in particular, incurs the displeasure of certain self-styled progressive and liberal Congressional and mass media elements in the United States because it dared allow United States military contingents to be stationed in Thailand to help end the Vietnam war, safeguard the lives of countless American and allied soldiers and save the American taxpayers innumerable millions of dollars. Such a decision, in the mistaken judgement of the

confused but vocal few, constitutes an unpardonable error. Thus frustrated by the lack of progress in the Vietnam war and looking for convenient scapegoats, they have lavished on Thailand and a few other Asian nations such a peculiar form of “love” treatment as few countries, including those hostile to the United States, have ever had the privilege of enjoying. The idea was, to use the words of a distinguished American statesman, to “turn friends into enemies” and to put into effect their own conception of the American way of life that for any one to be considered friendly to the United States he must belong to the opposing camp. However, this effusive display of affection hopefully will not go to our heads and the even-hearted and even-minded Thai nation will probably continue to cultivate the friendship of the enlightened American people. But if some feel that our profile has involuntarily become too prominent on such political scenes as Washington and New York, we are willing and ready to lower it, as it is not in our modest traditional upbringing to run after the company of the great. Neither would we mind keeping our distances from the less congenial ones who have gone astray from the generous traditions of America, maintaining close and confident contacts only with those noble-minded friends, like all of you, ladies and gentlemen, who are present here and for whom the Thai people entertain high respect and admiration.

As far as SEATO and Thailand are concerned, it should be noted that the various amendments and resolutions

recently adopted by the United States Senate have raised grave doubts regarding the commitments voluntarily accepted by the United States under the South-East Asia Collective Defense Treaty. The contingency plan, called “Secret Agreement” by some, which was signed by a duly authorized United States representative has been more or less abrogated by Congressional measures, and the implementation of the provisions of the SEATO Treaty which a well-known columnist derisively terms ‘a treaty that never was,’ is now practically at the mercy of a powerful legislative body. If that organ is in the mood to comply with the stipulations of the Treaty when the contingency, as provided by it, should arise, the administration will then be able to carry out the commitment. If not, the Treaty becomes practically inoperative, in fact nullified unilaterally by a contracting party through the escape clause of the constitutional processes. This possibility was envisaged in an article which I wrote for the magazine “Foreign Affairs” as far back as 1963, the relevant passage of which is as follows:

“History, particularly of recent times, is strewn with examples of lesser nations being sacrificed by their allies on the pretext of preserving peace of the world but actually because the national prestige and vital interests of those allies were not directly affected. International conferences were sometimes resorted to in order to afford a more or less honourable way out of the obligation. Or else the unfortunate victim was simply left to face either destruction or surrender.”

“Obviously, responsible governments can hardly disregard the facts of international life except at their own peril. As can be readily seen, the constitutional processes clause provides a convenient escape device in case the discharge of the treaty obligation does not appear to serve national interests or becomes too onerous. In such event, it would not be too difficult to leave it to the legislature to stall or even to prevent action from being taken.”

Thus the discharge of treaty obligations by certain members may be, to say the least, contingent upon too many circumstances. If the Executive and the Legislative agree on the implementation, the obligations will be readily carried out. But if one side, the Administration, is willing or appears to be willing to discharge the obligations but the Legislature is reluctant or opposed to such a course, the treaty may not be executed and may become void. Obviously, such an equivocal situation does not contribute to the security of the area. As a result, the most important question that will arise is not whether the Executive will or will not carry out its obligations since it has repeatedly pledged that it will, and there are no reasons not to believe it, but rather whether the Legislature will allow the Executive to do so. The uncertainties are further increased by the sharp internal struggle for control of policy between the two branches of the government with the possible result that problems of international import may be decided not so much on their merits as on domestic political considerations prevailing at the time.

What then will the situation be if a contingency should arise?

In the first place, with the actual and eventual withdrawal of most, if not all, outside powers from the Asian and Pacific scene, that region will revert to the pre-colonial period when the countries situated therein were on their own and had to cope by themselves with their security problems. If they could do it then, there seem to be no valid reasons, with new developments which have since intervened, why they would not be able to do it now or in the time to come.

The new situation as may arise in the future will test the criteria of statehood and viability of the nations of this region. They should prove to the world their ability to meet their responsibility if they cannot, they do not deserve to enjoy the rights and prerogatives of sovereign independence. On the other hand, if outside nations should decide unhesitatingly to honour their commitments as stipulated by treaties, the situation will be a great deal clearer and easier.

Such being the circumstances, it becomes imperative for nations of Asia and the Pacific to develop alternatives for safeguarding their security and protecting their national patrimony. What are those alternatives?

Irrespective of how the committed powers will perform in the event of future contingencies, the lessons derived from the Vietnam war should open our eyes to present and future realities that, under prevailing conditions, the most likely

dangers will come from what the communists lovingly call 'wars of national liberation.' The victims of such aggression have no better course to follow than to rely largely on themselves, on their own human and material resources. The latter may be augmented and supplemented to varying extent from friendly quarters or those who share immediate common interests. Little or no reliance should be placed on outside manpower which may be physically, mentally and psychologically unfit and unsuitable. As recent developments have shown beyond doubt, those, in faraway lands, who have little or no direct interest in and concern for the struggle tend to be more active, more energetic and indeed braver in the streets and campuses far removed from the battlefield. If they were to be compelled against their will to participate in defensive undertakings they do not understand or have faith in, they might create rather than solve problems. Indeed, in case of exasperation and despair, they may turn their hostility and their tirades against the friendly side rather than against the enemy. Their new credo seems to be that if they cannot beat their enemy, then beat their friends. For these reasons, manpower assistance from outside nations in which unwilling or unsympathetic voices exist in substantial number may not only be ineffective but may even become a liability.

After this harrowing experience, we should become wise enough to see clearly what is effectively dependable and

what is not. That is why Thailand on its part has never made, nor does it intend to make, any call on its SEATO allies to help with manpower in dealing with the communist activities sponsored and directed by neighbouring Marxist regimes. That attitude of self-reliance was not, however, fully recognized.

On the other hand, what is now patently evident is that nations facing the same threats and dangers have advantage to co-operate with one another, especially on practical basis and in many specific matters rather than by signing formal treaties. If such concept of practical co-operation can be perfected and rendered effective, the Asian and Pacific region may enjoy the blessings of peace and harmony.

To attain the objectives of peace and security, there are a number of factors to consider. A major one is mainland China whose attitude and policy are bound to have widespread repercussions on the region. After a rather moderate beginning with a more or less co-operative policy particularly evidenced at Bandung, the policy of Peking veered towards sharp militancy and aggressiveness culminating in the attack against India and attempt to overthrow a legitimate government in Indonesia. Then with internal blood-letting occasioned by the 'Great Socialist Cultural Revolution,' China isolated itself almost completely from the rest of the world keeping a few peep-holes in minuscule Albania and Cambodia. Now with the passing of the old

decade and the advent of a new one, communist China which is locked in border conflicts with a giant neighbour, the Soviet Union, seems slowly to be adopting a new attitude by agreeing to resume talks with larger powers such as the United States, after a lapse of over two years. Is this a real change of policy or simply a manifestation of '*manie des grandeurs*' (mania of greatness), seeking only the company of the great to engage either in disputes or in meaningless negotiation? This posture seems plausible since after it took on the next largest nation in Asia, India, and then Indonesia, the largest nation in South East Asia, as victims of its interference, it now moves on to the greatest in the world, disdaining to talk or discuss with lesser ones either in Asia or elsewhere.

The problem which is uppermost in the minds of the people in Asia and perhaps in the whole world will be how to bridle, through counterpoises and counteractions of non-military nature, this petulant and too-often turbulent force so that it may become less truculent and less aggressive, and ultimately to harness it to the service of peace, harmony and co-operation in the region. This may look like an uphill, even impossible task at present, but it should not be given up, as the peaceful and orderly future of the Asian hemisphere hinges on its successful completion.

Of all those who may try their hands at this very difficult undertaking, those who have their roots in the

region, namely the nations of Asia and the Pacific appear to be best qualified to do it, if for no other reasons than because they have close interests and indeed a stake in the peace and welfare of their part of the world. If peace and tranquillity are threatened or jeopardised they are the first to be affected and to suffer from the consequences. Nations which are far away, even the global powers with their impressive might, are less likely to meet with success in attaining the much desired objective since they may introduce element of conflict or rivalry between diverging and sometimes opposing interests. On the contrary, the nations on the spot, by joining together and combining their moral, political and diplomatic resources and ingenuity may present a worthwhile persuasive opportunity to Peking to alter its militant inclinations and follow a more peaceable course of co-existence with fellow Asian and Pacific nations. Bandung is the case in point. If that was possible then, the revival of a Bandung formula, with necessary modifications, may offer a worthwhile possibility of a solution. The interested nations should, therefore, organize and co-ordinate themselves to enable them to adequately approach this weighty problem. Only if this preliminary groundwork is successfully laid and the free nations of Asia and the Pacific succeed in closing their ranks and form a fairly cohesive group may the Peking regime, which is known to be imbued with the consciousness of its status as a leading or even a great power, be more inclined

to come to terms with its neighbours and fellow nations in the area, if not through separate negotiations then perhaps by means of open general discussions. Between the two above-mentioned approaches, the first one has not yielded any practical result. The bilateral talks between Peking and the two great powers, the USSR to solve border disputes and the US to improve general relationship, so far have not borne fruit. Other countries, such as Canada and Japan, with a view to establishing diplomatic relations or to formalizing trade exchanges, have been conducting or have tried to open talks without making any palpable progress. There remains only the possibility of a general meeting of the Bandung type which is worth exploring while efforts are being made to consolidate our own position.

This task of co-ordination may be pursued simultaneously and on a parallel line with the endeavours in the economic, social and cultural fields for regional co-operation. In fact, the success in this sector should increase the chances for the realization of the political and diplomatic approach. As the benefits of regional co-operation become more and more apparent, the Chinese leaders on the mainland may be attracted to abandon their hard line and militant attitude for a more profitable course of neighbourly co-operation. At the same time, Peking may come to realize that its aspirations towards a great power status will have a better chance to be fulfilled within the framework of regional

co-operation than through aggressive and truculent actions against smaller nations of the area. Indeed, such a recognition, because it is voluntary and does not come as a result of compulsion, will be more enduring and beneficial. That is why we should not despair that the Chinese, with their long tradition of subtle culture and ancient civilization, may be able to see where their real and abiding interests lie and decide, in due course, to live in peace and harmony with their fellow Asian peoples.

As we see it, this is above all an Asian problem which nobody else can hope to resolve more effectively than the Asian people themselves who are conversant with the history, mentality and the heartbeats of their fellowmen. It is true that the thinking of the people on the Chinese mainland has been more or less superficially coloured and influenced for some decades by an imported alien ideology, Marxism; but in spite of that enforced indoctrination, the foundation is likely to remain essentially consistent with the perennial Chinese values.

All these considerations, therefore, militate in favour of an assumption of greater responsibility on the part of the interested Asian parties for the peace and wellbeing of their part of the world. That does not mean, however, that outside powers, especially the world powers, should be precluded from playing any role. It is certainly not our intention. Because of their widespread interest and responsibilities,

those world powers, notwithstanding their disappointment and frustration, are bound to become involved in important world issues. The significance of our contention is that those close to the scene who bear immediate interests should first be prepared to exert efforts and discharge responsibilities to ensure satisfactory solutions to impending problems. Those who are only indirectly affected may contribute to the extent of their interests to the endeavours of these directly concerned. That is what global powers like the United States or the USSR can do to render those efforts more effective and fruitful. Particularly, those powers may serve as counterbalance to prevent rash actions and as counterpoise to forestall any immoderate attempts to disrupt world peace and order. The Soviet Union, on its part, has made both official and private utterances that are considered to be in its interests to maintain and strengthen the security of Asia and the Pacific. Brezhnev's proposal for Asian collective security, in our opinion, seems to envisage the departure from the scene of the western powers and the eventual occurrence of a power vacuum which may be filled by a large nation presently inimical to Russian interests. That is why the Soviet Union is taking whatever precautions necessary to prevent that eventuality from happening. If this viewpoint is generally upheld, it will certainly be in accord with the interests of Asian nations.

From the foregoing, a new direction has clearly emerged. The old concept of security based on military power and alliance, even if it may still be valid as far as nuclear and world powers are concerned, is likely to yield its place to a new concept of political security, or more exactly, a security founded on concerted and co-ordinated political actions, particularly in regard to smaller non-nuclear states. For the latter, now that the larger powers have already indicated their intention to relinquish or reduce their role and responsibility for overseas security, salvation lies in redoubling their national efforts and in working closely and systematically with those like-minded nations which share the same stake in the peace and secure well-being of the area. This will require novel methods of consultation, co-operation and co-ordination between themselves in the first place and also with those outside powers which show an interest in the task of peace-building. Not only must there be frequent and regular meetings at high and intermediate levels to compare notes and exchange views on the general situation and on specific issues and subjects, economic, social, cultural and technical undertakings should be thoroughly studied for possible joint implementation. After the interests of various members become entwined, a greater sense of solidarity and cohesiveness will result and will contribute to the co-operation on the political field. Thus the true spirit of regionalism will have to be based not so much on formal treaties but on

practical joint undertakings which will bind the parties through joint concrete interests rather than ideological considerations.

Likewise, as regards future relationships with countries outside the area including the great powers, there probably will be a de-emphasis of political and military matters in favour of intensified co-operation on the economic and business fields. This should prove beneficial for all concerned and offer highly interesting possibilities since the nations of this area are developing fast and require vast quantities of capital goods and investment funds. In this connection, important national and international development projects are being actively studied, the most important of which is undoubtedly the development of the Lower Mekong River basin. For that latter project alone, a vast capital outlay amounting to some 1.5 billion US dollars is required to finance technical services and various equipments. Great industrial nations, particularly the United States, can and in our opinion should play a worthy and highly constructive role. In addition to such a momentous international project, there are lesser development undertakings within progressive nations like Thailand which is moving ahead as far and as fast as its means permit. As an illustration of the pace of progress, it may be mentioned that in regard to the growth of electric power alone, a yearly increase in the past several years reaches an astounding rate of over 30%.

The shift in the nature and quality of co-operation from principally military or political mutual involvement to joint participation in business, economic and industrial ventures will represent a substantial improvement in international relationship and will strengthen the security position of smaller non-nuclear countries. Economic progress through development of means of production will greatly add to the domestic as well as regional stability and security. Likewise a monumental project like that concerning the Mekong River, by increasing the well-being of millions of impoverished people, will serve to consolidate and safeguard the security of thriving nations in developing regions of the world in an infinitely more effective manner than divisions of troops whose morale and effectiveness may be undermined by a host of demonstrators. Such progressive and highly creative nation as the United States which has so successfully transformed itself from a budding nation into a mighty world power, can hardly let an occasion like this go by without making a significant contribution.

Thus great and small nations can find an appropriate basis to work profitably together not for selfish gains, not for domination or destruction, but for mutual benefits and satisfaction with a view to fulfilling the purpose of which man has been created, the perpetuation and progress of the human race. I dare say that in this novel but exciting venture, there will be no cause for frustration nor regrets as in the

past. Indeed, it may be the most exhilarating and rewarding undertaking of our time. I know that America, a Pacific power with a creative pioneering genius, will want to have a worthy part in the building of a new peaceful and progressive Asia and the Pacific.

THAI FOREIGN POLICY IN THE MIDST OF A CHANGING WORLD*

It is indeed a privilege and a pleasure for me to be here among this very distinguished gathering of learned people who have served their country and numerous institutions for long years. I am happy also to see the growth of this organization of ours namely the Thai Council of World Affairs and International Law under the Patronage of His Majesty the King. This organization was born only a few years ago and now it has grown and I am sure it will continue to grow. I believe that the growth of the organization is due to a great extent to our active Chairman, Phya Prichanusat, I am therefore very pleased to be with you and to talk about things

* Delivered at the luncheon meeting of the Thai Council of World Affairs and International Law under the Royal Patronage, Erawan Hotel, Bangkok on 30 November 1970.

will be increasingly important in the days to come. I need not repeat the platitude that the world is moving and changing and that now more than ever the world is moving fast.

Only a few weeks ago, those who attended the U.N. Meetings could have seen that the world is on the threshold of new developments, not only in the realm of international affairs but also in many other fields, economic, social, technical and technological, not to mention the great feat which has astounded the world, namely that the United States has sent some of its distinguished sons to the moon. Since then further developments have also taken place. The Soviet Union has sent a lunar vehicle to the surface of the moon. But, in Thailand, we try to keep our feet firmly planted on the ground, as we are firmly on this planet and intend to be that way for a long time to come. For us there are no lunar problems and let us hope as few lunacy problems as possible.

In regard to the foreign policy of Thailand, we have had quite interesting developments. For the past 31 years that I have served the King and country, noticeable developments have come to pass. When I was a young officer in the Foreign Office, I expected great things. After a few years I climbed up the ladder and became *Chargé d'Affaires* at our Embassy in New Delhi. There was then what was known as the Asian Conference in New Delhi on the problem of Indonesia's trying to attain freedom and independence. Thailand, being an Asian country, could not avoid taking part. I got my

telegram ... a very brief one, which read something like this: "You are instructed to attend the Asian Meeting to be held in New Delhi and you are instructed not to open your mouth." That sums up the foreign policy of Thailand at that time. Then I slowly moved up the ladder to a higher echelon in the Thai Foreign Office and became Deputy Representative of Thailand to the United Nations with the rank of Minister Counsellor. Of course in the U.N., you know, we have to work from time to time. In my case, I tried to be a good civil servant and representative of my country. Therefore, occasionally and as often as possible, I would ask my chief how I should vote on such and such a question. Most of the advices and instructions that came to me on those questions were that I should go and talk to our friends and see how they would vote and conform to the vote of our friends. That again depicted the foreign policy of Thailand. So we started with a foreign policy of silence or a silent policy.

I was somewhat disappointed because I thought that an independent country should have its own views and know where its own interests lie. Of course in the U.N., we know that, before voting, some delegations would cast their eyes to the left and right; especially delegations of East European countries would turn to the direction where the delegation of a certain big power sits. Occasionally, the vote begins the other way around and those delegations would have to vote before, which might cause some discrepancies in the voting.

Some delegations may then exercise the option of rising and going to powder their noses exactly at the moment of voting. But that is neither an expedient nor a best way to determine how one should vote on a given question. Therefore, on the very first day when I came to assume the position of Foreign Minister, I prayed to the Lord Buddha and my ancestors to give me an insight to be able to follow the right path, that which will best serve the interests of King and country.

In the first place, I thought that the requisite would be to go over the position of this country. Can this country have a foreign policy? Will it be in its best interests to have a foreign policy? Although Thailand is a sizeable country, I cannot bring myself to believe that Thailand is a military power or that it could hope to become one. Whether we like it or not, we lack a population base, an industrial base, a scientific base, the vital natural resources as well as the sinews and ingredients which will enable a country to become a world power or a major power. Therefore, we should content ourselves with the fact that we are a small power. And as you all know, as a small power, it is difficult to have a positive policy. How can we hope to influence the course of events when we lack military power, economic power and technical know-how? For a small power to have an active, positive and independent foreign policy is not easy. These are the first findings that I had to face when I became Foreign Minister of Thailand.

Moreover, when I took up office, I inherited some already formulated policies, particularly the policy of belonging to a collective military security pact. In any event, after a close scrutiny of all the facts available then and even now, I do not think that it would serve my country's interests if Thailand were to leave this collective military organization. I think we owe it to some of the more aggressive neighbours who have forced upon us the continued membership of an organization for collective military security. If SEATO today, as does NATO in Europe, can still stand on its feet, it is perhaps due less to the desire of all its members than to the actions, policies and attitudes of certain nations either in Asia or in Europe. We have been saying quite frankly to some of the nations which do not quite agree with our so-called policy of commitment that if and when the powers which continue to be feared by many countries in this part of the world were to declare their policies to be ones which respect the independence and sovereignty of those other nations, SEATO would lose its 'raison d'être.' Thus the fact that SEATO as well as NATO continue to exist and to be active is mainly due to the policies and actions of the aggressive regimes either in Asia or in Europe as the case may be. For these reasons, Thailand continues to be a member of SEATO. For the sake of clarity I wish to summarize our foreign policy in only a few words. As I see it, the three pillars of Thailand's foreign policy are as follows. First, the foreign policy of

Thailand continues to be based on the notion or concept of regional security which I have inherited from my predecessors.

But knowing the effectiveness and the means that the military collective security system possesses, one of the first innovations that has been introduced in the foreign policy of Thailand is that we should not rely solely on the notion of collective military security but we must also try to complement and supplement it with a second notion, namely that of “collective political security.” Realizing that this country has not been and, in all likelihood, will not be a military power, we have to use the means that we have at our disposal. That is why we have to rely on diplomatic, political, cultural and social means in a framework of regional co-operation. Without casting any reflection on our partners, we realize that in those countries, as perhaps also in ours, the foreign policy is, in most cases, a reflection of domestic policy. As we all know, domestic policies may change from time to time. And that is why we feel that, for a small country like ours, we should rely more on ourselves and try to combine the strength of those who share the interests of this part of the world. If we want to hitch our star to a far away wagon we may wake up in disappointment. I have written in the Foreign Affairs journal many years ago that even though we have treaties and commitments, we must remind ourselves that domestic policies and politics may face variations and changes. That is why we have to establish a close working

relationship with our neighbours who share deep interests and an abiding faith with us. It does not mean that we have to forsake friends that are farther away.

However, it should be easily understood that if a disaster should occur close to your home, it would affect you more than one which occurs in a distant part of the globe. That is why all those who live close by must join hands and establish closer co-operation. If such a co-operation is effective in stemming the tide of aggression, then other nations that are farther away may see an advantage in coming to our assistance. After all we know that in this world of ours nations and peoples are acting not so much for the colours of their eyes or skin but mostly for national interests. Many journalists have written off Cambodia when its new government was faced with communist aggression, but nine months have already elapsed and yet the Cambodians are still fighting on their own with some help from her neighbours. It is evident that if the local people can show their great spirit in resisting aggression, there is great hope that other nations from outside may come to their assistance. Therefore, in our regional co-operative endeavours, in spite of set-backs and disappointments, we are still working hard and continuing to witness the steady growth and development of regional co-operation in this part of the world. Many countries in this area which were once “lukewarm” towards this approach have come to realize that the notion of regional co-operation is

imperative. That is why Thailand and many countries that find themselves in the same position are working together against all odds to develop and enhance this notion of regional co-operation.

