

H.E. Mr. Tanee Sangrat
Ambassador of the Kingdom of Thailand to the United States of America
at a Reception to celebrate the National Day of the Kingdom of Thailand
Fairmont Hotel, 30 November 2023

Congresswoman Michelle Park Steel,
Congressman James Moylan,
Congressman Eric Swalwell,
The Honorable Erika Moritsugu, Deputy Assistant to the President and Asian American and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Senior Liaison,
Dr. Mira Rapp-Hooper, Special Assistant to the President and NSC Senior Director for East Asia and Oceania,
Ambassador Esther Coopersmith,

Excellencies and Distinguished Guests,

Sawasdee and good evening! Thank you for joining us tonight to celebrate the National Day of the Kingdom of Thailand in commemoration of the Birthday Anniversary of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej The Great, Thailand's Father's Day, and World Soil Day.

As the US' oldest ally in Asia, I am proud of the progress we made to strengthen the alliance. On March 20 this year, the exact date that we signed the treaty of Amity and Cooperation 190 years ago, the Embassy and the Asia Foundation organized the first in a series of roundtable discussions on the State of Our Alliance. Let me share some accomplishments with you tonight.

Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

A-Alliance

On our alliance: the Congress has successfully established the U.S.- Thai Alliance Caucus. My utmost appreciation goes to the Chair of the Caucus, **Congresswoman Michelle Park Steel** and her team for their tremendous support. I am also grateful to all the members, especially those who are here tonight namely, **Congressman James Moylan** and **Congressman Eric Swalwell** and some who are not able to join, especially the Co-Chair, **Congressman Scott Peters**. This Caucus will be the main mechanism for the U.S. Congress to create win-win cooperation that benefits Thai and American peoples and the region.

Just a couple of weeks ago, my Prime Minister had a productive engagement with President Biden during the APEC Economic Leaders' Week (AELW). And allow me to congratulate the US on its successful APEC Host Year as well as completion of certain IPEF pillars.

We are now planning the Official Visit of our Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs upon the invitation of Secretary Blinken, which will pave way for the Official visit of the Prime Minister early next year.

Our leaders will deliberate enhanced cooperations on both bilaterally and multilaterally, particularly in Mekong sub-region and across the Indo-Pacific. We will translate the Communiqué on Strategic Alliance and Partnership and the MOU on promoting supply chain resilience that were signed last year into tangible actions and elevate our alliance to a higher plane.

S- Economic Sustainability

On the economic side: **Our bilateral trade** of 74 billion dollars last year, expanded 24 %, with the US as Thailand's second largest trading partner for the first time in 15 years.

On the investment front, FDI from the U.S. surpassed 1.1 billion dollars last year and now ranks No. 3 on Thailand's investment billboard. Simultaneously, Thai investments in the US are on the rise, reaching about 13 billion dollars in almost 30 states, creating more than 60,000 jobs for Americans, from food processing in Ohio and sustainable shrimp farming in Florida to renewable energy in Texas and petrochemical in South Carolina.

The new Srettha Government puts great emphasis on reinvigorating growth. In just three months, my Prime Minister visited the US twice to attend the UNGA, APEC, and IPEF. In New York, he connected with key US businesses and reaffirm Thailand's commitment to elevating Thai - US investment partnership. His message to the US business community in New York and San Francisco was clear and I quote:

Quote

“Thailand is more than open and ready to be a trusted reliable partner for your secured, diverse, and resilient supply chain.”

Unquote

Last month, the Embassy and the USABC organized the second roundtable discussion on how we can work together for a Sustainable Business Future. Like the US, the Thai government is fully committed to sustainable and inclusive growth through green economy and energy transition, while doubling our efforts to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 and net-zero GHG emissions by 2065.

Thailand aspires to become a leading clean energy producer in the region with clean energy proportion target of 50% by 2050. We are a top ten automotive producer and the 2nd largest Tesla market in Asia. We aim at becoming a global EV hub and have so far enhanced several policies and incentives to support EV manufacturers and relevant ecosystems. We welcome more investment from the US and expertise in the areas of clean energy, digital economy, and creative economy.

On a lighter note, I am pleased that Thailand is selected as the host of the Annual Meetings of the World Bank Group and the IMF in 2026, in Bangkok. We thank our friends and the WB and IMF members for the vote of confidence. As one of the top tourist and MICE destinations, Thailand has welcomed 24 million visitors so far, well on her way to the goal of reaching 25 million tourists this year.

P-Participation/People to People

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On people to people: the highlight of this year's commemoration of 190 years of Thai-US diplomatic relations was the Sawasdee DC Festival on 2 July, on the National Mall. Thai cultures with performances by Thai Singers, dancers, Muay Thai, Nuad Thai were on full display. We drew more than 30,000 participants to the event.

We wouldn't be able to execute such an event without the synergy of our Thai Communities across the U.S., which represents the largest Thai diaspora in the world. I am very proud of their support and always willing to empower them in every way we can. I am very happy to announce that our Thai Restaurant owners, led by Mrs. Sayomporn Srivara, successfully established the Thai Restaurant Association of America.

Earlier this month, my home town Chiang-Mai Governor and Austin Mayor signed an MOU to launch Sister Cities initiative, which will help foster cooperation in education, SMEs and Startups and bring our peoples closer.

The oldest ties between our peoples, perhaps which were the Siamese Twins "Eng-Chang Bunker," who came to the U.S. in 1829 and later settled in Mount Airy, North Carolina. Today, we have Ms. Tanya Jones, the great-great-granddaughter of Eng Bunker joining us tonight. Through Ms. Tanya's dedication, we will soon have a museum telling this fascinating history in Mount Airy, which is a reflection of the close bonds between Thais and Americans.

Closing

Allow me to end my remarks with a quote from the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej The Great addressing the Joint Session of the US Congress in 1960:

Quote

"In view of the present world tension and the feeling of uncertainty apparent everywhere, is my sincere feeling that the time is ripe for an even closer cooperation. It will demonstrate to the world that we are one in purpose and conviction, and it can only lead to one thing-mutual benefit."

Unquote

His Majesty's speech was a great reminder of the current international situation and of what Thailand and the US can achieve together and will continue to achieve in the near future.

I thank all my staff, community members and contributors who made tonight possible and thank you again for your presence on this auspicious occasion.