The third pillar of Thailand's foreign policy is our faith in international organizations, particularly the United Nations. In spite of our realization that the U.N. has many drawbacks and problems, no one has been able to offer any substitute for the United Nations. Even great powers which have on occasion by-passed the U.N. for better or for worse have gone back to the U.N. for help and assistance. The most patent evidence of the usefulness of the U.N. occurred during the Cuban missile crisis. If there had been no U.N. I shudder to think what would have happened when the two great powers confronted each other. The U.N., especially its Secretary General, was used extensively not only as the go-between but especially to dispense wise counsel and to act as a thin barrier between the two great powers. Therefore, if the U.N. has anything to boast about, I think it can claim that it has saved the world from a catastrophe. With this kind of service to humanity and the world, how can anyone think of scrapping it? I think what one should do is to try to give this world organization more muscles and sinews. All members, great and small, should join hands in making it a more effective organization. That is why for a small nation like Thailand, we cannot think of leaving the U.N. For small

countries of the world the U.N. provides a useful forum to present their views and occasionally to criticize the great powers for certain policy or action. At the U.N., even a nation with a small population can have the same use of the rostrum and of the immense mass media facilities as a great power.

These, in summary, are the bases of our foreign policy for the past 12 years or so. Some members of the Opposition have said that Thailand's foreign policy has met with failure. We know how things are in politics. The Opposition can never say that the Government is doing well or otherwise they would never have a chance of becoming a government themselves. However, in all frankness, with such a foreign policy we can face the whole world. I hasten to say that Thailand's foreign policy is not the work of one man but rather it has enjoyed a continuous development, since the days of our ancestors, from the air, the soil and the bloodstream of this country of ours.

If you compare our present-day foreign policy to the other foreign policies which have been put into effect by many countries in this area, one can see how our policy has withstood the test. For instance, Thailand has been spared from direct attacks by our enemies. Of course, there are subversive activities but no open direct attacks have been carried out against Thailand. That is a great difference between the situation in Thailand and what has happened in places not too far from here. In a country south of Thailand,

it may be recalled how the Sukarno policy was carried out and how it has been changed by the patriotic forces of Indonesia. You can cast your glance to the east of Thailand, and you can remember our neutral good friend, Prince Sihanouk. Where is he now? Is he living on his own country's soil?

These are the practical evidences of the result of our foreign policy. Whether a policy succeeds or not may be a subject of criticism by this or that person, quarter or group. But let us be honest and sincere, and we shall see that the policy of Thailand during the past decade has brought to this country relative security and welfare and also a relative feeling of confidence that the future will be sufficiently promising for us.

Now, many things have changed or are beginning to change. The U.S., a great and friendly power, has enunciated what is known as the Nixon Doctrine. This in itself is an innovation of the U.S. foreign policy and we agree with it. We have always agreed that the local people must bear the responsibilities for their own security and well-being. Although they may expect some assistance from outside, the principal responsibility should rest on their shoulders. Therefore, when President Nixon announced this change in U.S. foreign policy, we were not caught by surprise. On the contrary, we approve of it and intend to work with him for the successful implementation of that policy. Unfortunately, he has to face problems and difficulties from the opposition

in his own country, but that is a domestic problem for the U.S. As far as Thailand is concerned, we do not have any difficulty with the change of U.S. policy known as the Nixon Doctrine.

We have also seen many changes at the current session of the U.N., a number of countries have changed their attitude on the question of Chinese representation. On this I have been asked many questions by the press and have said that Canada, Italy and other countries have the right to change their foreign policy as they see fit. When the Italian Foreign Minister was here just a few days ago, he was also asked by the press whether he would try to persuade Thailand to adopt the same policy as Italy. He was friendly and cordial enough to say that he had enough respect for Thailand not to mention this question.

Then there was the question put forth by one of our neighbours that Southeast Asia should be completely neutralized. There again, it is a change which has been suggested. As far as Thailand is concerned and as I can see it, I do not look at the question so much as neutralizing Southeast Asia or any world, we have seen no sign of it here in Asia that Peking has changed its attitude towards us. The Chinese on the Mainland have yet to learn to live at peace with their neighbours in Asia. If they have shown a more relaxed attitude towards Europeans or Americans, we have seen no indication that they are willing to live in peace with

the countries in Southeast Asia. Therefore, it is for them to change. On our part, we are ready. It is not we who threaten their existence. We have sent no insurgents to the Mainland or to North Vietnam. Our policy is not anti-communist, it is they who are unfriendly towards us. We have friendly contacts with most of the Asian nations, and we are willing to explore ways and means to live in peace with all those who live on the Asian continent as well as all nations of the world.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen: the foregoing are our aims in forging the future of Thailand in the field of foreign affairs. You may see through our hearts and minds a sincere desire to cultivate friendship with all, near and far, not only with those who live in Asia but also those who live in Europe, the Americas, Africa and elsewhere. If they are friendly to us, they can be sure that the Thai people will also be friendly to them. These are the central truths in the foreign policy of Thailand based on independence and objectivity.

A POSITIVE FOREIGN POLICY FOR THAILAND*

It is with pleasure that I accede to the request sent to me by Miss Remedios B. de Jesus, Managing Editor of “The Ambassador” to contribute to the special issue of this diplomatic journal. I also extend my good wishes on the journal’s first anniversary.

To speak of a “positive policy” for small countries which include Thailand, may sound like wishful thinking or worse a pretentious claim. For how can nations which the Versailles Treaty condescendingly termed as “powers with limited interests” afford to formulate and follow a concrete and positive policy? Possessing only limited and sometimes meagre resources, and living in a world where political and

* An article published under the title: “The Intent of Thailand” in “The Ambassador,” Manila, August 1971, Vol. II No. 1.

economic pressures, not to speak of military pressure, which nowadays often take the form of subversion and instigation to insurgency, converge on them to the point of reducing them to paralysis or impotency. Would they have the means or the opportunity to devise and conduct a truly positive policy? It seems that their urgent preoccupation would be to survive in a world of competition, contestation and conflict rather than indulge in higher political formulation.

Thailand had been one of those which went through such trials and tribulations. The latter part of the 19th century and the beginning of the present one had been a truly hard time for the weak and underdeveloped nations of Asia and Africa. With the colonial expansion and the search for seaports and markets going on full blast, international life for nations in Asia was, to say the least, highly hazardous and studded with dangerous reefs which caused many ships of state to founder. Thailand, or Siam then, was one of the few which managed to survive as a sovereign nation and, in this connection, I am willing to recognize that one of the factors which helped my country to remain independent was the skilful knowledge of our past monarchs in dealing and co-operating with friendly European nations like Great Britain and France as well as with many other nations of Asia and America. The truth, nevertheless, remains that rather than forging ahead with positive measures and actions, nations in Southeast Asia in those days were obliged to

consider principally negative steps to avoid the dangers and pitfalls of international competition and rivalry. Thailand itself had to steer a very cautious course and most of the time its main concern was to avoid perilous implications and involvement. The most significant illustration could be seen in Thailand's vote on the Manchuria Question before the League of Nations which condemned the aggressive Japanese intervention in that territory. Thailand, for fear of antagonizing Japan which was then a dominant military power in Asia, carefully abstained in the voting. Thus Thailand may properly be said to have pioneered a neutralist policy which was followed until after the Second World War. Although Thailand was among the first to practise the concept of neutralism, well before many other Asian nations, I do not believe that we would claim that neutralism should be regarded as a positive policy.

After the War, when nations in Southeast Asia shook off their colonial bondage and emerged as independent entities, the fear of endangering their newly won freedom lingered on. That probably explains why most, if not all, of the new states prefer to adopt a cautious, but not very positive, approach to international events. Neutralism or, if you prefer, non-involvement gives them what they probably consider as a measure of protection from intervention risks created by the division of the world into two more or less hostile camps. It, undoubtedly, lacks a positive character; that is why certain

adherents of that approach felt the need of qualifying as “active” their policy of non-involvement or non-alignment. Thailand could have followed suit and jumped onto the bandwagon of neutralism which would only mean that it was reverting to its previous international stance. However, because of the militancy and threatening attitude of certain regimes and the frailty of the neutralist concept which depends on the goodwill and the faithful observance of the neutral posture by those who are more inclined to dominate and expand, Thailand did not join with others and revive its past adherence to neutrality and non-involvement. Instead, it drew closer to the western powers, thinking that such an approach would bring a more plausible assurance for its own peace and security.

However, the events of the past decade or so have revealed that the courses chosen by the nations of Southeast Asia either in the direction of neutralism or the so-called “committed” posture did not entirely fulfil their hopes and expectations. On the one hand, countries practising neutralism or non-alignment were subject to attacks by those who failed to respect their desire for neutrality which actually voided all the real meaning of that policy. As a result, the victims had to accept various kinds of aid, including the military one which they consistently declined up till then on the ground that it was incompatible with their non-alignment policy. On the other hand, human vicissitudes and the

vagaries of domestic politics in many faraway countries have also reduced the credibility of explicitly pledged international obligations. The need therefore arose for such nations as Thailand to seek a more positive policy that has a better prospect of ensuring their national survival. Thus the nations of Asia which followed different if not divergent paths have come a long way from their original points of departure and now find themselves much less far apart than when they first started on their journey to search for a workable and effective foreign policy.

After varying experiences and re-adjustments, nations are once again confronted with the factors of limited resources and power, military as well as political and economic, which constitute almost insurmountable difficulties for them to devise a positive policy. Alone and left to themselves, they have little chance individually of achieving such an objective. The only possibility remains in collective action and co-operation. If those small nations can learn and find ways and means to band together and co-operate with one another, they may eventually be able to shape and implement a positive and concerted policy without being squeezed or crushed by the weight and pressure of larger countries. This, indeed, is the dawn of regionalism or regional co-operation.

Although Thailand has a population of over 35 million and land area as large as France that is endowed with valuable

mineral resources, it can never aspire to become a super power or, for that matter, even a large power by western standard of classification.

In the international political areas, Thailand, realizing its obvious limitations in resources and power, adopted attitudes and policies which are aimed primarily at ensuring its own survival and orderly progress in the light of the then prevailing realities. As the basic tenets which serve as the bedrock of Thai foreign policy have been and still remain the preservation of national sovereignty and independence from foreign encroachment, the ominously growing communist threat in the aftermath of the Second World War, culminating in the Korean War and the communist victory in Indochina, compelled the Thai Government then to take the crucial decision of joining with other like-minded nations, in establishing the South-East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), which was set up for the specific purpose of helping defend Asian member states from that threat. This probably gave the appearance of a historic departure from the previous non-commitment policy said to have been practised by Thailand during the days of western colonial expansion. Upon closer examination, however, it becomes evident that the comparison does not take into account the changing circumstances. While in the past it was a question of avoiding to be nibbled to death by one or the other, or both western powers, which were busy trying to enlarge themselves at the

expense of Thai territorial integrity, the situation in the 1950's was entirely different, as the danger this time was coming from certain Asian Marxist regimes. In need of friendly assistance for the safeguard of its security, Thailand entered into close relationship with the western powers which shared with it the interest and desire to halt imperialistic expansion. That was the reason why Thailand joined in the collective defence arrangement such as the South-East Asia Treaty Organization and, because of that, Thailand and a few other Asian countries have since been stuck with the pejorative label of a "committed" nation which carries with it the idea of subservience to western nations. It was not clear why only the Asian members are considered to be "committed," and not the others, when it may be more justly said that countries like Thailand are committed mainly to their freedom and independence. Are not the big powers as committed to the same cause as the smaller nations?

Nevertheless, even a collective defence arrangement cannot offer a fool-proof guarantee for the national security of a nation. In fact, it contains an inherent weakness which finds a notable expression in the so-called "constitutional processes" provision which is tantamount to an escape clause for not honouring treaty obligations. Then not long after its inception, SEATO's strength was sapped by fundamental changes in the policies of certain member countries. Particularly at the height of the Laotian crisis of 1960-1961,

a painful impression was created that SEATO was not exactly capable of performing its functions in the face of crisis. More recently, an important member announced that it will not fight another war on mainland Asia. Meanwhile, its Legislative branch has busily engaged itself in placing one obstacle after another in the way of fulfilling treaty commitments in the event of another “Asian” war, thus rendering its SEATO obligations even more difficult to discharge, if not already obsolete. Moreover, the declared policy of its Executive branch already implicitly limits any possible involvement solely to the case of open aggression by the communist nuclear powers which may in all likelihood never occur. These developments tend to make any dependence on collective military arrangements somewhat less than secure. The need, therefore, arose for finding supplementary means to maintain stability and ensure orderly progress in Southeast Asia. Thailand, however, remains a member of SEATO since, despite its shortcomings, there is as yet no complete substitute for it. A “paper tiger,” as it was occasionally called by its antagonists, may perhaps be better than none at all. In other respects, the organization offers a useful forum for certain members, especially the European ones, which still find available opportunities to play a constructive role, together with their Asian partners, in Southeast Asian affairs. The Thai Government for one has not failed to urge both France and the United Kingdom to

assume a more active interest in this direction, not only in the SEATO context but also in the United Nations, as evident from the initiative taken by the Thai Delegation to the 25th General Assembly session last year to modify the important resolution on International Security urging upon the Permanent Members of the Security Council to perform their obligations in a manner worthy of the confidence reposed in them by the Charter.

Perhaps the need for such an initiative by a small country like Thailand to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations is a sufficient indication of two things. First, small nations, including Thailand, still count on the world organization for a measure of security. Secondly, their expectations have not been met. In fact, in proposing the said amendment, the Thailand Delegation encountered a great deal of opposition from many small powers which have grown suspicious of the activities of big powers and, therefore, do not wish to see any increase in their role. Thailand, being a staunch supporter of the principles and purposes of the United Nations, would however, like to see big powers carry out their responsibilities under the Charter and to justify their privileged position in the world body. Be that as it may, the United Nations, as we see it, embodies the legitimate aspirations and yearnings of human beings and despite its shortcomings and weaknesses, has as yet found no replacement or substitute. It is the best attempt thus far to realize man's

most noble aims, but is in effect a victim of man's foibles and human imperfections. Thailand does not expect the United Nations to do more than to give voice to small nations, particularly to their apprehensions and grievances, and to attempt at a peaceful settlement of international conflicts. Indeed, there have been occasions where the United Nations has surpassed all expectations by performing some useful functions. An example that comes to mind is the activity of the United Nations, particularly its Secretary-General, during the harrowing days of the Cuban missile crisis when the world was at the brink of a nuclear holocaust. Defusing that crisis was partly the result of patient corridor work at the United Nations Headquarters on East River, and the world was saved from possible devastation and disaster.

It is evident from the foregoing, therefore, that Thailand's foreign policy also rests on its faith in the principles and purposes of the United Nations Organization which still performs many useful functions but cannot be relied upon to ensure peace and stability in our part of the world. In fact, the raging wars in the Indochina area have remained completely outside the purview of the world organization. It is clear that additional ways and means are needed to supplement its functions in endeavouring to bring about a peaceful condition in Southeast Asia.

In its quest for a positive foreign policy, important initiatives and constructive measures have been taken by the

Thai Government to build new frameworks for regional co-operation in the political, economic, social and cultural fields. Such efforts are intended to consolidate national freedom and independence by joining together the endeavours of countries which share common stakes and interests. The new groupings are not, however, engaged in military co-operation, since their members do not possess any real military strength but must continue, for some time to come, to rely on assistance from outside the region. Indeed the experience with SEATO has convinced us that reliance on military security alone is not adequate, and that political defence through co-operation in non-military fields is capable of becoming a much more effective means of self-preservation. This is because of the growing unwillingness of free nations to employ a “military solution” in coping with the communist threat, and their preference for possible political accommodation with other states living under different social and political systems. For smaller countries to have some political leverage under such changing circumstances, they must act in concert in order to protect their interests more effectively. Moreover, the term “political” as used here signifies economic, social and technical co-operation as well, which will serve to strengthen the economic base and enhance the prospects of achieving a meaningful settlement of outstanding problems, and offer an added attraction for others to come and join in constructive

undertakings instead of following their destructive bent or less productive courses. The outcome will undoubtedly be for mutual benefit as well as for the benefit of the entire region and perhaps also the world at large. For these reasons, Thailand has been in the forefront in setting up such regional organization as the Association of Southeast Asia (ASA), the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the Asian and Pacific Council (ASPAC), which have ushered in a new era for Southeast Asia.

For those who may not be familiar with the aforementioned organizations, a brief description of them is hereby given.

The first effort was the historic establishment of the Association of Southeast Asia (ASA) by Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand in 1961, on the basis of the Bangkok Declaration of 31 July of that year. However, certain difficulties which may be regarded as relics of past colonial administration hampered the activity of the organization. Only when, through Thailand's efforts, reconciliation was achieved between Malaysia and Indonesia, on the one hand, and Malaysia and the Philippines, on the other hand, that the way was once again open for regional endeavours. The ASA was then enlarged to include Indonesia and Singapore in a new regional organization called the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) which was established in a meeting at Bangkok in 1968. By then another regional organization, comprising 9 nations of the

Asian and Pacific region, had already been set up, after successful preliminary discussions in Bangkok, at a meeting in Seoul, the Republic of Korea. The Asian and Pacific Council (ASPAC) comprises Australia, the Republic of China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Thailand and the Republic of Vietnam as members, and the Kingdom of Laos as an observer. Since then, the Khmer Republic has indicated an interest in participating in regional undertakings, and has in fact sent an observer to attend the Fourth Ministerial Meeting of the ASEAN, held in Manila last month.

While the activities of ASA, ASEAN and ASPAC have been mainly in the economic, social and cultural fields, Thailand and other countries in the region have been in close contact over political matters of import to the welfare of Asia and the Pacific. Apart from meetings under the aegis of these organizations, as well as other regional institutions, mention must be made of the Djakarta Conference on Cambodia (now the Khmer Republic) in May of last year, which was convened by the Government of the Republic of Indonesia in an attempt to deal with a serious regional problem peacefully and by regional efforts. It may be recalled that the crisis arose when the North Vietnamese forces in Cambodia launched a general offensive against the Khmer forces with the aims of destroying the Khmer Government and replacing it with one which would be sympathetic to their policy of expansion.

Although the three-man task force dispatched by the Djakarta powers to various capitals to find a peaceful solution to the conflict did not succeed in their effort, owing to the non-co-operative attitudes of certain outside powers which support North Vietnamese actions, the Conference itself represents a significant milestone in the annals of Asia and the Pacific. For the first time, the nations in the great arc spanning from New Zealand and Australia, through Southeast Asia, to East Asia and Japan, with different attitudes and policies on security matters, were able to assemble together to try to find Asian solutions to Asian problems, in particular the Cambodian crisis, which affect the security and stability of their region.

Therefore, it may be said that, though difficulties have been encountered and may still remain, regional co-operation on the bases of equality and partnership is here to stay and forms a main pillar of Thai foreign policy. Farsighted Asian leaders today are convinced of the need to enhance regional solidarity and identity. Regional efforts can complement and are supplementing the broader frameworks or arrangements of such organizations as the United Nations and SEATO. Truly regional groupings have a better chance of being effective, owing to their more compact membership and more identical interests as well as problems. Thailand for one envisages that sub-regional organizations, like ASEAN, should serve as the core or the inner ring, supplemented by

a larger body, like ASPAC, which is in turn complemented by international organizations with wider membership. This does not mean, however, that members of this “inner circle” should shun their friend from outside the region. Indeed it is not difficult to anticipate that nations of Europe and America, as well as other areas of the world, will then be able to strengthen their contacts with countries in the region on a more equal footing, with greater confidence and mutual advantages.

For the past twelve years, it has become evident that the Thai foreign policy, as briefly outlined, has served the country and the 35 million Thai people adequately, especially if one takes a quick look at the surrounding area. Thailand has been spared the trauma or suffering experienced by some of its neighbours, not excluding those which had advocated different policies, such as non-alignment. In one country to the west of Thailand, relations cultivated and nurtured for years under the policy of neutrality did not prevent it from being attacked by its erstwhile friend. In another country, where the then ruler openly courted the powerful neighbours to the north, aggression occurred and large areas of its territory have been occupied for a number of years now by foreign troops. In another country further south, its cherished independence was narrowly saved from the clutches of Marxist imperialism by the sacrifice of a young girl which enabled her father to escape certain death and to take part

in the patriotic movement to restore and preserve the nation's sovereignty and integrity. In a neighbouring country to the north-east of Thailand, despite guaranteed neutrality, war has been raging for years and a large part of its territory is under communist occupation. Recently, an island republic on the western edge of Southeast Asia, which has practised non-alignment and enjoyed close contacts with Asian Marxist regimes, finds itself in turmoil and discovers that the instigator is one of those regimes. Thailand so far has been spared such calamities. Thus experience and concrete examples have shown that the policy of non-alignment is fraught with no less danger and has not saved its practitioners and advocates from a fate that it is supposed to help avoid.

But what of the future? Although Thai policy will adhere to the principal lines mentioned earlier, namely support for SEATO and the United Nations as well as promotion of regional harmony and active co-operation, events in our part of the world are bound to be affected by the attitudes and policies of big powers in and outside the region: the United States, the Soviet Union, mainland China, Japan and, last but not least, the European powers.

The United States has announced the Nixon Doctrine as its new policy for Asia, and perhaps for other parts of the world as well. Despite warning by responsible officials that the Guam doctrine should not be turned into a Guam dogma, it is still not entirely clear whether the Doctrine itself is

capable of implementation by its proponent in the light of the uncertainties prevailing in Congressional quarters. For instance, in the case of Cambodia, there have been so many attempts by the United States Senate or Congress to put a strait-jacket on the Administration's ability to help the Khmer Government deal with North Vietnamese aggression. The approval of the supplemental budget of approximately \$200 million last year, after intensive lobbying by the Administration, has partially restored confidence among friends of the United States in the Administration's ability to obtain Congressional support and action, but other indications tend to confirm the nagging doubt in the minds of Asians as to the viability of United States revised commitment under the Nixon Doctrine.

I hasten to add, in this connection, that Thailand agrees entirely with the Doctrine, as the Thai Government and people have implemented the principles contained therein even before the Doctrine was announced. Thailand has relied on its own manpower resources in its long, continuing fight against communist subversive elements and insurgents at home and does not intend to request manpower assistance from outside to cope with communist terrorist activities within its borders.

The Soviet Union, on the other hand, has announced the so-called Brezhnev Doctrine of collective security, not to be confused with the other Doctrine dealing with

the right of the socialist motherland to intervene in the internal affairs of other socialist states. The Soviets have thereby indicated, and have since taken concrete steps to realize the intention of increasing their presence in certain strategic areas along the sea routes between Suez and the Pacific Ocean. Their future role, which is believed to be capable of acting as a counterpoise to the growing power of mainland China, is an important factor in the power equation and will be watched with interest by countries in the area. It is hoped, however, that the USSR will grow more aware of its responsibilities as a global power and more willing to carry them out for interests higher than ideological or short-term ones.

Mainland China remains the biggest question mark, even after the 'Ping Pong' episode. It will continue to cast an ominous shadow over the Southeast Asian peninsula for years to come. Nevertheless, if countries of the region succeed in forging a regional identity and cohesiveness, they will have a better chance of persuading mainland China to turn away from its isolationist, truculent and interventionist policy of the past and rejoin the community of Asian nations in a renewed Bandung spirit. If such an event comes to pass, it will surely be a significant achievement for peace and progress and the entire world will derive benefit from it. As for Thailand, it has offered to begin a meaningful dialogue with Peking; and so have most, if not all Southeast Asian countries,

but so far nothing concrete has resulted. Thailand has, furthermore, contemplated the possibilities that other ASEAN partners may join in conducting a many-sided dialogue with mainland China in the hope that such collective talks could pave the way for another Bandung, or could themselves assume the character of a Bandung-type conference. Although there has been no tangible response from Peking, no man of goodwill can afford not to try, provided that the attempt does not become a fruitless chase after the rainbow.

Japan is now the third ranking economic and industrial power in the world. Although militarily hamstrung by its constitution, its political power follows an upward curve concomitant with its economic might, and is increasingly felt in many parts of the globe. Its preoccupation may at present be with trade for purely commercial gains, but in future it may be in a position to exercise influence more commensurate with its economic standing and political aspirations. Japanese presence in Southeast Asia should then be turned to more constructive and welcome use for the benefit of the region as a whole. Even at this point of time, Japan has been actively participating in such regional endeavours as ASPAC and the Djakarta Conference on Cambodia, and has made significant contributions to the Asian Development Bank and the Mekong Project sponsored by the riparian states and United Nations agencies.

More recently, the Japanese Government has announced that Japan would increase its foreign aid up to one percent in 5 years' time, which was indeed a welcome move and an encouraging response to the appeal of the United Nations Committee on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). It is hoped that other industrialized nations will follow suit, as they will have little to gain, but may lose more, from a situation where their customers find themselves unable to afford their export goods and services.

The European powers, whether members of the European Economic Community (EEC) or not, have an important role to play in Southeast Asia. That was why the Thai Delegation to the 25th General Assembly of the United Nations proposed an amendment to the draft resolution on the Question of International Security to give a more deserving role to the Permanent Members of the Security Council in recognition of their responsibilities and in keeping with their privileged position. Nations like the United Kingdom and France are apparently willing and able to carry out their responsibilities in a constructive manner and should, therefore, be entrusted with greater opportunities to do so in close co-operation with countries of the region.

With regard to the United Kingdom, its role as a Co-Chairman of the Geneva Conferences has been a determinant in its policy towards the Indochina area for the past decade. Although its action in this capacity has been

unduly hampered by the attitude and policy of the other Co-Chairman, it should continue to try to perform its functions to the best interests of countries in the region, particularly those which have been directly affected by the Geneva settlements which the British Co-Chairman had no small hand in shaping. British membership of SEATO is welcome, particularly in view of Britain's renewed interest in the security of the region. At the recently concluded SEATO Council Meeting, I had the occasion to remark that "the decision of the Government of the United Kingdom to maintain its presence in Southeast Asia is welcome as it will contribute to strengthening peace and stability of the region." In this connection, British presence as a member of the Commonwealth also has a certain amount of value in the regional context. Last but not least, the region has benefited from British aid programmes, especially the Colombo Plan, and British participation in such regional organizations as the Asian Development Bank.

The point I should like to make here is that British presence and co-operation are of value to the region and are appreciated, but they are no less beneficial to British interests and should, if possible, be further enhanced, particularly in the political field, to promote peace, stability and progress in that important part of the world. In so doing, the legitimate interests and genuine aspirations of the people living in the area must always be considered, and no patchwork solution

should ever again be imposed on them from afar for the sake of political expediency or short-term gains. Such a temporary settlement constitutes a legacy which is no longer welcome in Southeast Asia.

In view of the foregoing, it may perhaps be concluded that Thai foreign policy to be pragmatic needs to take into account the changes which are occurring or can be anticipated. It is believed that present policy, based on factors which I have outlined, contains enough elasticity and flexibility to full the nation's future needs for some time to come. It is a positive policy in that it aims at constructive undertakings for the benefit of not only Thailand but also others with whom the Thai nation must work closely to ensure its own survival and orderly progress. It is not dictated by hostility towards any people or nation. Nor is it negative in its orientation, but strives to promote not only passive coexistence, which would still be an improvement on the present situation, but also active co-operation in all fields of human endeavour among like-minded peoples and nations for the good of all.

AIR CHIEF MARSHAL
SIDDHI SAVETSILA



Air Chief Marshal Siddhi Savetsila
Minister of Foreign Affairs
February 1980 - August 1990

THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AND THE PRESENT SITUATION

On 14 April 1986, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be one hundred and eleven years old. This journey, of which my tenure of the office of Minister of Foreign Affairs forms but only a small part, is indeed a long one. Already it has taken us through many historic milestones which have become our hallmarks as a people. Through the years we have been fortunate to sail with the winds on our back. We steer our ship with hope, safe and sound, through the turbulence which has become part and parcel of the international politics of the present era.

Soon we will, together and separately, begin anew the efforts to build the Thai future. The task will be, to say the least, far from easy. The international situation is disturbing, the regional situation is less than favourable, and domestically the going continues to be uphill. It would be sheer folly to

indulge in the illusion that all is “well.” Yet the same time, it would also be defeatist if we were to believe that the situation is “irretrievable.” That is not the Thai way. On my part, I only know that, as a people, we do have no greater asset than the willingness and determination to face all problems frankly and meet all dangers free from panic or fear.

In the past year, I have travelled not only across our own land but to other lands – to the North and South, East and West, and across the seas. In all the places where I have been, I have found that there is a vast reservoir of goodwill for Thailand. Peoples look to us with confidence and admiration. Thailand has become the model of a successful diplomacy. Our overriding obligations in the months ahead, therefore, will not only be to remain faithful to their trust, but also to fulfil the hope of our own people, and that is to uplift the well-being of our people.

The task must begin at home. We have learned, through the hard and bitter experiences, that we must put our house in order. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs plays no small part in creating the good image of the country. We must reflect on other countries and peoples the quality and spirit of our people. Now everyone in the world outside knows that we have not lost our faith in democracy. We have laid to rest the nagging question about the stability of our democratic government.

We have also learned, in the past year, that continuing economic ills are likely to undermine the ability to conduct an effective foreign policy. Economically, of course, the past year has been of an extraordinarily trying time for all of us. In my new capacity as the principal coordinator on economic affairs, I have added a new, important dimension to the conduct of foreign policy. Now it is more broad-based. The mobilization of ideas and counsels from the various sectors has been institutionalized in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In this process, the formulation of our foreign policy can be said to have become more democratized. Its implementation, too, has undergone changes. Foreign affairs are no longer the preserve of the Foreign Ministry. In this endeavour, we have received in good measure the cooperation and coordination of all concerned – be they in government, the private sector, academicians, mass media, students, and people from all walks of life. As I have said many times before, no one has the monopoly of truth. Through the new arrangements, I believe that confidence in our ability to master the present difficulties soon will not only be restored but further strengthened.

I will of course admit that confidence is one thing, success is another. When faced with economic recession, the first reaction would usually be to cut consumption, reduce imports, adjust the exchange rate, and expand exports. In the longer term, however, these measures will not always work.

To get Thailand moving again takes much more than that. It takes many constructive programmes and many far-sighted policies. It also requires that there be progress in those programmes and effectiveness in the implementation of those policies. In all this the role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs can be very crucial.

The outlook at present can be said to have brightened up. With the reduction of the oil prices and the interest rates worldwide, it should be possible for us to reverse the process of the economic downturn. Fresh capital is being generated from both within and without. It should be our policy to keep our economy competitive by widening the access to credit and contracts for both Thai and foreign business. In conjunction with the concerned Ministries and agencies, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is also doing a lot of work to attract investors and tourists from abroad. At the same time, however, we also realize how important it is for all nations to promote their own growth, and it would be more fruitful if they can do so in coordination. Our membership in the Security Council, as well as our position in the world as a bridge between the North and South, has proved invaluable in this regard.

But as an agricultural country, Thailand also depends on its farms and natural resources. I think we can take pride in the fact that Thai rice now holds nearly 40% of the present world market. This is no accident; it is rather the results of

good salesmanship and the popularity of our products. Of course our share of the world rice market is now in serious jeopardy because of the competitive and unfair measures adopted by a certain country. However, our task must remain to master and turn to fully fruitful ends the magnificent productivity of our farms and farmers. It is a source of pride to all of us; but, without new, realistic measures, it could demoralize our farmers and cause a severe depression in prices both at home and abroad. Perhaps it may be necessary to think now about the long-term possibility of tailoring the use of our lands and the supplies of each crop to the real needs, both domestic consumption and for export, in order to prevent glut.

In this connection, I am also of the view that perhaps a new, comprehensive programme for the restructuring of our economy may be in order. Since the last decade or so, Thailand's economic development has been based to a great degree on the exportation of our goods. Despite shrinking markets, our assertions have been highly successful. Thanks to the application of modern technology, we are today an internationally accepted manufacturer, in addition to being an important producer of commodities. Both the public and private are putting in the best of their efforts. They are working hand in glove to find new outlets for our goods. Indeed, the results have been spectacular; Thailand has firmly established itself as an international trader.

But the greatest challenge of all is being posed by the growth of protectionism and cut-throat competition in various shapes or forms from the developed countries. This happens as a natural result of the worldwide economic recession which has been with us since the beginning of the last decade. Moreover, today there are scores of significant trading nations of widely cultural backgrounds with great variation in labour costs and standards of living, but with comparable levels of sophistication. And so the question arises: Will we in this country adapt our thinking to these new prospects and patterns, or will we wait until events have passed us by?

In the recent months, controversies have been raging as to whether we have done enough to ward off the danger that is imminent. Let me assure you that we have. The action is one of concert and unity. All of us have acted as partners in this common cause. While the outcome of our efforts is by no means certain, we cannot be faulted for not having tried and done our best.

Thailand adheres to the principles of free trade, and will continue to do so for as long as we can see. It is common knowledge that the hope for recovery of the world economy depends on the strengthening of the free-trading system. The industrialized nations of the West, including Japan, must take the lead. During his recent visit to Thailand, Secretary of State George Shultz of the United States said that

“protectionism is not the remedy to an illness; it is, in itself, an illness.” While single American initiative can be expected to do the whole job, we in Thailand are looking with keen anticipation for an American example. The forthcoming summit of the industrialized nations in Tokyo is therefore of paramount importance. Not only can the industrialized nations afford any longer to continue to pursue incompatible economic policies among themselves, they must also seriously take into account the real needs and interests of the developing countries. We have had many disappointments in the past. This time, we would like to see that a coordinated programme to stimulate the general economic expansion be instituted. Nothing is more likely to encourage a sound political evolution in the developing countries than the hope that they may share soon in renewed growth.

Meanwhile, Thailand cannot wait for the actions of others, over which we may have little or no control. We will get on with the business at hand. In the volatile international environment which we find ourselves, we must transcend the traditional pattern of diplomacy. This is an era of interdependence, economically and politically, among the developing countries.

We are well on the road. We are in the period in which creative policy can make major progress. In the last six years, Thailand has established diplomatic relations with 35 new countries. The united strength of the Association of

Southeast Asian Nations has continued to flourish. Thailand wholeheartedly congratulates the Philippine people and government for the triumph of democracy in their country. The ASEAN Countries are now working on issues that would move them onto the new plateaus of regional progress and prosperity. The Economic Summit is being planned for next year, with the Philippines as the host. Then and there we will be strengthening our efforts to forge cooperation between the North and South, as well as between the South and South. And we will also be mapping out new political and economic strategies in our relations with the developed countries in warding off protectionism and in preserving the free trading system.

To the east of our border stands a grim symbol of power untamed. The occupation of Kampuchea by Vietnam is now in its eighth year. Deeper and deeper Vietnam is sinking in a quagmire, and is in enormous trouble economically. We greatly admire the courage and determination of Kampuchea in its struggling to be Kampuchea. Our hearts and minds are with the freedom fighters. We are delighted to see that they are making progress in the field. On our part, I can also report that we ourselves have made great progress in containing the situation along the border and that the threat to our territorial integrity has largely diminished.

Two weeks ago the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea undertook an active diplomacy to

end the conflict by proposing what might be “an Indochinese solution to an Indochinese problem.” This is known as the “Eight-Point Proposal” whereby the principal protagonists would be allowed to negotiate and reconcile directly among themselves. This proposal has the support of the international community and of ASEAN. It does not ask for much; it is a process, a beginning, and a direction for a negotiated settlement. It does not ask for a surrender, nor does it ask for an abdication of Vietnam’s legitimate interests in Indochina. This much the Kampuchean people have the right to ask. This little Vietnam can certainly afford to give. But Vietnam has, without legitimate reasons, turned a blind eye on it.

As for Thailand and ASEAN, we stand ready to help Vietnam end the nightmare in Kampuchea if and when it wants to wake up from it. On our part, the undertaking will not be for a tactical, transient, or expedient reason. It is out of our genuine desire for peace in the region. Vietnam should now realize, if it has not realized already, that better relations with Thailand are in its best interest. They would have far greater implications than normally would have Vietnam’s other relations. Both the United States and China, with which Vietnam would like to normalize relations, have said that their attitudes will be influenced Vietnam’s behaviour towards Thailand and the Kampuchean problem.

Now that the opportunity presents itself, Vietnam should seize it. The need for a solution to the Kampuchean

problem has never been more acute than it is now. Thailand and ASEAN, along with the other members of the international community, can be counted on to help Vietnam break the impasse in the Kampuchean and other problem.

Finally, let me end my remarks with a note of hope. I am basically an optimist, in addition to being a realist. Both the successes and the setbacks of the past year remain on our agenda of unfinished business. The show must go on; we cannot break off the journey now. We will always remember that the world is not meant to be a prison in which man awaits his execution. Nor have we, as a people, survived the tests and trials of over 700 years to surrender everything – including our place in history – now. This Nation has the will and the faith to make a supreme effort to break the log jam on the economic, development, and security problems. And we will persist until we prevail; until we see the light glow at the end of the tunnel, no matter how far away.

In the words of a great statesman, “With all the mighty foes we have laid low and all the dark and deadly designs that we have frustrated, why should we fear for our future?” “We have,” he said, “come safely through the worst.”

PEACE AND JUSTICE: MEETING THE CHALLENGES IN OUR INTERDEPENDENT WORLD*

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Members
of the Honolulu Committee on Foreign Relations,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Among the societies of the world, Hawaii stands out as one in which people from diverse cultures and religions can work together for a prosperous and peaceful common destiny. This is where East and West have met with happy results. Hawaii stands out as a valuable example for the rest of the world.

* Delivered at a dinner hosted by the Honolulu Committee on Foreign Relations on 6 October 1986.

In our present age of global interdependence, no society can afford to take a lone path. International cooperation is vital for our very survival. We live in a global community in which we all share a common destiny.

With the recognition of our interdependence, we have resorted to building international institutions to tackle our common problems. Today, the United Nations remains the best global instrument for cooperation and peace.

It is true that the United Nations has some deficiencies. The deficiencies reflect the lack of consensus in the international community toward common problems. Nevertheless, we should not overly focus our attention on the negative side. The United Nations can and has done a great deal for the benefit of mankind. The United Nations has made it easier for nations to cooperate with one another in areas ranging from social welfare, education, population, health care, to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Among other things, the United Nations has given new light to the concept of power in international relations. In traditional diplomacy, power used to be equated with military might alone. Now, power may also be measured by one's ability to link global issues in the United Nations to increase one's leverage. Thus, to a substantial degree, the United Nations has enabled states to pursue peace and justice via multilateral diplomacy rather than the use of force.

Thailand remains a firm and steadfast supporter of the United Nations. We stand ready to cooperate with other nations to solve common problems.

The end of this year will see the expiration of our first two-years-term as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. As a member of the Council, we have had to make many difficult decisions. Each decision was guided by our firm adherence to the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter and the rules of international law. Furthermore, our activities were guided by our desire to promote objectivity and moderation in the Council's decisions.

Thailand fully supports the decision of the United Nations to declare this year the "Year of Peace." To us, peace is not merely a cessation of hostilities. It is a more positive state. To us, peace must include justice.

Numerous obstacles to peace and justice still exist in our world today. In the international economic area, rapid improvement in the living standards of the peoples in developing countries is fundamental to peace and justice. People who are gainfully employed and whose basic needs and modest expectations are fulfilled would be unlikely to support radical causes or disruptive changes. On the other hand, economic failure had been a catalyst for unrest and dissatisfaction resulting in fundamental and disruptive changes.

My government places rapid economic development and the improvement in our people's welfare high on its agenda of priorities. We are confident of our ability to maintain acceptable sustained growth rates. We are proud of our past performance. We will do our best to maintain that record. Moreover, some encouraging developments have taken place in the world economy. We are now witnessing lower oil prices and lower interest rates.

Nevertheless, several areas remain of great concern for us. Let us look at protectionism and subsidies in agricultural trade. Before I discuss these very important subjects, allow me to describe salient aspects of the Thai economy in order to help put these problems in their perspective. Thailand has an abundance of fertile land and natural resources. It is, therefore, natural that agriculture forms the basis of our economy. Agriculture provides much of our needed export revenue. Nearly two-thirds of our 50 million people are farmers. Agriculture produces valuable inputs for agro-industries and for export. Our agricultural export exceeds one-third of our total export income. Growing export markets inevitably led to the expansion of our industrial sector. This, in turn, led to the growth of our skilled labour force in order to serve the increasing needs of the industrial sector.

The above developments did not come about because of government intervention and rigid economic planning.

They have evolved naturally in accordance with market forces. The Thai government has promoted free enterprise and kept its market open. As a result, we have attained a high level of growth and economic efficiency. Nevertheless, we do rely on more trade. This means more exports and imports especially with developed countries.

We are, therefore, gravely concerned about protectionism. We condemn it as a matter of principle. We condemn it because it adversely affects our economic well-being. We condemn it because it will inevitably undermine our stability. It is unjust. In our interdependent world, it undermines world peace and stability.

Present day protectionist forces use trade deficit as their main argument. In my view, disequilibrium in other sectors of the economy is responsible for this deficit. The fact remains that several large industries that are the least efficient are the most highly protected. They ironically possess the most political power. They are likely to use their power to press for larger measures of protectionism. The mood in developed countries have also changed in such a way that any export gain by developing countries is looked upon with suspicion of unfair trade practices. Such an atmosphere is definitely not conducive to the promotion of an open multilateral system which would serve the long term interests of all states.

Another disturbing phenomenon is the escalation of trade distorting measures. I refer particularly to the increasing use of export subsidies by developed countries in the area of agricultural trade. Farm lobbies with strong political clout have kept agricultural prices high. This, in combination with their advanced technology, and their successful attempts to become self-sufficient, led to chronic surpluses. These surpluses are eventually offered to world markets at uneconomically low prices at the expense of efficient producers such as Thailand.

The case of rice is an interesting one, particularly since rice is the key crop of Thailand. The lobbying skills of the US Rice Millers' Association allowed it to fully benefit from the provisions of the Farm Act. It is noteworthy that the Farm Act was designed primarily to counter the European Community's agricultural export subsidies. However, the EC does not export rice in any significant quantity.

To provide a balanced view, I should also mention the European Community's sugar subsidy which turned it from a net importer of sugar to one of the largest sugar exporters within a few years. This contributes to the present stagnation in the sugar trade, upon which many poor farmers in Thailand and many other developing countries depend for income.

It is therefore natural that Thailand should strongly support efforts to liberalize trade, stem protectionism, and reduce trade-distorting measures and attaches great

importance to the New Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations. At the same time, we support the establishment of discipline in agricultural trade. We place particular emphasis on agriculture, because we feel that agriculture must be given priority in the negotiating process and implementation.

The world is, in our view, at an economic cross-roads. If we fail to stem protectionism and restore free and open multilateral trade now, economic stagnation will follow. As confidence in international trade erodes, each state will be forced to become more self-sufficient and inward-looking. Less international trade inevitably means lower standards of living. It will also mean the erosion of economic ties which bind the international community in a cooperative environment of peace, and mutual interest. With the erosion of economic ties, the prospect for peace and justice will be more difficult.

Let us now focus our attention on some other obstacles to peace and justice. It is a fact of life that international terrorism has now become a major challenge of our time. Violent groups take advantage of modern communication and the media to dramatize the demands. Innocent men, women and children have perished in vain because of the terrorists' derate pursuit of what they perceived to be their interests.

The international community must stand united and let the terrorists know that enough is enough. I firmly believe

that intelligence exchange and extradition are areas of crucial importance in our joint struggle against international terrorism. Let there be no doubt that we will react and react strongly. We must join hands as law enforcers against this modern barbarism. As law enforcers, our methods must be decisive, effective and within the bounds of international law.

Another issue which has serious implications for peace and justice is the issue of armament. I am deeply concerned about the continuing escalation of the global arms race, particularly in the nuclear dimension. I sincerely hope that the resumed negotiations between the United States of America and the Soviet Union will yield early and concrete results consistent with the goal of seeking a genuine, verifiable and balanced arms reduction.

I would like to emphasize our strong feeling that nuclear-weapon states must take into account, not only their own security concerns, but also those of the entire international community, especially the non-nuclear-weapon states.

In talking about peace and justice, we cannot help but recall another very sad reality. At this very moment, innocent men, women and children in southern Africa continue to remain victims of racism and oppression. The situation in southern Africa poses a serious threat to regional and, indeed, international peace and security.

My government strongly opposes the racist and repressive policies and practices of the South African regime. Thailand fully supports the legitimate struggle of the people

of South Africa for the total elimination of apartheid and the establishment of a non-racial, democratic society in South Africa based on majority rule.

My government also condemns the South African regime's continuing illegal occupation of Namibia in complete disregard of the right to self-determination of the Namibian people. We fully support United Nations' efforts to bring about, as early as possible, genuine independence to the Namibian people in a united Namibia.

As we look around the world today, we cannot help but notice that the use of force remains prevalent in many regions.

My government continues to be deeply concerned about the situation in Central America. We feel that a durable solution to the problem there must be based on negotiations between the parties concerned. The principle of non-intervention must apply equally to all states.

In the Middle East, the peace process between Israel and her Arab neighbours seems to be confronted by endless obstacles. Thailand fully supports the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East. Such a conference would offer the most appropriate avenue towards a just and comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

We feel that a lasting peace in that region will not be possible unless the Palestinians are allowed to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination. A lasting peace in the

Middle East also requires the acknowledgment of the right of every state in the area, including Israel, to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries.

The Iran-Iraq war continues to take innocent lives with no end in sight. We would like to see both Iran and Iraq observe an immediate cease-fire, a cessation of all hostilities and withdrawal of all forces to the internationally recognized boundaries without further delay.

Turning to Afghanistan, my government deplores the continuing Soviet occupation of that country. Thailand has consistently joined the international community in its repeated calls for the immediate and total withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan. Only then will the Afghan people be able to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination.

Let me turn to the situation in Southeast Asia. The continuing Vietnamese occupation of Kampuchea remains the major obstacle to peace and justice in Southeast Asia. As you know, I am now on my way back to Thailand from the United Nations. I feel greatly encouraged by world public opinion on the unresolved problem. The world has not forgotten the gravity of the problem, and the urgency for its peaceful resolution. In the United Nations General Assembly, more than 110 countries voted in favour of the ASEAN-draft resolution demanding the total withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea and the exercise of the

right to self-determination of the Kampuchean people. It reflects the international community's continued support for the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK), headed by Prince Norodom Sihanouk. Prince Sihanouk's address to the General Assembly was most moving. It truly turns the spotlight on the plight of the Kampuchean people for peace and justice and their apprehension of Vietnam's policy toward Kampuchea.

Over the past eight years, Vietnamese occupation of Kampuchea has posed a serious and direct threat to the security of Thailand, which is by no means a party to the conflict. Vietnamese troops in Kampuchea continue to perpetrate acts of aggression that violate Thailand's sovereignty and territorial integrity. No less than 200,000 Thai border villagers had to be relocated in consequence of Vietnamese border violations.

The Vietnamese military occupation of Kampuchea has created tremendous humanitarian problems for Thailand. Since 1975, Thailand has granted temporary asylum to 700,000 refugees. Of these, 130,000 remain in Thai holding and processing centres. In addition, there are over a quarter-of-a-million displaced persons encamping along the Thai-Kampuchean border with approximately 200 new arrivals per month. As a developing country, Indochinese refugees and displaced persons continue to place tremendous strain on our already limited resources.

Furthermore, Vietnamese aggression against Kampuchea has obstructed the realization of the ASEAN goal to transform Southeast Asia into a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality, free from outside interference.

The peaceful settlement of the Kampuchean problem would be a significant contribution to regional as well as global peace and justice. To this end, Thailand, together with all other ASEAN countries, strongly support the Eight-Point Peace Proposal of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea. The proposal is very comprehensive and reasonable. It was formulated at the initiative of the Kampuchean people themselves. In ASEAN's view, it can serve as a constructive framework for negotiation between the two protagonists in the conflict, Vietnam and the CGDK.

The onus now rests on Vietnam to respond in good faith to the proposal of the CGDK Prince Norodom Sihanouk has announced that he cannot and will not make any new proposal for peace. Vietnam's repeated rejection prompted him to say that the Kampuchean people will have to put more pressure on Vietnam in the battlefield in order to "win peace," namely until Vietnam agrees to negotiation.

The present situation in Kampuchea is stalemate. Vietnam, despite its superiority in arms, ammunition and manpower, is now feeling the pinch. The Vietnamese leadership admitted that they are having difficulties in Kampuchea. Popular support for the CGDK and its

activities inside Kampuchea has been widespread and growing. The Kampuchean patriotic sentiment runs high, even among those members of Vietnam's puppet regime in Phnom Penh.

At this crucial juncture, the international community must not relax its political, economic and moral pressure on Vietnam. We must convince Vietnam that the price of aggression is excessively high, and it is in Vietnam's interest to agree to a negotiated settlement. Vietnam should not entertain the illusion that the international community will eventually condone its aggression in Kampuchea. In this regard, Thailand hopes that the U.S. and all like-minded countries will intensify their cooperation with ASEAN in persuading Vietnam to leave Kampuchea.

The United States is playing a constructive role in this process. It is gratifying to note that President Reagan took up the Kampuchean issue during the summit meeting with Mr. Gorbachev. The issue should be included in US-Soviet talks at all levels. We fully appreciate the firm stance of the US Government that a *fait accompli* in Kampuchea on Vietnamese terms will not be tolerated.

As far as China is concerned, we feel that China wants peace and stability in Southeast Asia as much as we do. Its cooperation with ASEAN on the Kampuchean issue has been constructive and is contributing to the peaceful settlement the Kampuchean problem.

In reference to the Soviet Union, Mr. Gorbachev's Vladivostok statement, though containing some positive elements, was rather disappointing when closely scrutinized. It fails to address the real issue of the Kampuchean problem. Mr. Gorbachev only reaffirms the position of the Soviet Union. One can expect no change in its policy of aiding and abetting Vietnamese intervention in neighbouring countries. This is the key which has prolonged the armed conflict in Kampuchea for eight years now. Without military aid from its patron, Vietnam would surely have agreed to negotiate a peaceful solution with the CGDK. It could not have been so intransigent.

In return for its support for Vietnam, the Soviet Union has been able to move into Southeast Asia. Moscow is rapidly filling in the vacuum left by the American withdrawal from Indochina. The USSR has now gained a military foothold in Vietnam and has enhanced its military presence in this region. Such a development clearly has strong negative implications for regional as well as global peace and justice. It is regrettable that we have not yet succeeded in persuading the Soviet Union to play a positive role in the region. Nevertheless, Thailand will continue to develop its bilateral ties with the Soviet Union on the basis of reciprocity. We hope to make Moscow see the immense potential benefits that could arise from cooperation with ASEAN.

The US should therefore play a greater role in strengthening the self-defence capabilities of its friends and allies, especially that of a front-line state like Thailand. In strategic terms, the overall security of ASEAN countries is vital to US security interests as well.

In conclusion, I think you will agree with me that numerous obstacles to peace and justice remain alive in our world today. We must act together to overcome them. Let us not be tempted to take a lone path.

In our interdependent world, when the international community gains, each member will gain. Our true national interests will only be served when we sincerely work together for a world of peace and justice.

We must join hands and make a firm stand against unfair trade practices. We must work closely together in our struggle against international terrorism. We must work together and put an end to all forms of violence.

My government values its role as a voice of moderation in international relations. We will continue to do our utmost to promote peace and justice.

Thailand is proud of her long and excellent relations with the United States. Thai soldiers have fought side by side with their American brothers for freedom and justice in many parts of the world since the First World War.

The United States is our ally. We have done and will do our very best to continue to cooperate with you. We have

reduced our tariff on wheat and cotton. We are in the process of amending the copyright law to give more protection to U.S. copyrights in Thailand.

We will continue to do our best to assist the U.S. and other Western countries in the suppression of narcotics and drug trafficking. My government's position on narcotics is clear. We want to tackle the problem at its source and in a total manner.

Tons of heroin, raw opium and chemicals have been seized. Thousands of acres of poppy cultivation area have been destroyed. In 1985 alone, we succeeded in arresting some 32,000 drug traffickers in over 30,000 cases. The total amount of drugs seized and burnt consisted of approximately 1,200 kilogrammes of heroin, 1,400 kilogrammes of opium, 47 tons of dry cannabis and 349 tons of fresh cannabis. During the 1985-1986 period alone, over 1,600 acres of poppy cultivation were eradicated and over 1,000 tons of cannabis plants were destroyed.

In reaffirming my government's continued firm commitment to the close friendship and alliance between our two countries, I sincerely hope that the U.S. feels the same. I hope the U.S. understands our vital needs. I hope the U.S. will not allow protectionism and other unfair trade practices to undermine our economy.

A healthy and dynamic economy is crucial to our security. It is also crucial for ASEAN's security as a whole.

We will continue to do our best as a front-line state on the East-West ideological frontier in Southeast Asia. In our interdependent world, instability in Southeast Asia would lead to instability in the Asia-Pacific region as a whole. It would affect U.S. vital interests, starting right here in Hawaii.

U.S. support for the ASEAN position on Kampuchea is therefore in your own interest. You have joined us, as an active partner, in our quest to bring peace and justice to Southeast Asia and to the world at large.

SECURITY, DEVELOPMENT AND DEMOCRACY: THAILAND'S FOREIGN POLICY STRATEGY IN THE LATE 1980'S*

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Members,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you, Mr. President, for your kind introductory remarks. I am very pleased to be among you again for the first time since the new cabinet was sworn in. The past election was another chapter in the evolution of democracy in Thailand. That the election was relatively orderly testifies to the increasing political awareness of the Thai people. Furthermore, subsequent demonstrations of political acumen by the loyal opposition in the House of Representatives,

* Delivered at the Foreign Correspondents Club of Thailand on 11 December 1986.

which I hope will not be too often, augur well for the future of the parliamentary system in Thailand. The Government also has emerged from these parliamentary tests with greater resolve, having successfully demonstrated its commitment to the democratic process.

To many, particularly in the Western eyes, Thailand's internal politics may appear perennially unstable. To you trained observers, the facts are usually more intricate. Thais have their own peculiar way of dealing with political crises and problems which seem to have sometimes confounded even the most astute students of Thai politics. You have to look beyond changes in government to our track record of consistent adherence to international obligations and our constant improvement of policy and its implementation. In addition, you will probably agree that Thailand is fortunate to be blessed with the most cherished institution which has been the bedrock of stability in this country. I am referring, of course, to the monarchy. Thus, I am confident that we will be able to solve the short-and medium-term problems before us, be they political, economic or otherwise. Our goal is to develop a democratic and prosperous society. We shall continually work to ensure that the democratic process will take firm roots in the Thai political culture. Likewise, we are determined to expend every effort to secure a firm and balanced agricultural and industrial base for Thailand by the turn of the century.

But in order for the country to proceed along this charted course, Thailand's external environment must be conducive to our national security and economic development. Towards this end, this government has identified certain priority tasks. They include promoting conditions for peace and stability in the Southeast Asian region and improving in concert with others the international economic environment favourable to the expansion of international commerce and our own economic development. I am referring specifically to the ongoing efforts to develop a strong and cohesive ASEAN; orderly and mutually beneficial relations with our neighbours and the external powers; and a liberal international trading system whereby fair and open economic activities may be pursued.

As you all know, the top leaders of the six ASEAN nations will have their third summit meeting in December next year in Manila. The Summit is to examine the record of ASEAN cooperation, to assess its potential and to chart its future course in political and economic cooperation. For the past two decades, ASEAN has served the various needs and interests of its members adequately. Successive Thai governments have pronounced the cooperation with ASEAN as a cornerstone of the country's foreign policy. The past decade, since the last summit in Kuala Lumpur in 1977, has witnessed several major changes which have significantly affected ASEAN and its member countries.

Our leaders need to collectively devise appropriate responses to the new circumstances. Such responses, especially those addressing the economic challenges affecting the future directions of ASEAN, will cover a comprehensive spectrum of issues involving a cross-section of the government and private sectors. The agenda before us will cover both issues related to intra-ASEAN relations as well as those with other nations. On a more personal plane, the summit will afford an invaluable opportunity for the ASEAN leaders to get together and renew their acquaintances. I am convinced that such is an extremely useful exercise in further cementing the unity of ASEAN. In short, we place great emphasis on promoting stability and prosperity in Southeast Asia. Much will depend, of course, on the readiness on the part of the respective ASEAN members to demonstrate their political will and exercise necessary political commitment, particularly in these times when these countries are encountering in varying degrees common crucial economic crises and challenges.

In our continuing effort to develop better understanding and consequently, more beneficial relations with our neighbours, the Kampuchean problem remains a major stumbling block. Realistically it is difficult to envisage a solution to this very complex problem in the immediate future. Vietnam on its part has been advertising that it will settle the problem and withdraw militarily from Kampuchea

by 1990 or about four years from now. But looking at Vietnam's continued failure to subjugate the Kampuchean people and the growing viability of the Kampuchean Resistance makes one wonder if the Vietnamese pronouncement is credible. Furthermore, Vietnam's economic health, by Hanoi's own admission, is in deep trouble, compounded by Vietnam's isolation from the international community as a result of its mistaken Kampuchean policy. Such situation hardly aids Hanoi's ambition to speed up its attempted *fait accompli* in Kampuchea. In the meantime, Vietnam's principal backer, the Soviet Union, the so-called Vladivostok Initiative notwithstanding, has shown little or no inclination to help resolve the problem by continuing to adopt a non-involvement stance. Nevertheless, I believe there are some encouraging prospects for an eventual settlement. I think the Hanoi leadership, when meeting at the sixth Vietnamese Communist Party Congress in mid-December, ought to do herself a big favour by posing for her own scrutiny the following questions: Is the current policy of assuming for herself the big brother's role in dealing with the other two Indochinese countries accruing more benefits or losses? Can Hanoi continue forever to ignore the security interests of others while insisting on maximising its own at others' expenses? How long will Hanoi continue to flout the internationally sanctioned rules governing interstate relations and go on paying the penalty of being an international pariah as well

as impoverishing her people? I believe that all countries in the region can live in peace by acknowledging and respecting the interdependence of security.

Thailand sincerely hopes that the Vietnamese Communist Party's Congress which will be convened in a few days would set a new stage for peaceful coexistence between Vietnam and her neighbours by abandoning the futile dreams of creating an Indochina Federation by coercion and concentrating on the tasks of economic development to lift Vietnam from the status of one of the least developed countries of the world.

Turning now to our Northeastern neighbour, Laos, the recent visit to Vientiane by the Thai delegation led by the Advisor to the Prime Minister, Dr. Arun Panupong, is a step forward in improving the Thai-Lao relations. As our kins and brothers from time immemorial, the Lao people have always had a special place in our hearts. We, therefore, will do what we can to facilitate the economic well-being of the Lao people. We will seek to maintain and strengthen the ties between our two peoples. We will be open to any proposals for joint endeavours that would bring mutual prosperity and peace to people on both sides of the Mekong river. We hope that in spite of the understandable constraints that presently circumscribe her freedom of action, Laos will join with Thailand in realizing our common objective to make the Mekong, the river of peace and friendship between our two countries and peoples.

Mr. President,

The next sphere of external environment, the developments in which could impact on Thailand's security and economic development, is the configuration of power in the Southeast Asian region. At present, a rough distribution of power prevails in the region. On the other hand there are those who seek to expand their influence or to project their power: Vietnam on land and the Soviet Union by sea. On the other hand, there are ASEAN which aspires to ZOPFAN, the United States which seeks to maintain her role in preserving peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region, and China which is concerned with the protection of her southern flank. Kampuchea happens to be the vortex, in which all sides interface. Kampuchea, therefore, will be the crucible, out of which a new configuration of power in this region would emerge. How the Kampuchean question is settled will consequently determine the distribution of power in Southeast Asia for years to come.

Since rivalry among the major powers in Southeast Asia is detrimental to regional stability, Thailand would seek to undertake in cooperation with her ASEAN friends to minimize such rivalry by influencing the development of a favourable configuration of power in this region. In this connection, our task is two-fold: first, to seek to ensure that a balance of interests among the major powers exist in Southeast Asia; second, to induce the powers to agree among

themselves to observe a code of conduct to order their relations with each other and with the countries in the region. Thailand will be active in coordination with our ASEAN friends in our joint endeavours to minimize the impact of extra-regional powers' rivalry on Southeast Asia.

Since Southeast Asia is part and parcel of the Pacific, Thailand is also concerned about the possible effects of any rivalry among the major powers in that area that could send repercussions to our area. We, therefore, would wish to see improvement of relations among the major powers in the Pacific which would lessen their rivalry and facilitate the settlement of the Kampuchean problem. We also support the dialogues between North and South Korea leading to the decrease of tension on the Korean peninsula and Northeast Asia. We further want to see ASEAN acting as a force for peace and commerce in the Pacific, inducing the major powers to substitute trade and economic cooperation for power competition. An economically strong and politically cohesive ASEAN would be a constructive force in influencing the emergence of a peaceful and prosperous community of the Pacific nations perhaps during the end of this century.

Since the Pacific is the natural geographical sphere of external environment of Thailand, we are rightfully concerned with developments in this area. However, this does not mean that other areas are of lesser importance to us. Thailand values our friendship with the littoral countries of the Indian

Ocean since Thailand too is a member of those countries. We therefore wish to see increasing cooperation between ASEAN and the member countries of the SARCC, the regional organisation of the South Asian countries.

Thailand also cherishes the political and economic cooperation that the EC has provided to us bilaterally and multilaterally through the ASEAN-EC framework. We therefore welcome the EC's increased economic and political presence in Thailand and ASEAN. We also view Mr. Cheysson's recent visit to Laos as a good omen and would encourage the EC to render economic assistance to Laos.

Mr. President,

The spheres of external environment which I have described thus far concern primarily the security dimension of Thailand's foreign policy. In this day and age, however, when security and economic issues are intertwined, interrelated and interdependent, Thailand's foreign policy must focus also on the economic dimension. Since the value of our foreign trade now accounts for more than half of our gross domestic product, Thailand's future is tied to the health of the world economy. During the past decade, the external shocks on Thailand have been quite severe. As in the case of most developing countries, Thailand was hit by deteriorating terms of trade, recession in the developed countries, rising protectionism, and growing debt service obligations.

The plunge in oil prices has improved the overall outlook of our economy but we should not forget that as recently as last year, Thailand's balance of payments suffered a loss equivalent to seventeen percent of our gross domestic product.

There are some encouraging trends. The fall in the prices of crude oil, the lowering of the interest rates, the yen appreciation and the dollar depreciation have led to a sharp increase in Thailand's manufactured exports. This has helped to cushion the impact of the decline in the prices of our agricultural products and primary commodities which are at their lowest in the past two decades. These two developments-rising value of our manufactured exports and dwindling prices of our agricultural exports – should be viewed as writing on the wall, calling for adjustments in our domestic and foreign economic policies.

The present government is certainly aware of the structural changes going on in the world economy which impact on Thailand. Thus, we are pursuing the course of structural adjustment as prescribed in the Sixth Five-Year Plan. If Thailand is successful in achieving its own structural adjustment, it is possible that our economic growth rate could be 6-7 percent per year instead of the projected 5-6 percent. If that is the case, Thailand could become an industrial country in the 1990s.

The economic mission of Thailand's foreign policy is therefore to influence the external economic environment of

Thailand to develop in such a way as to facilitate Thailand's structural adjustment. In this connection, we have done and shall do the following:

First, deal with the agricultural subsidies which have exacerbated the problem of low commodity prices brought about by excess supply. Thailand hosted the Pattaya Meeting of non-subsidizing countries who later formed the Cairns Group of 14 which played a key role on the issue of agriculture at the GATT Ministerial Meeting in Punta del Este. Through this group, Thailand's interests were articulated and effectively advanced. We will continue to play an active role through this group during the Uruguay Round to seek increased discipline in agricultural trade and the elimination and reduction of agricultural subsidies within an agreed time frame.

Second, fight protectionism which if permitted to rise unobstructed would strangle our export industry, which is the key vehicle of the structural adjustment of the Thai economy. The Uruguay Round again will be the focal point of our cooperation with other developing countries to liberalize and expand world trade, including improvement of access to markets, and to increase the responsiveness of the multilateral trading system to the evolving international economic environment.

Third, search for additional markets for our exports especially in the socialist and the developing countries in

order to improve our terms of trade and circumvent the protectionist problem. My recent trip to China and projected visits to Africa and Eastern Europe next year are part of this effort to find access to additional markets for Thai exports. In this connection, Thailand is willing to trade with all countries, irrespective of differences in ideology and political and economic system.

Fourth, aggressively promote Thai interests and understanding of our political and economic situation in selected countries in order to maintain and to expand market access for Thai exports. The obvious example is the US, which is now Thailand's biggest export market. Recently, when our exports under the GSP programme faced possible reduction, the Government was successful in negotiating with the US authorities to maintain our market access to the US. As Thailand's trade problem with the US has just begun only a few years ago, we are just beginning to grasp the intricacies of the complex network of relationships between the US domestic industries, Congress and the Administration. But we are learning quickly how to defend and promote our economic interests with the US.

Fifth, expand and employ our embassies abroad as effective instruments of our economic diplomacy, facilitating and supporting our private sector in penetrating foreign markets. We will seek to bring about closer cooperation and coordination among various representatives of different

ministries and agencies abroad in order to create a unified team which would implement an integrated approach to a particular country combining export, investment, tourism and finance aspects together and spearheading by the political arm of the Embassy. Our aim is to efficiently utilize scarce resources by preventing duplication of efforts caused by bureaucratic rivalry and to create an effective country team to defend and promote and aspects of Thailand's national interests.

Mr. President,

The foreign policy strategy which I have sketched tonight in both political and economic dimensions is designed to enhance Thailand's national security and economic well-being in order to lay a solid foundation for our Thai democracy. At the end of this government's term of office, I hope that this foreign policy strategy would contribute to the emergence of Thailand as a democratic medium-income country enjoying friendly relations with all her neighbours, actively participating in creating an economically strong and politically united ASEAN, and forging mutually beneficial trade and economic ties with all regions of the world. By the time, I hope that my country would be free from the constant threats to our national security posed by the Vietnamese occupation of Kampuchea and can therefore concentrate on the tasks of increasing the

economic prosperity and ensuring the domestic peace of the Thai people. Whether we shall be successful in realizing this vision or not, only time will tell. But my attitude is to approach the problems facing Thailand's foreign policy with a sense of humility, realizing that our resources are finite but bearing in mind that we are confronted with certain urgent and difficult tasks, the successful accomplishment of which is essential to regional security and our own.

ADDRESS AT THE FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIA*

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Members,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you, Mr. President for your warm words of welcome and for your kind introduction. I am pleased to have an opportunity to be here with you today.

What I propose to do is to go through some of the significant events which in my view have direct implication for the countries in the region.

Let me first begin by recounting to you my recent trip to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe last month which was undertaken with ASEAN's blessing and support. My trip was designed to be a probing mission. We wanted to find out

* Delivered at the Foreign Correspondents Association of Southeast Asia, Singapore on 17 June 1987

what the Soviets had in mind, what they were willing to give. The Soviet Foreign Minister emphasised the Soviet desire to see a durable peace and an atmosphere of good neighbourliness and cooperation in Southeast Asia. The Soviet Foreign Minister also reaffirmed the Soviet stand that regional disputes should be settled by political means at the negotiating table.

Furthermore, the Soviet Foreign Minister stated that, and I quote, “the Soviet Union is prepared to do everything it can to promote a settlement of the Kampuchean problem and to guarantee, along with the other permanent members of the UN Security Council, a mutually acceptable solution,” end of quote.

Although I found that the fundamental positions of the Soviet Union remained unchanged it should be noted that the Soviet leadership was willing to discuss the Kampuchean problem. It also acknowledged that it had a role to play in resolving the problem. In this respect, we must continue to impress upon Moscow to discharge its responsibilities.

The Moscow trip should be viewed against the backdrop of the political and economic situation in the region.

Southeast Asia has become a stage for great-power rivalry due to its strategic location as the communication link between the Pacific and the Indian Oceans. With the increased recognition of this strategic and economic

importance of Southeast Asia, ASEAN has assumed a more significant place in the major powers' strategic consideration.

Since the mid-1970's we have seen the rise of a balance of power and influence among the major powers in the Asia-Pacific region. While the Soviet Union and its allies enjoy an advantage in military strength, at least in numerical terms, the United States and its allies hold an edge with their economic capability and dynamism. As a result, no major power enjoys exclusive dominance in the region. Apart from this balance of power, there seems to be a growing convergence of interest among the major as well as lesser powers in avoiding conflict and reducing tension in the region. This is due to the increasing preoccupation with economic development or other internal problems and priorities and also to the decreasing relevance of ideology in relations among states. While the international system remains basically bipolar, the importance of ideological differences has declined. Intrabloc disputes, for instance trade frictions, disputes over nuclear policy between the United States and its allies, and the Sino-Soviet rivalry have become more salient.

ASEAN is thus confronted with both challenges and opportunities. With the decline of the bipolar alignment and the wide diffusion of power and influence, ASEAN has been provided with more room to manoeuvre. Our international contacts and activities have broadened, and we have gained

greater autonomy and leverage in international affairs. On the other hand, there are risks and dangers for ASEAN as competition among the major powers continues in diverse terms. The strategic outlooks and interests of major powers are not immediately clear and as such could have either favourable or adverse implications for Southeast Asia. ASEAN must recognise the nature of these challenges and opportunities and how they affect us. More importantly, ASEAN must be able to respond to this situation.

The continued rivalry and military build-up in Southeast Asia are a de-stabilising factor. The USSR's growing military presence, seen by its massive naval buildup in the Asia-Pacific region and the up-grading of Cam Ranh Bay are both significant and alarming.

The Soviet military posture in the region should be viewed in the context of Moscow's global strategy, especially vis-à-vis the United States. The Soviet military presence, particularly in face of any further erosion in American military strength in the region and the uncertainty over the future of U.S. bases in the Philippines, could have a significant effect on ASEAN.

Against such a backdrop of the Soviet military build-up and Moscow's continued support for Hanoi's military occupation of Kampuchea, the Soviet Union's recent "peace initiative" as evidenced by the Vladivostok speech and the Soviet Foreign Minister's visit to Southeast Asia, would be

seen as being more apparent than real. ASEAN welcomes Moscow's apparent increased interest in improving its relations with ASEAN and in solving regional problems together with countries in the region, as well as its willingness, for the first time, to discuss the Kampuchean question. The USSR should demonstrate its sincerity by assuming a construction role in the search for a political settlement of the Kampuchean problem merely a low-risk strategy aimed at gaining political influence.

Mr. President,

Turning now to another major power, the People's Republic of China has demonstrated its refusal to accept Soviet dominance in the Communist world. It is pursuing a policy of independence of the Soviet Union and the United States, identifying itself with the Third World. ASEAN is watching closely the PRC's open-door policy, especially its present linkages with the West. There exist differences in perception by individual members of ASEAN of the Chinese role in the region-mainly due to each country's strategic interests, outlooks and historical backgrounds. However, given its current drive towards modernisation and need for a stable international environment the PRC could be expected to continue its friendly relations with the ASEAN countries and the West.

It is interesting to note that under its modernisation programmes, China has mitigated its ideological fervour and has given its military role a low profile. Should this become a long-term trend, I feel that we can be assured of the future of PRC-ASEAN relationship.

Mr. President,

ASEAN recognizes the positive role of the United States in the maintenance and promotion of regional peace and stability. Needless to say, its success in maintaining this role depends upon its ability to cope with the Soviet military presence. There are factors which may affect the United States' ability to project and maintain the power balance in the region namely, the question of U.S. military installations in the Philippines, the differences in nuclear policies within the ANZUS and the present trade frictions between the United States and its friends and allies within the region.

The United States' trade frictions with ASEAN constitute a negative factor in our otherwise excellent relations with the United States and these disputes should be settled amicably. Trade and security are interrelated in that trade has an important bearing upon well-being and internal political stability of countries in the region.

Mr. President,

ASEAN economies have become increasingly dependent upon foreign trade. The global economic situation therefore affects their economic performance as well as development strategies. ASEAN is committed to free and fair international trade. We believe that trade restrictions represent important obstacles to economic dynamism and prosperity. It is also an accepted fact that internal security problems of any country stem from a complex set of economic, social and political factors. It therefore follows that trade restrictions constitute a major threat to ASEAN's security.

Mr. President,

I should like to conclude by saying that, the present balance of power and influence affords ASEAN wider room for manoeuvre. Our enhanced role and leverage in international affairs are due, in no small part, to its collective strength and unity. ASEAN should point out to the Soviets both the disadvantages of continued bankrolling Vietnam and the advantages of cultivating genuine friendship and goodwill with ASEAN by persuading Vietnam to withdraw its forces from Kampuchea and to live in peace with all its neighbours in the Southeast Asian region.

Thank you.

FOREIGN POLICY DIRECTIONS OF THAILAND AS A RISING ECONOMIC POWER*

Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I deeply appreciate the kind invitation that the World Economic Forum extended to me to be here and share a few thoughts with you. The topic you have given me is a very challenging one. In spite of my firm realization that I shall have to work hard for my lunch today, I have been looking forward to this opportunity for a long time.

My advisors told me that the best way to stay awake during a luncheon speech is to deliver it yourself. I am therefore grateful for the chance to do just that.

* Delivered at the World Economic Forum National Meeting on Thailand, Bangkok on 28 October 1987.

I promise you I shall keep my remarks short. I have just returned from the United Nations and I know how it feels to have to listen to long speeches.

I am not an economist. Nevertheless, I am deeply interested in the subject. It is no secret that I enjoy the company of economists. Economists are people who will tell you tomorrow why something they predicted yesterday didn't happen today.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Is Thailand a rising economic power? This is a question which I shall leave with you for you to ponder on. For now, I would merely like to underscore a few facts and figures you may have heard already this morning.

Thailand is a rapidly modernizing agro-industrial society with one of the most successful economic track records in the developing world. Over the past 20 years, our economy has expanded at an annual average of over 7 percent. Contrary to international trends, our economy averaged close to 5 percent growth during the recession years of the early 1980s, making our record the best in Southeast Asia.

We have done fairly well because our economy consists of a well balanced mixture of agriculture, agro-industry, manufacturing, mining and services. The reasons for the Thai economy's dynamic long-term performance are clear.

They include strong commitment to free enterprise, open economy, rich natural resource base, prudent financial management, diversified economic structure, continuity of major economic policies, a large and rapidly expanding domestic market in addition to an educated and cost-competitive workforce.

In agriculture, Thailand is one of the world's great food producing nations. It is the only net food exporter in Asia and one of only five in the world. The Thai fishing fleet ranks among the top 7 in the world. Our manufacturing sector has also made rapid progress. Manufacturing now contributes a higher percentage to our GDP than does agriculture. Back in 1960, Thai manufactured goods accounted for only 5 percent of our total exports. By 1986, over 50 percent of our exports were manufactured goods.

This tremendous growth of our manufactured exports has been facilitated by our careful cultivation of excellent relations with our major trading partners. It also reflects the success of the foreign policy strategy that we have pursued over the years to trade with all countries irrespective of ideological differences.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This you can see that our foreign policy has spearheaded our emergence onto the world economic stage. Thai foreign policy will therefore continue to seek to promote active

cooperation with others on matters of common interest. Although political and security issues remain important to our national interest, the degree that economic variables affect our national security has dramatically increased. Consequently, our domestic stability and external security are unavoidably linked to our economic performance.

The continued success of our economic performance depends on a conducive economic environment. For us, this would imply the maintenance of a liberal international trading system, adequate flows of financial resources and technology, stability of major commodity prices, access to markets, and predictability in economic relations among nations.

We pursue our objectives at three levels – bilateral, regional and multilateral.

On the bilateral level, we shall intensify our economic and trade with each and every member of ASEAN. Our other important partners include Australia, Canada, China, the European Community, Japan, the United States, and the newly-industrialized nations of East Asia. Our aim is to consolidate and intensify existing relations, diversify products of trade, encourage investments and transfer of technology. We are also looking to expand our exports to and foster our economic relations with countries in Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and the Pacific. Our trade relations with Burma are moving along in a positive direction.

There are also prospects for an increase in trade between Thailand and Laos.

As for Vietnam and Kampuchea, the political settlement of the Kampuchean problem would allow us to develop healthy trade relations with both countries.

At the regional level, we are working toward the further expansion of ASEAN's trade cooperation. Over the past twenty years, ASEAN has served us well. The organization has been referred to as the prime example of successful regional cooperation. ASEAN's main goal is to strengthen the foundation for a prosperous and peaceful Southeast Asia through cooperation and mutual assistance. This coming December, ASEAN's heads of government will hold ASEAN's Third Summit, in the Philippines, to chart the course of ASEAN's future cooperation. It is expected that there will be increased flows of trade among the member countries and expanded cooperation in all fields, bringing the member countries even closer together.

In reference to the wider geographical picture, Thailand is part of the Pacific Rim. As the centre of world trade gravitates toward the Pacific Rim, the region is rapidly becoming the centre of dynamic economic development. It has become a region of opportunities for high returns on direct investments. In our interdependent world, the growth performance of Asia-Pacific countries will undoubtedly have an increasing influence on economic dynamism elsewhere in the world.

At the international economic level, there are many functional issues which we shall have to pursue in forums such as GATT, UNCTAD, IMF and the World Bank. The global economy seems to be on a slow growth path. There is also a considerable risk that growth may slow down even further. Among the factors that contribute to such situation are: the persistence of large external and internal imbalances, unstable exchange rates, high degree of uncertainty in financial and capital markets, growing protectionism and the depressed state of key commodity markets.

We shall seek to work closely with all interested parties to help resolve some of these problems. Along with the ASEAN countries, we shall attempt to serve as a bridge between the developed and developing worlds so as to secure an international economic environment beneficial to all.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is clear that we live in a complex and interdependent world. We need one another. No man is an island. International economic cooperation is essential to the well-being and security of all concerned. The World Economic Forum's goal of fostering economic development through business cooperation is a noble one, one which has the firm support of my government.

We feel positive about the prospects for economic development through business cooperation. In fact, on

numerous occasions, we have been using diplomacy to pave the way for our businessmen to strike deals. We have travelled to far-away lands. I myself, my Deputy Foreign Minister, and other senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have travelled extensively to promote economic cooperation, often to areas where no Thai had been before.

In our diplomatic quest for a secure and favourable economic environment, we shall, as we have always done, adhere to the principles of mutual benefit, reliability as a partner, observance of international obligations and non-discrimination in the conduct of relations with all countries.

Our doors are open for you. Let us work together to translate our good intentions into meaningful results.

CURRENT TRENDS: IMPLICATIONS AND REPERCUSSIONS ON THAILAND'S FOREIGN POLICY*

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Members,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for your kind introduction. Actually, I feel this is a very familiar turf. For the past years, the FCCT has never failed to ask me to appear at this forum, and I have always felt obliged to subject to this annual grilling exercise by the foreign press corps. I have noticed that the gathering at this yearly function has stayed fairly sizeable. I wonder whether is the speaker or the dinner that makes the crowd come back for more. Modesty,

* Delivered at the Foreign Correspondents Club of Thailand, Bangkok on 27 January 1988.

though, tells me that it may have something to do with my performance.

In fact, the timing of this 1987 meeting has been slightly delayed because last month we were all engaged with great joy to witness all Thais from every walk of life joining hands to celebrate His Majesty's 60th birthday anniversary. In this connection, the FCCT should be commended for its forthcoming publication of a collection of articles on His Majesty, written by foreign correspondents.

In the past 12 months, you may have noticed a growing public attention in the making and implementation of Thai foreign policy. As a member of Parliament and a keeper of Thai foreign policy, I welcome this as a healthy sign of a maturing democratic society. However, since our foreign policy needs to be credible, it must be rational and not vacillate simply on account of momentary public fervour or sentiment. At the same time, care should be given to debates on foreign policy issues to prevent them from being exploited for partisan politics or personal glory. Every member of parliament should also cooperate to deny foreign foes any opportunity to take advantage of our honest political differences. On my part, I have sought to open and maintain a channel of communication between the Foreign Ministry and the Parliament through meetings with and briefings of Parliamentary members especially those of the Committee of Foreign Affairs. For I recognize that under our parliamentary

system, our foreign policy, to be viable needs to be multi-partisan.

Mr. President,

Several significant international events have happened since I last addressed the FCCT meeting. Early last year saw the first visit to ASEAN by the Soviet Foreign Minister, signifying the political thrust of the Soviet Union into the Southeast Asian region. Then in May, I made a trip to Moscow to underscore the need for the Soviet Union to bring pressure to bear on Vietnam to withdraw from Kampuchea. I came back from that trip to be greeted by the copyright controversy. In July, the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting was held in Singapore. The Post Ministerial Conference which was held after the AMM heard U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz telling ASEAN countries to look somewhere else instead of America as the engine of our future economic growth. In October, Thailand and Japan celebrated the one hundredth anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relations between the two countries. Prime Minister Nakasone came to Bangkok on this occasion and announced the intention of the Japanese government to set up a 2 billion-dollar fund for ASEAN development. Then, in December, the Super Powers' Summit was held in Washington D.C. and the ASEAN Summit Meeting was held in Manila. In the same month, Prince Sihanouk held his first talk with Mr. Hun Sen.

These events, although seemingly unrelated on the surface, shape the environment in which we must navigate our ship of state. Our two guiding principles are, as they have always been, Thailand's security and the well-being of the Thai people.

The greatest threat to our national security is still the Vietnamese occupation of Kampuchea. On this issue, all eyes of Kampuchean watchers must have focused on the past two rounds of talks in France between Prince Sihanouk and Mr. Hun Sen. The next round is scheduled to be held in Pyongyang, North Korea. So far, there seems to be no sign yet of the light at the end of the tunnel. The talks probably will continue to drag on without any significant breakthroughs. Since Mr. Hun Sen's coaches in these parleys are Vietnam and the Soviet Union, any breakthroughs on the Kampuchean problem must come from or be sanctioned by them in particular Vietnam.

Even if these two rounds of talks have not yet culminated in any breakthrough on the Kampuchean problem, the substantive discussions, especially those points made by Prince Sihanouk, have created a framework for the political settlement of the Kampuchean conflict. Prince Sihanouk asked for the total withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea in 1988 or at the latest in 1989. He called for the dismantling of the People's Republic of Kampuchea and the formation of a quadripartite provisional

government of Cambodia to organize general elections. They are to be held under the supervision of the International Control Commission and in the presence of an international peace-keeping force, in both of which France should have an important role. The general elections will lead to the setting up of a statutory assembly in Phnom Penh to frame a constitution to stipulate the name of the state of Cambodia and its political, social and economic regimes. Mr. Hun Sen so far has not addressed himself to these issues raised by the Prince. He must do so if he is to demonstrate his sincerity about the political solution to the Kampuchean problem. If he evades these issues, then there would continue to be lingering suspicion that his objective is not to arrive at a political solution but to gain legitimacy for the PRK and to undermine the unity of the CGDK.

Although no breakthrough occurs during the last two rounds of talks between Prince Sihanouk and Mr. Hun Sen, we have noted recent encouraging trends. First, the Super Powers' Summit in Washington D.C. recognizes that world peace requires attention not only to nuclear arms reduction but to regional issues. In this connection, I am gratified to note that the Kampuchean problem was discussed by President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev. Second, there seems to be a convergence of the opinions of the Major Powers that there must be a political solution to the Kampuchean problem. The third trend is the emerging

consensus among all parties involved that Prince Sihanouk is pivotal to the political settlement of the Kampuchean problem. Hence, it is important that he be given the opportunity to negotiate directly with the key party who can make a decision on the Kampuchean issue: *Vietnam*. For Vietnam to use Hun Sen as a front to carry on dialogue with Prince Sihanouk is a tortuous process. Fourth, there seems to be an agreement among all parties involved that the key to the solution of the Kampuchean problem is the total withdrawal of the Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea. Now even the Vietnamese Communist Party Leader Nguyen Van Linh also sees it that way. Mr. Nguyen Van Linh said last week in Ho Chi Minh City, and I quote: "Hundreds of Vietnamese youths are being killed in Kampuchea. This we do not want. We want to bring them home to work in the reconstruction of our country. We spend a big part of our budget on the army and that is detrimental to us." Unquote. How refreshing to hear such candid remarks. I do hope Mr. Nguyen Van Linh would be able to convince Mr. Lee Duc Tho and Mr. Nguyen Co Thach to see the Kampuchean problem in the same light. If he manages to do so, and I sincerely hope that he does, he is the man whom Thailand can do business with. As I have said before and I shall say it again, the only obstacle to the improvement of Thai-Vietnamese relations is the Vietnamese occupation of Kampuchea. When the last Vietnamese soldiers leave Kampuchea, I shall go to Hanoi to

resume the cordial relations that existed between Thailand and Vietnam before the fateful event of December 1978.

Let me now turn to the immediate problem affecting Thailand's territorial integrity: The Ban Rom Klao incident. We have tried to maintain a sense of proportion about this problem. We intend to treat it as an isolated incident. That is why we have allowed normal interactions between the two sides to continue uninterrupted. We want to discuss this incident with the Laotian side in the spirit of mutual restraint. We have applied a policy of restraint in our efforts to defuse the situation and have used force as an instrument of last resort in order to protect our territorial integrity. After careful examination of relevant historical and legal evidences, we are convinced that the area in question lies in our territory. Hence, we are prepared to enter meaningful negotiations with Laos only when there are no longer Lao troops on our soil. It would be a grave mistake if the Laotian government were to try to use this incident to pressure Thailand on other issues. Nonetheless, I am convinced that an amicable solution between us is not beyond the realm of possibility.

Let me state firmly at this juncture that the Thai Government does not merely wish to maintain amicable bilateral relations with Laos, but also genuinely wishes to facilitate any economic improvement of the Lao people particularly by intensifying our bilateral trade relations. Our two peoples and nations need to build up mutual trust

upon which meaningful negotiations can be based. Our continued purchase of electricity from Laos in spite of its high cost as well as our cooperation in the transit of goods to Laos are evidences of our genuine efforts to promote mutual trust between our two countries. We will continue our efforts in a neighbourly spirit to work out possible modality to get us back on the road to genuine dialogue.

Mr. President,

Thailand's security and the well-being of the Thai people nowadays are affected not only by military activities along or near our borders but from changes in the world economy. The degree of the dependence of our economy on the world economy is getting higher every year. In 1983, our foreign trade accounted for 41 percent of our gross domestic product. Last year, that figure has increased to 51.2 percent. In view of this increasing vulnerability of our economy to changes in the world economy, we must be vigilant and flexible at all times to adapt ourselves to new trends in the world economy.

Looking back at the year that just went by, I must say it was a good year – a year of achievements for Thailand. Our economic growth registered at 5.6 percent, our balance of payments is doing well in our favour with rising foreign reserves, and our exports expanded by 22.2 percent – the highest percentage growth in seven years. The success story

of our exports is particularly attributed to the close cooperation between our public and private sectors.

It must be proudly noted that last year's Thailand's economic achievement took place against a backdrop of rising difficulties in the world economic environment – the time when the world is inundated with trade distorting measures, increasing international debts and exchange rate fluctuations. At the time when countries attempt to defend their historical interests and monopolies, the world economy is in danger of being divided into regional trade blocs and of sliding into trade wars. These are the challenges that Thailand is facing.

U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz's warning at the Post Ministerial Conference in Singapore last July that ASEAN countries should no longer look to the U.S. to continue absorbing rising exports from them is a timely reminder that the world economy that we have known since the end of the Second World War is being fundamentally transformed. Other economic centres are replacing the U.S. as the engine of growth. The principal one of course is Japan, which also is becoming more and more important to Thailand economically.

Since the Plaza accord in 1985, Japanese investment capital has been flowing into Thailand at an accelerated rate due mainly to the Yen appreciation. More Japanese investment came to Thailand during the last two years than during the past twenty five years from 1960-1985. Last year, Japanese

investment in Thailand accounted for 36 percent of all foreign investment in this country, more than that of any country and nearly double that of the United States. Given the long and cordial relations between our two countries and the complementarity of our two economies, Thai-Japanese economic cooperation should be promoted as a showcase of ASEAN-Japan cooperation. In this connection, Japan could complement our receptivity to Japanese investment by facilitating greater access of Thai goods to Japanese markets. I am also in favour of the idea of a wise-men's group comprising leading government officials, businessmen and academicians of both sides being formed to take a long-term look at the overall relations between Thailand and Japan in the future. Such a body could help to minimize possible frictions and promote greater understanding between our two countries and peoples.

Our increasing ties with Japan do not need to be at the expense of our ties with the United States, our historical friend, treaty ally and most important export market. We view existing trade problems between our two countries as temporary ones arising from the success of our economy in diversifying our exports from primarily agricultural commodities to manufactures. We hope that the United States will bear in mind that Thailand is still a developing country, having many miles to go before we become another NIC. We have come a long way, thanks partly to the United

States, to the present position of being a showcase for the market-economy model. To undermine Thailand now would be detrimental to the U.S.'s long-term security and economic interests in this corner of the Pacific rim. If we are free and prosperous, our success would vindicate the values that the United States has been trying to promote in the Third World.

What Thailand seeks to achieve economically must depend on ASEAN performance as a whole. Thus, the success of the Third ASEAN Summit last December augurs well for our future. The Summit agreed to increase intra-ASEAN trade cooperation, to attract foreign investment and improve the Preferential Trading Arrangements over the period of five years. This may sound a humble beginning but it represents a giant step forward for ASEAN. Further cooperation and inter-action among the ASEAN countries will result not only in a possible greater ASEAN market but in enhancing ASEAN's competitiveness in the world economy. In this connection, the Japanese 2-billion dollar industrial development fund for ASEAN is thus well-timed as a catalyst for greater economic cooperation among the ASEAN countries. It is now incumbent upon all the six member states to proceed along this course towards an intrinsic ASEAN market for the mutual benefits to all of us and our descendants.

Mr. President,

In this address, I have sought to highlight certain international events of the past year that seem to foreshadow significant trends for Thai foreign policy. I am aware that the challenges facing Thailand will be great this year. But I welcome them. For I believe that what is fundamentally at stake in our foreign policy is no less than the survival of this nation as a free and independent country. Looking back during the past eight years of my stewardship of the Foreign Ministry, I am proud that we have successfully stayed the course on Kampuchean policy to ensure our and regional security as well as to keep alive the hope of millions of Kampucheans for the restoration of a free, independent and neutral Kampuchea. I take pride also in the activism of the Foreign Ministry in defending and advancing Thailand's economic interests. For I have long recognized the security and economic interdependence of our national interests. Throughout my years of conducting Thai foreign policy, I have always observed the two principles that I have mentioned earlier, namely, Thailand's national security and the well-being of the Thai people. These two principles will continue to be my guiding light in the years to come.

Thank you.

SOUTHEAST ASIA IN THE YEAR 2000*

It is a great honour for me to address this distinguished gathering of scholars and policy-makers. I truly appreciate the invitation by the International Studies Centre to share some thoughts with you, who are engaging in a discussion of the trends and implications in ASEAN-major powers relations.

Anticipating a fruitful result of your deliberation, I shall not directly touch upon its substance – since I may pre-empt its conclusion.

I shall instead focus on a somewhat pertinent subject: “Southeast Asia in the Year 2000.” I am fully aware that

* Keynote address at the meeting on “Trends and Implications in ASEAN-Major Power Relations,” organized by the International Studies Centre, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bangkok on 12 May 1988.

projecting the future is a slippery and elusive path to tread. I nevertheless hope that this topic carries some relevance to the attempt you are making to chart the course of future ASEAN-major powers relations.

I shall begin with a profile of the global landscape. Then, I shall try to fit Southeast Asia into this picture. In doing this, I shall direct my attention to only certain selected issues and trends – those I consider most potent in affecting future changes. Moreover, my approach is not so much to describe the situation as if we were already there in the year 2000, as to point out the *unfolding trends and developments* as we approach that year. As you may be well aware, insightful observers have already detected a number of significant developments unmistakably under way on the global scene.

First and foremost is the reduction in superpower tension. This is probably not just a transient phenomenon. It may have been a reflection of domestic as well as strategic imperatives now facing both superpowers.

Most notably, both have been militarily over-extended, with mounting economic difficulties constraining further military development programmes. Equally important, continuing technological progress may soon compel them to revise, or perhaps overhaul, their strategic doctrines. In the next century, their emphasis may be on greater military flexibility – to allow for what has been termed discriminate deterrence or more selective commitment and more flexible

capacity for action. Finally, by that time there may have also been a further readjustment in defence-burden sharing.

All such developments would then have put a premium on not only an expanded security role of some other major powers, but also a shift of superpower attention to areas of really pressing priority - be it the Middle East, Eastern Europe or Latin America.

The second remarkable trend, in my view, is the decreasing relevance of ideology. The failure of many ideology-oriented regimes to live up to their high growth promise or presumptuous expectations, bears an irrefutable testimony to the failure of their dogmatic development models.

It is quite conceivable that by the year 2000 ideology will not have been easily, or at least rhetorically abandoned. Most significantly however, in almost all countries, ideology-oriented or otherwise, pragmatism will have by then prevailed. In particular, open-economy measures to spur growth which are now being introduced to varying degrees, even in dogmatically ideology-oriented countries, will even then remain dominant. Introduction of such measures are supposed to be 'transitional.' It is nevertheless my impression that the transition could be very long and continue well into the next century!

The performance of those ideology-oriented states stands in sharp contrast with the success of many developing

and newly industrialising market economies, especially in the Asia-Pacific region. And this is the third trend that I would like to highlight.

Growth in some other regions, particularly Western Europe, will continue well into the twenty-first century. By that time, however, the Asia-Pacific economic dynamism will have become most dominant on the world scene – dynamism that will have turned the next century into a true ‘Pacific Century.’

Even then the Asia-Pacific region will still enjoy a relative calm. This state of affairs is naturally favourable to further growth and progress. The prospect becomes even brighter if one considers the character of the new generations of leaders in most countries. They tend to be truly growth-conscious, by and large ‘managerially’ trained, and increasingly appreciative of the importance of science and technology-based development strategies. They will then be even more mindful of growth and progress than party and ideology.

In summary, the Asia-Pacific region is becoming increasingly characterised by political stability and economic dynamism. By the year 2000 this favourable state of affairs will have induced further peace and progress.

Where will Southeast Asia figure in this larger profile? Economically, along with Japan, Australia and New Zealand, the Asian, ‘Four Tigers,’ and modernizing China, ASEAN

forms the main Asia-Pacific current that will by the next century have transformed the region into the centre of global gravity. As export-oriented market economies, the ASEAN countries will nevertheless have faced both opportunities and challenges.

Most obviously, they will have experienced further growth as a result of the increase in their export trade. However, competition for market will have been far more intense. The ASEAN countries will have been compelled not only to maintain their competitiveness, but also to be more exposed to external vagaries.

In security matters, power competition will remain the hallmark of international affairs. The rivalry will, however, be more subtle, and the non-military elements of security will assume greater significance. International violence will not have been eliminated by the next century, but trade and diplomacy will have represented a major aspect of the major-power competition. ASEAN will in such circumstances have been again provided with both opportunities and challenges.

The decline of the 'draw-the-line' confrontation between blocs would probably have been complete by that time. There will have been further blurring of ideological and/or political differences among states. Contacts and transactions will have been undertaken regardless of ideological considerations. The ASEAN states will thus have

been in a position to reap full benefits from cooperation, economic or otherwise, with a wide range of nations.

To be able to do so, the ASEAN countries will nevertheless have had to overcome certain difficulties. How have they balanced their security concerns and economic imperatives? How have they overcome their 'inhibitions' or even 'fears' in dealing with certain major powers? How have they expected to keep out adverse effects of major power competition, in the form of 'trade and diplomacy' or otherwise? Will any outstanding regional problems have stood in the way of expanding their international contacts and co-operation? To what extent have they been able to 'co-operate' with the major powers to solve such problems?

Another major concern I would like to bring out here is the possible shape of power balance in East and Southeast Asia. Given the projected change in the security postures of the various major powers how will this region have figured in their strategies? Will the superpowers have been too preoccupied with areas of more pressing priority to pay much attention to the Asia-Pacific region and hence further relegated their security responsibilities to certain friends and allies or concentrated on non-military aspects of competition, including trade and diplomacy?

The free flow of trade, which has accounted much for the Asia-Pacific growth and progress should also be well taken care of. To what extent will the various trade restrictions

imposed in particularly by certain major powers have impeded this flow, if they were to persist into the next century?

The present and future growth and progress, needless to say, depend essentially upon mutual benefits to be derived from economic co-operation. In effect, the increasing interdependence cutting across narrow nationalistic parochialisms, would probably have militated against protectionism. However, there is a danger that such practices will have undermined the real basis for both peace and prosperity even before the end of the present century.

My last but not least point is that in looking into the future we should not underrate intra-regional conflict and competition. It is this factor that has been responsible for much regional instability and great-power interference. Kampuchea is a major case in point. Roots of conflict are still in existence and hence constitute a potential for future disruption of regional peace and stability. On this point, I would like to say, briefly, that ASEAN has paved part of the way towards avoiding, or at least lessening regional disputes.

On the one hand, by forming a free association seeking peaceful development co-operation among themselves as well as with the third parties, the ASEAN countries will have well headed by the twenty-first century towards what I would call 'lawful community' – or community of states advocating

peaceful settlement of conflict. ASEAN has developed its 'ASEAN way' by which it is seeking to enhance the fledging 'community spirit'.

My point is that if we could expand this 'community umbrella' to cover the whole or most of Southeast Asia, the chance for peace would be immensely boosted. In fact, there already exists an institutional framework for such expansion that is, the ASEAN Amity and Co-operation Treaty, which is open to all Southeast Asian nations.

On the other hand, to prevent an adverse impact of major-power involvement, ASEAN has promoted a concept of zone of peace, freedom and neutrality – or ZOPFAN. It is firmly committed to continuing to work for the realisation of this idea. Possibly, we will have achieved that by the next century.

In closing my remarks, I would like to reaffirm my appreciation of the importance of this kind of round table discussion that you are now engaging in. To the extent that it promotes our mutual perceptions and understanding, peace will never be so elusive. I most sincerely hope that our get-together will serve to point out the right way to future peace and prosperity.

JAPAN, THE UNITED STATES AND ASEAN IN THE NEXT DECADE: THE COOPERATION FOR STABILITY AND PROSPERITY*

Excellencies,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to be present this morning before the gathering of such prominent and distinguished academics and scholars from Japan, the US and ASEAN who are here to discuss and exchange views on the issue of such great importance to all of us. I wish also to thank the organizer, the Institute of East-Asian Studies of Thammasat University for having invited me to deliver this keynote address entitled “Japan, the United States and ASEAN in the Next Decade: The Cooperation for Stability and Prosperity.” Certainly,

* Keynote address at the International Conference on Japan, the United States and ASEAN in the Next Decade, Bangkok on 25 March 1989.

during the course of this Conference, all of you will have the opportunity to discuss this topic much more extensively. My contribution is, therefore, intended to offer you only some of my perceptions on this wide-ranging issue. I hope that the valuable discussions, the new ideas and the in-depth analyses arisen from this academic exercise will become important inputs in the policy planning of the nations involved.

Excellencies,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

ASEAN, which is now twenty-two years old, is often viewed as a stabilizing force in Southeast Asia, thanks to its economic dynamism, domestic stability and collective political strength. ASEAN's unique role and immense potential have been recognized by other countries, particularly Japan and the United States since the 1970's probably because both ASEAN, Japan and the United States share vital common values and aspirations. They all practise democracy in their own indigenous manner. They are all champions of freedom and independence. And they are all free market economies benefitting from an open international trading system. Hence, Japan and the United States have become ASEAN's important "Dialogue Partners," sharing both political and economic interests as evidenced through the close consultation during the annual ASEAN Post Ministerial Conferences.

An important cause for the close relationship between ASEAN, Japan and the US is the fact that the ASEAN economies have always been closely linked with those of the US and Japan. The United States has long been one of the most important trading partners for ASEAN, and shall continue to be so in the foreseeable future, despite all the present difficulties. Japan has always been ASEAN's important trading partner. But with the stronger yen and her effort in meeting the new economic challenge, Japan now sees ASEAN as a major target area for industrial manufacturing base rather than her trading market. Thus, Japan has increased her economic presence rapidly in ASEAN.

In addition to these economic linkages, ASEAN, Japan and the US are tied together by the security interdependence. ASEAN is strategically located in the area that serves as the vital maritime link between the Pacific and the Indian Oceans. ASEAN's friendliness and cooperation are vital for Japan's economic survival and the maintenance of peace and security by the US's Seventh fleet. Thus, while dependency characterizes the relationship between the economies of ASEAN and those of Japan and the US, interdependence characterizes their security relationship.

Distinguished Participants,

The question that we should ponder in this seminar is where do ASEAN, US and Japan go from here. Given these

economic linkages and security interdependence, their fates should continue to intertwine in the foreseeable future. Should we then not try to make sure that these three players walk hand in hand instead of stepping on each other's toes?

If we are to walk together as soul mates instead of bickering partners, into the 90s, should we not try to understand each other's predicaments and aspirations and help one another to realize our respective national interests? Should we not also compare our perceptions so as to make sure that our perceptions of the environment now and in the 90s do not diverge widely? For without similar, if not identical perceptions, how can ASEAN, Japan and the US coordinate their policies for our mutual benefits? With these considerations in mind, I wish to offer to you a rough map of how I see where we are and what we are likely to encounter as ASEAN, Japan and the US journey together into the 90s.

The recent improvements in the relations between the two Super-Powers, namely the United States and the Soviet Union, have significantly reduced tensions both between themselves and internationally. This encouraging trend is expected to continue well into the next decade. The Soviet Union now hopes to repeat a similar success that it has had with the US, this time with China. The upcoming Summit between Mr. Deng Xiaoping and Mr. Gorbachev in May should serve as a major stepping-stone to improve the Sino-Soviet relations. Such developments should help create

better international climate which should be beneficial for the security and stability as well as the continued economic progress of the Southeast Asian region.

This new atmosphere should also facilitate and accelerate the achievement of a comprehensive and durable settlement of the Kampuchean problem. In this connection, ASEAN fully appreciates the strong and consistent support that both Japan and the United States have given to ASEAN in our collective effort to bring about the Kampuchean settlement. ASEAN will continue to work in concert with Japan and the US and other like-minded nations for the complete withdrawal of the Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea, and the emergence of a truly independent, neutral and non-aligned Cambodia.

Despite the reduced tension in the international environment, many still believe that we are not seeing the end of the competition between the Super-Powers, which, in any case, will continue, only in a different manner. Therefore, the US military presence in various regions of the world including our own should continue to retain its utility in the maintenance of a configuration of power that is most conducive to the security and stability of the free and market-economy countries such as ASEAN. As for Japan, while there seems to be a consensus among ASEAN countries on the undesirability of Japan's possible remilitarization, she could contribute to ASEAN's stability and security that

are also crucial to her own through her economic clout. For in the present international environment in which trade wars are more likely to occur than nuclear confrontations, Japan's political power grows with the strength of her economy.

In summary, the present trend in the international political environment is conducive to continued partnership between ASEAN, Japan and the US. But with the reduction in political tension, we are witnessing growing economic conflicts in the international economic environment. The slow progress of the Uruguay Round has led many countries to become somewhat disillusioned and strive to liberalize trade by alternative means. One of these alternatives is the move towards bilateralism and regional trading blocs. The United States has taken an economic initiative in the Caribbean, negotiated free trade agreement with Canada and implemented special trade relationship with Mexico. The European Community is today concentrating its energies on completing its internal market by the end of 1992, that has aroused the fears of a "Fortress Europe." These developments have unavoidably revived the speculation about the world economy fragmenting into sugar trading blocs. What are the implications for ASEAN and the wider Pacific region?

For more than a decade, the idea of the Pacific Community in various forms, has been expounded. Today, voices calling for Asian-Pacific cooperation are being heard with greater frequency. In July last year, George Shultz, then

the US Secretary of State, suggested the formation of “Pacific Basin Forum” to start intergovernmental exchanges on the structural policies needed to promote integrated processes and distribution. The latest proposal by the Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke, called for Asia-Pacific countries to form a new regional institution, an Asian-Pacific version of the OECD, to analyse and consult on economic issues and to counter protectionism in international trade. Perhaps the time is fast coming when the Pacific countries should explore what they could do together to impart a fresh impetus to the task of promotion and development of Pacific Cooperation for their mutual benefits.

On this question, I wish to ask that certain considerations should be borne in mind. First, ASEAN should play a central and useful role in any eventual co-operation that may take place. Second, ASEAN, the US, Japan and other Pacific dialogue partners have already had a useful mechanism of ASEAN-Pacific Cooperation (APC) within the PMC format. Third, a degree of looseness and informality in structure may be advisable in view of the present reality. The prospect for the cooperation between ASEAN, US and Japan to facilitate the emergence of a Pacific Century should not make us lose sight of the present difficulties in the economic interactions of these three partners, each of whom has one’s own economic agenda. Let me start with the United States.

The US economy for the last ten years has undergone some fundamental changes which undermined the US position as a major economic engine that has contributed to the growth of the world economy. The US industry's inventiveness and competitiveness in the marketplace have declined. Overshadowed by huge federal budget and trade deficits, the United States, under domestic pressure, has more and more turned away in practice from the principle of free trade, for which it once championed and still does verbally. Its protectionist measures, nonetheless, have so far not produced the desired results. Instead, the US protectionism has seriously damaged its own image and adversely affected the positive perception and goodwill towards the United States among US's trade partners. Economic cooperation, not coercion should be the principal instrument of US foreign economic policy. Indeed, a good example is the ASEAN-US Initiative or AUI, a major joint study undertaken by academics from both sides to improve the economic relations and cooperation between ASEAN and the US.

As for Japan, in the last ten years, Japan has overwhelmingly increased her influence in the Asia-Pacific region. The appreciation of the yen has made ASEAN, in the Japanese view more attractive as industrial manufacturing base for exports to foreign countries. But because approximately 20 percent of Japanese investment abroad is in ASEAN, ASEAN grew much more dependent on capital

and investment from Japan than any other countries. In this regard, I believe, a greater diversity in ASEAN economies would benefit both ASEAN and Japan in the long run. There are encouraging signs in recent Japanese economic policy such as the initiatives in the Maekawa Report submitted to Prime Minister Nakasone in April 1986 and the New Aid Plan launched in early 1987 by the Japanese MITI proposing several changes in the Japanese trade structure. Furthermore, the recent ASEAN-Japan Development Fund of two billion dollars and the Japan-ASEAN Investment Company which is a Joint Venture between a Japanese and ASEAN private company are steps in the right direction. But Japan can do much more. It is time for Japan to effectively reduce its balance of payments surplus by opening up more access to her market for ASEAN products.

As for ASEAN, the Manila Summit in December 1987 fully recognized that regional prosperity must be based on both the internal and external economic factors. For the former, it was agreed that closer intra-ASEAN economic cooperation must be effectively accelerated. The increased and strengthened intra-ASEAN economic cooperation will, on the one hand, stimulate regional growth and prosperity. On the other hand, it will put ASEAN in a stronger position to deal with its trading partners and the world economy.

In this connection, I believe that it is time for us to stop bemoaning the lack of political will. I believe in the

resourcefulness and the entrepreneurial ability of the ASEAN peoples. Therefore, I believe, that we should allow maximum freedom for the private sectors of ASEAN to cooperate with one another. They, not an abstract political will, will provide the necessary dynamism to move ASEAN economic cooperation forward. As for Thailand, I wish to reaffirm categorically that ASEAN has been and will continue to be the cornerstone of our foreign policy.

Distinguished Participants,

I am convinced that the ASEAN solidarity will enable us to succeed in meeting any challenges that lie ahead in the next decade. And I am convinced further that, if ASEAN, Japan and the US are mindful of each other's sensitivities, interests and objectives and strive to strengthen our cooperation for mutual benefits, then this triangular concert may turn out to be the pillar of the new Pacific Community. And your discussion here may hasten to bring it about. I therefore wish you success.

Thank you.

THAILAND'S ROLE IN CHANGING INDOCHINA*

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with honour and pleasure that I once again accepted the kind invitation of the World Economic Forum (WEF) to address this gathering of eminent and distinguished international business leaders. Let me first extend a warm welcome to all of you and wish you a pleasant and fruitful stay in Thailand. At the first National Meeting on Thailand in October 1987, I was invited to speak on "Foreign Policy Directions of Thailand as a Rising Economic Power." I am pleased to learn that the success of that Meeting together

* A dinner speech at the National Meeting on Thailand organized by the World Economic Forum, Bangkok on 25 May 1989.

with Thailand's recent economic performance have inspired the WEF to organize this second National Meeting on Thailand. We in Thailand, have always been supportive of the WEF's goal of fostering international economic development through business cooperation.

This evening the WEF has asked me to speak on "Thailand's role in changing Indochina." Events in Indochina for the past ten years have been dominated by the situation in Kampuchea. However, the past several months have witnessed several positive developments which give rise to optimism that a political settlement may finally be found. A series of dialogue and consultation between the parties directly involved and other countries concerned have been held and are continuing. Most noteworthy is the announcement by Vietnam that it would withdraw all its troops by September this year. With these encouraging signs, the international business community would naturally wish to know what role Thailand can or will play in Indochina, and what are the opportunities for the international business community in the post-settlement period. Furthermore, Prime Minister Chatchai Choonhavan's policy announced shortly after taking office of turning Indochina from battlefields into a market-place, has no doubt aroused much attention and interest among you all.

Distinguished Participants,

The idea and policy of turning the Indochinese war zone into a trade zone after a political settlement to the Kampuchean problem is found; including assistance for their economic reconstruction is not new, but has been firmly rooted in the desire of successive Thai and ASEAN member Governments to see a peaceful, secure and stable Indochina. Whatever happens in Indochina will have a significant impact on us. When the Vietnam War ended in 1975, Thailand was ready to be both a friend and a partner in the economic reconstruction of Indochina. Unfortunately, Indochina was turned into a battlefield once again when, in December 1978, Vietnamese troops invaded and occupied Kampuchea. Since then, the Kampuchean problem has been the major obstacle to peace, stability as well as economic cooperation and development in the region.

As a country sharing a common border, our fate is inseparable from our Kampuchean neighbour, Thailand therefore wishes to see a long-lasting political solution in Kampuchea. Over the years, and today still, Thailand and our ASEAN partners continue to explore all possible means and channels for achieving an early political settlement. It is heartening that over the years we received strong support from our friends and allies, most notably in the United Nations, for our efforts towards a Kampuchea which is fully sovereign, independent, and neutral, existing peacefully with its neighbours and posing no threat to anyone.

Distinguished Participants,

While peace in Kampuchea is not yet at hand, I would say that prospects are now brighter than at any time in the past. We may, therefore, consider what role Thailand could play in the economic relations with Indochina in the future.

Thailand already maintains trade relations with Laos and Vietnam. We welcome and aim to increase trade with our Laotian brothers and have tried our best to keep relations smooth. The border dispute is now in the process of being amicably resolved. As a matter of fact, a joint Thai-Lao technical team this week conducted the second inspection and survey of the disputed area. We hope this issue will be settled soon.

In the case of Vietnam, while the question of Kampuchea remains the main obstacle to the full normalization of our relations, during my visit to Vietnam in January this year we agreed that increased contacts between businessmen and scholars would further promote goodwill and understanding between the two countries. Several such exchanges have taken place and at present a group of nearly 100 Thai businessmen representing a wide array of business is currently in Vietnam to get a first hand look and access for themselves the situation and possibilities. According to press reports, they have met with some success.

As regards Kampuchea, while at present there exists some border trade transactions, the normalization of

economic relations and full-scale, state-to-state trading between Thailand and Kampuchea could take place only after peace is fully restored in Kampuchea and a Government which is freely chosen by its people is established. While it is up to the Kampuchians to decide, it would appear that the only personality acceptable to all is Prince Norodom Sihanouk.

Thailand believes that there are great potentials and many opportunities for trade with Indochina. In general, the three Indochinese states with their rich natural resources, ample supply of cheap labour and potentially large market for commodities and household items, especially Vietnam with over 60 million people, offer many opportunities in trade, joint ventures and investments in the development of labour-intensive industries, agro-industries, oil and gas, forestry, minerals, fishery and tourism, to name just a few. The possibilities are there, but so are the immediate problems. There is short supply of ready cash and capital for investment, lack of adequate infrastructure.

The reconstruction of Indochinese economies will take many years, and will require massive development of infrastructure such as dams, roads, irrigation, electricity and communications. Most of the funds will have to be obtained from Western and Japanese sources, including international financial institution such as the ADB, the IMF, and the World Bank. However, foreign funds and investments will not be

forthcoming unless and until basic requirements are met, namely: restoration of peace in Kampuchea; political stability; economic restructuring from the tightly controlled, centrally-planned economies into more open market-oriented economies, all of which takes time. These changes must be concrete, not cosmetic. The Vietnamese and Laotian governments have announced their willingness to tackle these problems and to protect foreign investment. It remains to be seen whether these announcements would be translated into action.

Distinguished Participants,

After peace and stability is restored in Kampuchea, Thailand, with our more developed and sophisticated economy, is willing and ready to become a supporting partner for the reconstruction of Indochina. Given Thailand's geographical location and close cultural links with the three Indochinese states, Thailand can serve as a funnel for foreign assistance; a bridge linking the Indochinese states and the global economy; and/or a gateway and spring-board for interested foreign investors. Bangkok and our Northeastern cities will be the most logical stepping stones for trade and economic relations and contact between various transnational corporations and Indochina. Our infrastructure, such as airport and seaport facilities, can be utilised. Private foreign investors can also collaborate with their Thai partners in entering the Indochinese market.

Distinguished Participants,

In sum, Thailand wishes to see an early political settlement in Kampuchea which is acceptable to all parties concerned. When the conditions are right, Thailand will be ready to engage in full official trade relations and economic cooperation with the three Indochinese states for the mutual benefit of all concerned.

I therefore would like to conclude my remarks by inviting all of you distinguished business leaders, to consider the challenges and opportunities offered by our Indochinese neighbours, and to consider making use of Thailand's skills, potential and facilities in your future dealings with the Indochinese states.

Thank you for your attention. May I also wish you a successful meeting and wish the WEF all the success in its future endeavours.

SPEECH AT THE LUNCHEON HOSTED BY THE AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN THAILAND*

Mr. Harold Vickery, Mr. William Reinsch, Mr. Tom Seale,
Distinguished members of the American Chamber of
Commerce in Thailand, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I appreciate this opportunity to meet once again with
the AMCHAM. I have been informed that this is our third
meeting over the past six years. When I last addressed the
AMCHAM in 1986, trade between Thailand and the United
States was 2.9 billion dollars. Today, two-way trade stands at
seven billion dollars. So we can say that there has been some
progress, I shall not claim that my appearances at AMCHAM
have helped to stimulate trade. What I can say is that the
trade volumes reflect the strong and sustained relationship
between our two nations.

* On 8 December 1989.

My three appearances at the AMCHAM covered the greater part of the 1980's. We are now embarking into the 1990's. I do not know whether I will still be invited to talk to you at the end of the 1990's. But what I am certain about is that our bilateral trade volume will likely be double what it is today.

The year 1990 will usher in many new challenges. By the end of next year, we will likely see in what direction the dramatic events in Eastern Europe will have unfolded. The integration of Western Europe into a single market will have already made great advances. The US and Canadian economies would be more closely linked by the Free Trade Agreement. The concept of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation would have gained added momentum, and interested parties would have a clearer perception of how it should proceed.

We are about to enter into the final decade of the 20th century with tremendous challenges and opportunities ahead of us. To succeed in a rapidly changing world, all governments must constantly evaluate the assumptions and premises that guide national policy.

The search for prosperity and better quality of life is increasingly becoming the dominant trend in the world today. The breach of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of one-party rule in Eastern European countries are the latest vivid demonstrations of the economic pressures bursting

apart the political structures that cannot satisfy the revolution of rising expectations. Governments around the world are confronted with the challenge of either being able to deliver the goods or going into oblivion. They must restructure their priorities by elevating economic progress to the top, or risk being cast away as relics of a bygone era.

Thailand too must cope with this trend sweeping the world. With the value of our foreign trade accounting for more than half our gross national product, Thailand's destiny depends on how we can successfully compete in the international economic arena. The urgent task before this nation is therefore the coordination of our resources and instruments of policy to enhance Thailand's international economic competitiveness.

I intend to utilize the instrument of diplomacy to supplement other instruments of national policy to enhance Thailand's competitiveness and assure stable and sustained economic growth. This is not an entirely new departure. It has been accepted internationally for a long time that trade, politics and security are all interrelated. The Foreign Ministry has also had an important economic role for some time now. However, with the immediate threat to Thailand's security being diminished more time and resources can now be devoted by the Foreign Ministry to the task of enhancing Thailand's international economic competitiveness.

The business of diplomacy will increasingly be business.
Ladies and Gentlemen,

All of you are aware, the character of the Thai economy has changed. Rates of growth over the past few years have been consistently higher than expected. There is a need to guard against an over-heated economy. Fiscal and monetary measures are needed to contain inflation, increase saving, reduce trade deficits, reduce stock market and real estate speculation, and to expand productive capacity. All these measures are necessary for continued stable and sustained growth of the Thai economy. I can assure you that the Government is fully conscious of what needs to be done, and soon an announcement will be made on the specific measures that we shall be implementing. On the part of the Foreign Ministry, we shall be actively supplementing the efforts of other economic ministries.

I take this opportunity to outline for you some of the things Thai diplomacy will be engaged in over the coming year:

– We will continue to push for greater discipline in and full liberalization of the international trading system. We will join with other like-minded countries in aggressively opposing protectionism. We shall strive for the successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations.

– We will seek to maintain and widen access to our traditional markets in the United States, Japan and the EC, as well as to vigorously explore new additional markets in Indochina, the Pacific, the Middle East, South Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

– We will diversify our sources of raw materials and capital goods, and secure our sources of supply.

– We will continue to seek and attract appropriate investment and technology to Thailand, and to expand our manufacturing base.

– We will continue to closely evaluate the developments in Eastern Europe as well as the implications of the integration of Western Europe into a single market.

– We shall work to attain the goal of a single ASEAN market and to advance closer economic cooperation among the ASEAN countries. ASEAN relations with its major trading partners also need to be better structured. With the United States, ASEAN will need to work out a new framework for closer economic cooperation with special emphasis on trade and investment activities of the private sectors. American small and medium sized firms have somewhat neglected the trade and investment opportunities available in the ASEAN region. More needs to be done to induce their participation.

– We shall also be actively involved in the development of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation concept.

We recognise that the growing influence of the Asia-Pacific countries in the world economy requires greater coordination among the regional countries. What we in the Asia-Pacific region may need is a mechanism for cooperation that will ensure greater trade liberalisation and enhancement of intra-regional trade. The Canberra meeting of twelve Pacific countries last month was a good beginning. I believe it is important for businessmen to closely monitor developments in these endeavours since the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation concept foreshadows a movement of the centre of gravity of world trade and investment to the Asia-Pacific region.

—Last but not least, we will facilitate greater interaction between the Thai business community and their counterparts overseas. The private sector will continue to be given top priority as the engine of growth.

In all these endeavours, we hope to be able to work closely with our friends. The United States is our largest trading partner and will continue to be so in the foreseeable future. The US market now accounts for nearly 20 per cent of our exports. We value US trade and investments and shall continue to facilitate their expansion. We shall negotiate in good faith with the US Government to eliminate or minimize the trade frictions and barriers between our two countries. We would, however, ask the US to bear in mind that on a level playing field, applying the rule of reciprocity between

a major league player like the US and a little league player like Thailand is not fairplay.

As in America, where solution to any critical problem is arrived at by consensus emerging out of public debate and democratic processes, likewise, there must be recognition and acceptance that in Thailand remedy to any problem will also have to rest on democratic consensus.

But let me say that trade problems between our two countries are symptoms of success, and do not portend failure. Problems arise in any active partnership. As a leading American businessman once said, “If two people agree all the time, then one of them is unnecessary.”

I want also to emphasize that economic nationalism is not the way to go. It would be destructive to the longer term interests of both nations. We need to be creative and understanding. We need to be consistent and fair in our approach. To this end, AMCHAM certainly has a vital role to play. Based in Thailand, you have a broad perspective of our bilateral relations. AMCHAM’s inputs to the policy formulation of the US Government can be extremely important. I therefore urge the AMCHAM to enhance its role as an intermediary between the United States and Thailand to facilitate mutually satisfactory outcomes to our bilateral economic negotiations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the dawn of this century, there were just a few nations in the international community. The word “interdependency” was non-existent. This century has seen two tragic world wars, one great depression and countless other conflicts and ideological confrontations. Yet it is a happy irony of history that this century appears to be finishing up on a positive note. As we look to the future, we can all be more confident that the world will indeed have a future. The over 160 nations on earth now seem to recognise that interdependence is the key to peace and prosperity. The task of diplomacy is now to create conditions whereby all nations will have a stake in and enjoy the benefit of an ever-widening international economic pie.

Finally, let me take this opportunity to wish all of you a Merry Christmas and a happy, prosperous and successful 1990.

Thank you.

SURIN PITSUWAN



Surin Pitsuwan
Minister of Foreign Affairs
November 1997 - February 2001

PEACE AND PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY*

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed a pleasure to be here. The excitement that accompanies the start of a new intellectual adventure is in the air. The task before you call for boldness and creativity, for this workshop will have to weave together disparate strands of thoughts and interests into one cohesive whole. At this early point in the project, I would like to offer a few thoughts for your consideration.

STATE BEHAVIOUR IN THE NEW WORLD SYSTEM

It is difficult these days to start any meaningful discussion of international relations without referring to the

* Delivered at “ASEAN-UN Workshop on Peace and Preventive Diplomacy,” Bangkok on 22 March 1993.

end of the Cold War. With the situation in many parts of the world still quite fluid, we cannot say with certainty what shape that new world order will take. It is at this crucial time that we need to determine what we want the new international system to look like, and act accordingly to achieve that vision.

To begin with, we will need to perform what the Americans call a reality check. Not everyone will agree on the substantive components and processes of the new order. With regional rivalries no longer held in abeyance by conventional superpower competition, and with the United States reluctant to play a benevolent hegemonic role, a resurgent nationalism is likely to figure more prominently. Some countries will wish to concentrate on becoming economic powerhouses. Others will seek to expand their influence in the region and in the world. Still others may attempt to build leverage by any means, including developing weapons of mass destruction.

Without strategic alliances binding states together, two types of emerging state value-maximization behaviour may be discerned in the present era. One is a tendency for some states to be more assertive in pursuing their own interests, political and economic, if necessary at the expense of others. The “advantage” in this approach is that if a state is powerful enough, it can effectively use that leverage to extract concessions from weaker states.

The other is that states may seek to enter into alliances with other states to increase their own leverage vis-à-vis other nations outside the alliance as well as within the alliance itself. In this new era, we may expect to see intensifying efforts by states to establish cooperative frameworks in order to minimize transaction costs in a world of uncertainty.

NON-STATE ELEMENTS

There are, of course, other elements at play. Forces long suppressed by the Cold War, such as religious extremism and ethnic chauvinism, may transcend state boundaries and be beyond the control of any individual state (and indeed may threaten the integrity of the state itself).

Other more benign forces are shaping the world as well. Rapid technological advances are facilitating the dissemination of ideas. A Western-style consumer monoculture is sweeping the globe. Some governments will resist this globalization and attempt to reassert its individuality, while others will embrace modernity as the harbinger of development. The cumulative effect of all these agents of change is that sovereign governments will continue to face challenges no less daunting than those existing under the Cold War. Cooperation is one way for states to weather these changes that affect us all.

COOPERATION OR CONFLICT?

With the uncertainties and problems facing the world today, mankind's most dangerous era has not given way to a lasting reign of peace and prosperity. The current world situation may tilt towards either greater cooperation or greater conflict. With the introduction of diverse regional cooperative frameworks such as APEC, EAEC and AFTA, the trend in Southeast Asia seems to be towards greater cooperation. Encouraging as this trend is, most multilateral cooperation remains in economic areas. Appropriate and practical forms of cooperation are also needed on the security front to ensure a stable and secure new international order.

The most obvious and widely practiced form of international cooperation is bilateralism. During the Cold War, bilateral security cooperation was underpinned by ideological and strategic calculations in the context of the US-Soviet rivalry. With that context removed, the chances for low-intensity regional conflict are significantly heightened. Bilateralism, by its own logic, leads to the formation of alliances to improve the relative positions of individual members vis-à-vis non-members. This can lead to competing alliances that may eventually undermine the stability of the international system once again.

Another form of international cooperation is multilateralism. By multilateralism, we mean a framework

consisting of three or more states entailing a generalized set of rules applied on a uniform, non-discriminatory basis. The GATT and NATO are examples of multilateral economic and collective security frameworks respectively.

I would like to stress that multilateralism should not be taken merely to mean cooperation among three or more actors. A non-discriminatory element is necessary to ensure what academics call “diffuse reciprocity,” a rough equivalence of member benefits in the aggregate over time. Without it, “multilateral” diplomacy is more likely to occur only when the interests of all or most members of the cooperative framework are directly involved. A generalized code of conduct for the proposed ASEAN-UN cooperative framework could well serve as that vital ingredient.

THE UN AND ASEAN

At a time when the United Nations is in an unprecedented position to fulfil its potential, however, it finds itself seriously overstretched. Internally, it is financially strapped and in need of organizational restructuring. Outside, the proliferation of hotspots around the globe threaten to severely tax UN resources and capabilities. Compounding the problem, belligerents in local conflicts such as Cambodia often seem to resent the role of the UN in seeking a resolution to their conflict.

It is clear that in order to live up to its mandate, the UN needs to have closer cooperation from regional states. A reason such cooperation is often not forthcoming may be because once hostilities have started, diplomacy becomes more difficult and even the UN's authority may not be heeded. In such scenarios, the UN often finds itself in over its head.

Is the Security Council adequate to ensure peace and security around the world? If it is, then the idea of preventive diplomacy would be redundant. There are times, of course, when the Security Council is appropriate, for example, to sanction gross violations of the UN charter. But there are also times when its limitations show.

The fact is that the UN is traditionally oriented towards dealing with problems when they arise. When the body politic is afflicted with an ailment, the UN ventures in with remedies ranging from condemnations to economic sanctions to, theoretically, the deployment of a peace-keeping force. What has hitherto been lacking is the kind of prescription for peace laid out by the UN Secretary-General.

UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has urged regional organizations, among others, to cooperate with United Nations in performing preventive diplomacy. This is defined as "action to prevent disputes from arising between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts and to limit the spread of the latter when they

occur.” The components of preventive diplomacy identified in the report are: measures to build confidence, fact-finding, early warning, preventive deployment of UN forces, and demilitarized zones.

The Asia-Pacific region, in particular Southeast Asia, stands to benefit greatly from such an innovative approach to peace-keeping. Countries in the region are apprehensive of changes in the security balance wrought by the end of the Cold War. Outside observers are uneasy as well over the prospects of Asia-Pacific security. Confidence building is an urgent first task for our region. As Professor John Gerard Ruggie of Columbia observed:

“In the immediate postwar period, it was not possible to construct multilateral institutional frameworks in the Asia-Pacific region. Today the absence of such arrangements inhibits progressive adaptation to fundamental global shifts. In Asia-Pacific, there is no EC and no NATO to have transformed the multitude of regional security dilemmas, as has been done in Europe with Franco-German relations, for example. Indeed, no Helsinki-like process through which to begin the minimal task of mutual confidence building exists in the region. Thus, whereas today the potential to move beyond balance-of-power politics in its traditional form exists in Europe, a reasonably stable balance is the

best that one can hope to achieve in the Asia-Pacific region.”

Cooperation between ASEAN and the UN can help to compensate for weaknesses that each organization may suffer from singly. The UN, for all its resources, would benefit from a regional conduit to carry out its mandate. The UN General Assembly’s recent endorsement of ASEAN’s Treaty of Amity and Cooperation as a regional code of conduct suggests a synergy of effort that could be further augmented.

In this regard, ASEAN has an enviable track record in political cooperation. Now, with the changing rules of the game, it faces an even more formidable challenge. The issue that was ASEAN’s common cause, Cambodia, has been deprived of the compelling external dimensions that made ASEAN’s role so important. Competing territorial claims among ASEAN countries, while in abeyance for the time being, constitute potential weaknesses in the armour. Shortcomings in economic complementarity among ASEAN members likewise hold the organization back. With the UN in close consultation, these weaknesses may yet be rectified.

IMMEDIATE TASKS

If we can agree on what I have laid out so far, we may now turn to the steps that need to be taken to fulfil the vision.

In this workshop, we need to identify the relevant issues in building a multilateral institutional framework, with ASEAN and the UN as the core, that will ensure peace and stability in Southeast Asia. The nature and scope of this multilateral framework need to be defined. We need to analyse past and present efforts at multilateral cooperation, especially with regards to preventive diplomacy, and identify their strengths and shortcomings to enable us to build a solid framework for the future.

Like preventive medicine, the most obvious advantage of preventive diplomacy is that it is less costly and relatively painless. The disadvantage is that it is less spectacular and thus susceptible to being neglected. Moreover, it requires constant effort to make it work.

For a start, we will probably need to reconcile the new framework with traditional approaches to preventive diplomacy, which include prediction, deterrence and containment of conflict or damage control.

Prediction, of course, requires high-quality intelligence about potential conflicts and their likely outcomes in order for us to intervene effectively. The less-than-satisfactory record in this area – the failure of the best intelligence services to predict the collapse of the Soviet Union, the surprise with which the horrors in Bosnia took everyone, the premature confidence that led to the signing of the Paris peace accords – suggests that we will have to concentrate much

of our effort in data gathering and intelligence work. Still, much of our work is already cut out for us. Cambodia, the South China Sea, and competing territorial claims within the region are readily identifiable as potential sources of conflict in Southeast Asia.

Dover Deterrence, a mainstay of Cold War politics, can also be important to stave off armed conflict. It assumes directly conflicting interests would erupt into war were it not for the unacceptable costs each party in the conflict would have to sustain. Deterrence is a game of calculated risk, assuming the worst about the other. While nuclear deterrence is an extreme form, conventional deterrence is similarly draining on energy and resources of nations. Deterrence may be a form of conflict prevention, but since it feeds on fear and distrust, it is nonetheless not a very constructive approach, though one that may be necessary under certain circumstances. For this reason, it might be useful to draw a distinction between deterrence and preventive diplomacy, which ultimately aims to bring about an atmosphere of mutual confidence that renders deterrence unnecessary, much like the one existing among the United States and Western Europe.

Finally, when the first shots have been fired, there is the question of conflict containment, or damage control. That this could be viewed at all as one category of preventive diplomacy suggests a general reluctance on our part to admit failure. If preventive diplomacy works, there should be

no need for conflict containment, since there would be no conflict to contain in the first place. The prevention of conflict escalation is very much part and parcel of traditional diplomacy. That it should be conducted within a regional multilateral framework suggests a change of process rather than content, but is nevertheless worth exploring.

What then is this much-touted preventive diplomacy? How do we pin the creature down? Will it be whatever hopes we project on it? Is it merely another proposal for yet one more international organization whose primary objective is to provide a forum for discourse among members? If so, are there not enough such forums already? What is the niche, so to speak, for this new multilateral framework for preventive diplomacy? Other than building mutual confidence by promoting dialogue over policies and intentions, what should be some of the other objectives of this framework? What are the short-term and long-term mechanisms that should be devised to prevent the outbreak of conflict? These are basic, practical questions that will no doubt be addressed in this workshop.

Preventive diplomacy is a promising idea that, like all new ideas, needs to be further developed, and I am sure there are few more qualified for the task than those in this room. I wish the workshop every success and hope that your two days of stimulating discussions will generate insights into laying the foundations for peace and preventive diplomacy in this region.

THAI FOREIGN POLICY*

Mr. John Bresnan, Executive Director of Pacific Basin Studies
Program of Columbia University,
Distinguished Guests,

Whenever I am invited to speak at a forum, the Foreign office will prepare my text and monitor my dictum very closely, but at this particular forum, I am glad that the code of conduct here gives the speaker a sense of freedom, namely that the speaker speaks from notes and that Chatham House rules are applied. Such rules also imply that the Foreign office is relieved from preparing me a text and that my off-the-cuff/bold comments on Thai Foreign Policy will not make the headlines, thus saving the Foreign office from any embarrassment.

* Delivered at "Southeast Asia in World Affairs" at Columbia University, New York on 2 December 1993.

I deem it a distinct privilege to address the University Seminar on Southeast Asia in World Affairs here at the East Asian Institute of Columbia University. The intellectual environment of Columbia University and the inspiring universities and academic institutions in the East Coast have had a lasting impression upon me. The fact that Southeast Asian studies receive such interest and recognition among leading scholars here in this part of the world certainly helps to illuminate our region in world affairs. I therefore take pride to be here representing a country which is an integral player in Southeast Asia, and to share my views on Thai foreign policy.

In today's school of international relations, analysts are continuously in search of the direction in which international diplomacy is heading and its implications on world affairs. Some scholars have warned that cultural conflict will lead to "the clash of civilizations" whilst some foresee that the age of "geo-economics," as reflected in the emergence and consolidation of regional economic groupings, have set the stage for economic rivalry, particularly between the Atlantic and the Pacific. In this context, Thailand and ASEAN recognise that certain adjustments are needed to ensure that political stability and economic prosperity will continue to flourish in Southeast Asia.

Against this backdrop, we need to ask ourselves how to manage interdependence and how to build for ourselves

a collective base with a view to strengthening our competitive edge and bargaining position amongst our partners?

In foreign policy, every country has its own priorities and limitations. Thailand is a small and independent state which, at times, may not be able to indulge unilaterally in every issue. But being a democratically elected government, we try to play our part in upholding and promoting the fundamental values regarding human rights, democracy, “free and fair trade,” as well as the preservation and protection of the environment.

With the end of the Cold War and the bipolar system, we can now look freely to other nations regardless of ideology. In today’s world of interdependence, we cannot disregard any area in the world. The structure of our international society is characterized by globalization in which economics has become the language of diplomacy. On the part of Thailand, we have graduated ourselves from being a least developed country (LDC) into becoming a dynamic economy. As Thailand is an export driven economy, we are in the process of improving our international competitiveness. Therefore, we are always looking for trading and investment partners, both access to markets and raw materials as well as tourism. Thai investors are now looking beyond the natural boundaries and traditional markets in order to tap opportunities in Eastern Europe, Africa, Middle East, and Latin America.

In order to accommodate the initiative of the private sector, the government provides the framework to promote and protect Thai overseas investments. Moreover, in view of Thailand's strategic position as a dual ocean country, we intend to link the Indian Ocean with the Pacific Ocean through a land bridge in Southern Thailand. We hope to see the southern ports of Thailand serving as international entrepôts for the sea lanes of Asia as we enter into the Pacific Century.

We are now concentrating our efforts in South-South cooperation and have been admitted as the 110th member of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) just only two months ago. NAM has transformed itself into an economic cooperation movement, a prospective process which Thailand could well help to reinforce. Indeed, many countries in Africa and the newly emerging states in Eastern Europe now look to Thailand with "envious eyes" as a role model of an open and dynamic society. We therefore would like to share and exchange our experiences with these countries, and help them in nation-building.

Distinguished Guests,

The favourable changes which are bearing fruit in the international arena as a result of the end of the Cold War have, in turn, signalled positive implications for the political and socio-economic developments in Southeast Asia. Against

this positive backdrop, Thailand is playing a constructive role in consolidating peace and enhancing economic prosperity in the region.

I need to emphasize this point because the foreign media have, on various occasions, made misleading comments on Thailand's objectives with her neighbouring countries, creating misunderstanding with those countries, particularly the former Indochinese countries. Some have described "how Bangkok's vision of becoming the economic hub of Indochina wound up in a slash-and-burn capitalism."

We are not happy with the international impression that we are engaged in profiteering, in exploiting the natural resources without any regard for the environment. I therefore would like to emphasize that Thailand is a sincere and compassionate neighbour. We are restraining our investors from speculative investment and guiding them towards engaging in long term investments. Our intention is to assist and cooperate with our neighbours in their human resources development.

The end of global ideological conflict has opened up new challenges and opportunities as well as greater responsibilities for the countries of Southeast Asia. Once a region of conflict and turmoil, Southeast Asia is emerging as an increasingly unified and harmonious region in which the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has served as the stabilising factor for the past two decades. As Thailand

is an integral part of ASEAN, our challenge is how to integrate the three former Indochinese countries as well as Myanmar into the ASEAN regional order. Both Laos and Vietnam are in the process of transforming their economies along the lines of the free market system. Moreover, as both these countries have acceded to the ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, we expect others will follow, thus paving the way towards achieving a harmonious and prosperous Southeast Asia.

At the same time, the establishment of a permanent Cambodian government recognized by the international community marks the beginning of a new era of enduring peace and promising prosperity for the Cambodian people and for the region. As an immediate neighbour of Cambodia, Thailand has provided assistance to Cambodia in various forms such as school construction, road repair and several training programmes. Moreover, the international community continues to be engaged in the post-conflict peacebuilding process in Cambodia.

The successful conclusion of the International Conference on the Reconstruction of Cambodia (ICORC) held in Paris in September 1993 has resulted in additional pledges of 119 million US dollars in assistance. This amount supplements the 880 million US dollars that the international community has committed for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Cambodia in 1992. Nevertheless, to ensure

that the momentum towards peace and stability is maintained, we should continue to encourage the national reconciliation process in Cambodia while nurturing Cambodia's economic rebirth through further assistance.

If you look at the map of Southeast Asia, Thailand is strategically located in the middle of Southeast Asia, thus serving as a bridge between that of the mainland and the archipelago countries. We therefore perceive ourselves as a responsible and sincere partner. By virtue of our historical, cultural, linguistic, and religious ties, Thailand is linked with her neighbours both the former Indochinese countries to the East and Myanmar to the west, and we intend to serve as the centre of gravity for all activities in the region.

We do not perceive ourselves as being a "big brother." We want to be on an equal footing with our neighbours and to share our knowledge and experiences so as to ensure that our neighbours can learn from our successes and avoid the mistakes and failures which we have committed in the past. Through our example as an open and dynamic society, we intend to help our neighbours in their transition from a state-controlled economy towards a free-market system. As a donor country, Thailand has therefore launched a package of economic programmes in the form of direct economic and technical assistance to Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, as well as Myanmar totalling 200 million baht for 1994. The value may be small by western standards but it is

one of our ways in expressing compassion and sincerity to these countries.

The international community is also taking constructive measures in promoting the favourable economic and political developments in the region. In this context, Thailand acts as a “transformer” whereby we serve to channel the high level of assistance and technology from the international community to meet the practical needs of our neighbours. We are now studying the idea of setting up a “Thai Centre” in some of the Southeast Asian countries. This would serve as a medium for assistance and exchanges in technical assistance, culture, social values, and languages, and thus help reduce the level of suspicion that may still be lingering amongst our neighbours.

Distinguished Guests,

When Western leaders come through to Bangkok, a prominent topic that will be discussed is Myanmar. I have continuously reiterated the message that the West enjoys the “luxury of distance” whilst we have the “burden of proximity” Thailand shares a long and continuous boundary of approximately 2,400 kilometres with Myanmar which means that any disturbances that may occur in Myanmar would certainly have serious implications on Thailand. We have been asked by the West to restrict our relations with Myanmar. But Thailand and ASEAN continue to remain committed to the policy of constructive engagement.

As part of our policy in engaging Myanmar, we have agreed in principle to the construction of a Friendship Bridge across the Moei River so as to promote greater interaction between our two peoples. Moreover, we recognize that the people of Myanmar need to be given the opportunity to develop their potentials. The Thai government has therefore allocated a budget of 50 million baht for the fiscal year 1994 for the purpose of training human resources in the fields of agriculture, public health and education. We hope that such assistance channelled to these three sectors will help contribute to the future well-being of the people. At the same time, discussions are already underway among the top ASEAN leaders on the possibility of inviting Myanmar as an observer at various ASEAN forums.

The Thai policy towards Myanmar is to serve as a window in helping the regime to communicate and open itself up to the international community. Thailand has consistently delivered a strong message to Myanmar, and the leadership understands that before they can be integrated into the international community, a certain standard of behaviour is expected.

A Western ambassador once described to me that if there is to be any changes in Myanmar, it would be only cosmetic. I replied that such an analysis is a very western one. For us in the East, if someone feels that he or she needs a cosmetic, that is already a good sign. If later on he or she

decides that a plastic surgery is required, that is up to him or her to decide.

My point is that the process of opening up Myanmar is gaining momentum and I perceive that the Myanmar leadership is trying to draw up an appropriate formula to accommodate their interests in response to international pressure. Therefore, it is just a matter of time, and patience is required before democracy can bear fruit just as in any medical care which takes time for the cure to take effect.

Distinguished Guests,

The international community looks to ASEAN as an increasingly dynamic region. As Thailand has assumed the Chairmanship of the ASEAN Standing Committee for the term 1993/94, we are encouraging ASEAN to forge closer cooperation with other regional groupings, such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and the Economic Community Organization (ECO). ASEAN is an outward-looking grouping and cooperative endeavours on the regional to regional basis could well enhance greater interdependence.

ASEAN remains the cornerstone in reinforcing cooperation and promoting economic integration of Southeast Asia. The framework agreement to move towards an ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) by the year 2007 is certainly progressing as scheduled. The depth of economic

integration is reflected in the formation of growth triangles and economic zones at the subregional level among the ASEAN members, prospects which would help augment the cooperative frameworks of AFTA.

At the same time, the easing of political tension in the region has made it possible to extend economic cooperation beyond the framework of ASEAN with an aim to bring about increasing regional interdependence. Thailand has taken the initiative to start reviving old trade routes and forge new ones within the area encompassing Northern Thailand, Myanmar, Southern China, and Laos thus giving the latter two countries access to seaports. This means that the “Golden Triangle,” which has a negative connotation, is being transformed into the “Golden Quadrangle” as a new growth area of intense cooperation in the fields of transportation, tourism, and other economic activities. Indeed, leading international financial institutions such as the Asian Development Bank as well as western countries have expressed their interest in these development projects.

Whilst to the East of Thailand, there are on-going discussions among the lower Mekong riparian states namely Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam regarding cooperation for the sustainable development of the Mekong River, the lifeline of Southeast Asia. We expect such cooperation to be dynamic, incorporating cooperation not only in water utilization but to expand into a wide range of economic

related projects. These activities, we hope, would provide the impetus in drawing China and Myanmar together to complete the full participation of all the six Mekong riparian states. Distinguished Guests,

The growing web of interlocking relationships is expanding beyond Southeast Asia to the Asia-Pacific region. Both the United States and Thailand are geographically Pacific nations, and together we can make use of the potentials and opportunities existing in this increasingly dynamic region. Indeed, there is much transforming the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum into a new Pacific Community, thus creating a trading block.

This is a concept which requires a pragmatic approach and needs to be worked in stages. The Asia-Pacific nations are market-driven whose economies are diverse in the level of economic development. This means that such a trading block could well cause certain socio-economic strains upon some of the Asian countries. Therefore, the APEC current role as a consultative economic forum is, at this stage, much more relevant towards the liberalization of trade and investment among the member economies within the framework of the GATT multilateral trading system. But of course, the December 15, 1993 deadline of the conclusion of the Uruguay Round will have a determining factor in the future direction of APEC.

In spite of the favourable developments, Southeast Asia as well as the Asia-Pacific still find themselves surrounded by some uncertainties. We are pleased that the US has indicated the “primacy of Asia” in its foreign relations and its willingness to remain engaged in the region. Moreover, regular dialogue on security is still essential in preventing these uncertainties from overriding the path of prosperity which Southeast Asia has embarked upon. As Chairman of the ASEAN Standing Committee for the period 1993/94, Thailand will be hosting a formal dialogue on security related issues at the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in July 1994.

This regional security framework will, in addition to the six ASEAN members and the groupings’ seven regular dialogue partners, include China, Russia, Vietnam, Laos and Papua New Guinea. Such a multilateral dialogue hopes to create “transparency” in the security designs of the regional powers so as to enhance mutual reassurance, thus minimizing armed conflict from arising through preventive diplomacy.

Through cooperation at various levels – bilateral, subregional, regional and extra-regional – which I have mentioned, I hope to see the management of interdependency more effective to the future well-being of our international society. I believe that you can reduce the chance of clashes, confrontation and suspicion when people can flow across borders. The free flow of people, goods, and ideas would contribute to the promotion of security, stability, and

prosperity. There, Thailand will continue to play a role in enhancing interdependence in Southeast Asia, the Asia-Pacific and beyond. This principle, in my view, will be a code of conduct in Thai foreign policy for today and for the 21st century.

Thank you very much.

THE ROLE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THAILAND'S FOREIGN POLICY*

Ms. Bungarten, Members of various Human Rights Commissions, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

May I thank Ms. Bungarten for that very kind introduction. I agree with everything you said, but for one point. There is no inconsistency in Thailand's human rights policy.

When I walked into this room, I could not tell whether I was among a community of friends or a school of sharks because the issue of human rights can be considered a very delicate topic.

In any case, the Royal Thai Government has committed itself to the promotion of human rights in the form of its

* Delivered at "Promotion and Protection of Human Rights by Human Rights Commissions" hosted by Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung on 2 October 1998.

policy statement to Parliament on 20 November 1997. Since then, we have carried our message on this issue not only in Thailand but around the world.

One problem I have found as the point man on this issue is that it is extremely difficult to satisfy everybody. Each of us is expecting different kinds of implementation of the policy espoused by Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai in his policy statement. However, what I wish to do tonight is to share with you some of the thoughts, the ideas, the sensitivities concerning how to implement this foreign policy with an emphasis on human rights.

It is a great pleasure for me to be here today despite the fact that it has been a very grueling week on my part. I have come here after having just spent 10 days on the road attending the United Nations General Assembly in New York. The trip itself took twenty-four hours on the way over there. And every day – in Washington, in Chicago, in New York – my day would start at 6 o'clock and end at midnight.

Then the flight back home took another twenty-four hours. I arrived in Bangkok on Tuesday at 5 a.m., just in time to change and go straight to attend the weekly cabinet meeting.

Sometimes I cannot help but wonder: what happened to my **own** human rights?

That is the life I have been leading and enjoying during the past 8-9 months, with a lot of pleasure in this endeavour

to bring about the aspirations of the Thai people to our friends around the world.

I would like to thank the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung for inviting me to share with you my views on “The Role of Human Rights in Thailand’s Foreign Policy.” I am very pleased and honoured to be a part of this international seminar sponsored by this famous German foundation. For decades, Thailand has greatly benefited from the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in terms of support for democratic development as well as promotion and protection of the rights of workers, and we are greatly appreciative of this generous gesture of solidarity.

Congratulations on the victory by the SPD (Social Democrat Party) in the German elections. I do hope that, through you, we can communicate and be in touch with the new leadership in Bonn. And I hope that, with your emphasis on continuity, this will help to strengthen our relations.

I hope you will convey the message that Thailand stands ready to cooperate with the new German administration. Thailand is particularly ready to work with the new leadership in Germany on the issue of human rights because during the past 9 months we have shown our dedication and support to this issue in our own foreign policy.

In Thailand, there exist many laws and regulations allowing for collective bargaining and freedom of association

for Thai workers. However, the success of such laws certainly depends on the strength of the worker's organizational structure as well as their bargaining skills. In this regard, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung effectively rendered support to Thai workers and unionists in improving their capabilities and organization. With successful organization, comes the power to bargain and to influence changes within one's own territory as well as to serve as an inspiration to others beyond. The labour movement in this country has a lot to be grateful for in terms of the activities of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

Let me also take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to other German political foundations for their contributions to our democratic development here in Thailand.

From yesterday morning until now, you have been participating actively in a vigorous discussion on human rights. This is a subject that has always been close to the hearts of the Thai people and the present Thai Government. While human rights may be viewed by some as a luxury of rich countries or as a "Western" value alien to Eastern societies. I would say that human rights have been instilled in the Thai tradition and Thai society for a very long time. Thai people have always been known for their love of liberty and freedom as well as their respect for other people's rights, although, in the past, individual rights may have received less emphasis than collective rights.

And for those who feel that is a value alien to the Thai people, I would like to share with you a thought from United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who spoke on this subject at the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Summit in Harare, Zimbabwe on 2 June 1997. He said, and it is very applicable to us:

“Some Africans still view the concern of human rights as a rich man’s luxury for which Africa is not ready; or even as a conspiracy, imposed by the industrialized West. I find these thoughts demeaning of the yearning for human dignity that resides in every African heart.”

May I paraphrase Kofi Annan by saying: those in this country who believe that the issue of human rights is alien to our culture; thoughts such as these are also demeaning because the yearning for democracy is burning in every Thai heart, indeed, in every Asian heart.

The importance that the present Thai administration attaches to human rights, both in domestic and foreign policy, very well reflects the Thai’s traditional respect for human rights and responsibilities, both individual and collective. At the same time, the high priority we have accorded to human rights also constitutes a response to modern-day problems and challenges.

Over the past decade, the world has witnessed rapid and monumental changes – politically, economically and socially. Many authoritarian and totalitarian regimes have crumbled under the popular pressure of their own peoples, and liberal democratic forms of government have emerged in their places. Communism, both as an ideology and as a socio-economic system, has proved to be totally bankrupt. Democracy and liberalization have emerged as the prevailing trends of the present and, most probably, the foreseeable future.

What can we learn from these experiences? What was the driving force behind these changes? My answer is very simple: the will and the desire of the people. The will of the people serves as the very basis for the legitimate right to rule. The voices of the people call out for their rights to be observed and respected.

This is a gathering sponsored by a German foundation. Therefore, it is appropriate for me to cite the words of a great German philosopher, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, who said: “Life has a value only when it has something valuable as its object.” And I think people in Thailand, in Indonesia, all around us have something valuable in their hearts, and that is the freedom and liberty that they have fought for with their blood and sacrificed for with their lives in order to achieve a constitutional system of democracy.

Against the backdrop of this new climate in the international system, where people are placed at the centre, Thailand has been experiencing the strengthening of democracy and respect for human rights. Of particular concern and interest is where human rights and democracy are located in Thailand's priority of interests and, consequently, what impact will they have on Thai foreign policy. Since this is a fairly broad subject, and given the limited time we have, I shall limit myself to outlining how human rights and democracy help to shape and mould present Thai foreign policy towards the region.

In its statement to the Thai Parliament on Thai foreign policy, the present government declared that Thailand would join the international community in promoting human rights. Although this is the first time that the government has specifically highlighted human rights as a part of its foreign policy, the importance of human rights has actually been embedded in previous foreign policy statements. Every Thai government since World War II has strictly adhered to the United Nations Charter, which, of course, contains references to the protection of human rights.

What is the rationale behind this declaration on the part of the present government? You have heard the expressions that "foreign policy begins at home" and that "foreign policy is an extension of domestic policy." What has happened in Thailand is that in the past two decades or so

the country has undergone tremendous changes, not only economically, of which you are all aware, but also politically, especially regarding increased participation of the non-governmental sector, the NGOs, the mass media, the academia, the whole spectrum of civil society.

In effect, these changes have reinforced Thai society as a liberal, compassionate, and caring society. And now that Thailand has the most democratic constitution ever in our history, human rights, democratization and good governance are given particular importance. Democracy has been increasingly recognized as an essential ingredient for the promotion and protection of human rights and vice versa. They are mutually reinforcing. With this background, it is not surprising, therefore, that human rights have found its way into our foreign policy. The statement to Parliament is but a reflection of the new reality of present-day Thailand. Here, again, the will of the people matters most.

Since the present Thai Government has incorporated the promotion of human rights in its foreign policy platform, how do we intend to implement it? This is the difficult part. As a democratic country, Thailand will support the efforts by the international community as expressed through the United Nations organizations to enhance the respect for human rights and the acceptance of enlargement of democracy by all governments.

It is our cardinal conviction that the world will be a safer and nicer place to live if all governments were to be democratic and to respect human rights. We also realize that our pursuit of such ideals has to be carried out in a real world of nation-states, each of which still jealously guards its sovereignty. So, while we are willing to extend our moral support to the people who love freedom and democracy everywhere, we will be active champions of only our own.

In concrete terms, this means the Thai Government will strive to ensure the success of the respect for human rights and the enlargement of democracy in Thailand so that our example will be an inspiration to freedom and democracy-loving people in other countries, without interfering in their internal affairs. To paraphrase an old Chinese proverb, “instead of cursing the darkness of dictatorial regimes, we will light our own candle of freedom and democracy to be the beacons of inspiration to oppressed peoples everywhere.”

Our commitment to freedom and democracy underlies Thailand’s “**flexible engagement**” initiative that was later renamed after its adoption by ASEAN at the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting last July in Manila – it was transformed into “**enhanced interaction**.” In proposing this free, open and intensified interaction among the ASEAN member countries, Thailand hopes to prepare ASEAN to meet the challenges of globalization that is transforming the international environment into a “world without borders.”

The recent and ongoing economic crisis has demonstrated vividly the interdependence of nation-states. What started as a Tom Yum effect in Thailand in July last year is threatening to cause a financial meltdown in Latin America. Thailand, in introducing the proposal of flexible engagement, or enhanced interaction, wants to issue a wake-up call for ASEAN that unless we deepen our interactions frankly and openly on issues that jointly affect us all, ASEAN may become extinct through irrelevancy. The present economic crisis has so weakened ASEAN, economically and politically, that strong medicine is needed. By trying to pretend that nothing is wrong and to conduct business as usual, ASEAN risks the fate, as I mentioned earlier, of slow extinction through irrelevancy. Only by opening up to, and cooperating with, one another to heal our economies and bodies politic, will ASEAN member countries be able to cope with the present economic crisis that is a manifestation of the force of globalization.

As Benjamin Franklin once warned the American states during the Revolutionary War, “if we don’t hang together, we will be hung separately.” For ASEAN member countries to hang together, we must be willing to enhance our interactions frankly and openly.

The other point I wish to make is that although we place importance on human rights in our policy, we do not seek to dictate this position to other countries, nor will we

allow anyone to dictate us. The incorporation of human rights into our foreign policy naturally implies that we advocate these rights. In fact, yes, we do advocate these rights because we believe societies that respect human rights and practice democracy are more stable and have proper mechanisms for the management of problems; whatever problems they may be. We try to balance the need to have good relations with other countries with the need to respect our own principles and beliefs, and of course, again, the will of the people. We understand fully that the promotion of democracy and human rights needs time to take its root and to flourish.

We are – this country is – indeed in a very delicate position because the pace of change and the steps toward development in whatever area – economic, social, political – are not the same for everyone. All the countries in the region are not marching to the beat of the same drum. This is because we are different and some of us have chosen totally different lines of development although we are all in the same region.

This country is, therefore, in a very delicate position. How can we be true to our own principles? To our western friends, I can only quote the words of William Shakespeare, who said:

“This above all: to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man (or
any woman)”

Our proposal of “flexible engagement” will allow Thailand to be different. We have designed that approach for ourselves. So, our friends and neighbours, please do not misunderstand us if we are different.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to note that this year, to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Thai Government has established a national committee, headed by the Minister of Justice, to oversee activities to mark this special occasion. The committee involves all those working in the field of human rights, both governmental and non-governmental. I believe that Dr. Somchai Homla-or (Secretary-General of the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development) and Your Excellency – all of you here tonight – are involved in this process. We are working in partnership. Some of the activities that the committee is working on are the consideration on accession to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the drafting of a national plan and plan action on human rights as well as a national plan for human rights education.

And I appreciate what Dr. Somchai has asked me to do tonight. A draft bill for a new national human rights commission is now sitting on the desk of the Deputy Prime Minister and waiting to go before the Cabinet. Dr. Somchai has asked for a public hearing into this draft bill.

Well, thank you very much for your proposal. I hope you will be the first to defend the Government on this matter. My position is a very delicate one because I will not be able to satisfy everyone across the whole spectrum. Yes, I will take your suggestion and bring the draft bill before the Cabinet. But do help us when we are accused of dragging our feet on this matter.

This month, the committee is organizing an international symposium on the subject of human rights on 24 October, the United Nations Day. The topic of the symposium was particularly chosen to suit the modern-day needs of a region experiencing rapid industrialization. In organizing such a symposium, the Thai government wishes to play a catalytic role in involving the private sector in the full and effective promotion and protection of human rights. It is going to be called the Symposium on Human Rights and Business Ethics. So businessmen and the business community will be given the opportunity to have their say on this matter.

It is not only the rights of the consumers and local workers that we aim to protect. We shall also not neglect the needs and the rights of foreign migrant workers, both legal and illegal. Being an open and democratic country, Thailand sits in the middle of a lot of problems around us, so we absorb a lot of problems into our country. One of those is illegal migration, and associated with this matter is the problem of illegal workers. At present, Thailand is hosting close to one

million migrant workers, not to mention the countless number of those fleeing from armed conflicts in our neighbouring countries. In this regard, next year, the Thai Government plans to organize an international symposium on migration to exchange views and experiences among countries within the region and beyond in order to achieve cooperation in dealing with irregular migration.

The Thai Government is also looking towards strengthening cooperation with neighbouring countries on human rights promotion and protection. We support the efforts of NGOs in seeking the possibility of establishing a regional mechanism to deal with human rights issues. While such mechanism will need endorsement from all governments in the region, with different views, perceptions and interests, this should not stop or delay the efforts towards that end, which are very noble and very commendable. In fact, ASEAN has increasingly recognized the importance of placing people at the centre of its policy formulation.

All of these efforts on the part of the Thai Government constitutes foreign policy based on the precept that being true to one's self is the guarantee of integrity, which validates and enhances one's power of advocacy. Therefore, the country's foreign policy should not betray its strengthening democracy, a view that is shared by many in the informed public.

To recapitulate everything in a nutshell: the human rights elements in Thai foreign policy reflect both Thailand's

interest as well as her moral and ethical principles, particularly the collective will of the people, expressed and articulated through our dynamic democracy. It will also help transform ASEAN into the open and caring community that its members hope to achieve.

And, yes, Thailand promoted the idea of an open society last December at the Informal ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur. We proposed that by the year 2020 ASEAN should be a collection of open societies. There was some hesitation on this issue. Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai was all geared up to use his power of eloquence to convince his colleagues to adopt this idea. When our friends and colleagues around the region heard of Thailand's determination, they compromised and agreed with the proposal, but with some qualifications. The ASEAN members agreed to open societies **“consistent with their respective national identities ...”**

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In closing, let me reaffirm what UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated at the 54th Meeting of the Commission on Human Rights in Geneva in March this year that “We cannot afford indifference, individually or collectively” on the issues of human rights and democracy. In our own way, via our own channels, in our different capacities, we should endeavour to promote these issues.

And I am sure you have questions about what Thailand is doing about things happening around us. Please be assured that we are trying to do what we can, in our own way, and according to our own capacity.

If we do not care about others, then who is going to care about us when we need them? If we do not look beyond our interests, then who is going to stand up and defend us when the time comes? Foreign policy is not about protecting mere national interests but, in this increasingly borderless world, foreign policy involves domestic, transnational and global interests. Idealistic, some may say, but would it not be better to strive for the ideal and achieve the best possible outcome, instead of setting our sights lower and attain even less? This is the value of the song – the Impossible Dream.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As this year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, I fervently hope that human rights will be further respected, protected and promoted, and that human rights will find additional ways and means to express itself in all languages, in all cultures and in all societies.

And, Ms. Bungarten, what a better way to celebrate your own victory in the recent German elections than to sponsor this international seminar on the promotion and protection of human rights.

Congratulations again, and thank you.

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*AMITY
EQUALITY
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REGIONALISM
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MODERATION*

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