

Remarks by H.E. Mr. Vijavat Isarabhakdi, Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of Thailand at a Reception to Celebrate the 190th Anniversary of Thailand–U.S. Diplomatic Relations, 1 February 2023

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**Remarks by
H.E. Mr. Vijavat Isarabhakdi**

**Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of Thailand
at a Reception to Celebrate the 190th Anniversary of
Thailand – U.S. Diplomatic Relations**

At the U.S. Ambassador’s Residence, 1 February 2023

Ambassador Godec,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests,

- Sawasdee krub and good evening. I am deeply honored and delighted to join you all today - to be a part of this special event to mark the beginning of the celebrations of the 190th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Thailand and the United States of America.
- Having spent many memorable years in the United States -- as a student and Fulbright scholar, a Congressional Fellow, a First Secretary and, in the twilight of my career, as Thai Ambassador to the United States -- I have had the immense personal pleasure of witnessing the partnership between our two nations grow from strength to strength.
- Our long history of formal diplomatic relations began almost two centuries ago when Thailand became your first treaty partner and, as we like to put it, the “first friend” of the United States in the region through the signing of the 1833 Treaty of Amity and Commerce. Our two countries committed to fostering our partnership – in the immortal words of the Treaty – “as long as heaven and earth shall endure”. And I believe that today we have truly turned this vision into reality.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- Throughout the years, our two countries have remained great and reliable friends, strong allies, and strategic partners. Over the past few years, we have even witnessed increasing dynamism in Thai - U.S. relations. Last year, in particular, proved to be a very productive one for our bilateral relations. We welcomed the successful visits of Vice President Harris, Secretary Blinken, Secretary Austin, and many others, as well as the signing of the

Thailand-U.S. Communique on Strategic Alliance and Partnership, setting out our common goals and strategic directions to drive our cooperation forward well into the next century of our relations.

- This occasion of our 190th anniversary is a golden opportunity, not only to look back at our past accomplishments but also to set our sights forward towards the future directions of our cooperation, which have long benefited both our countries and peoples, as well as the region at large.
- Our comprehensive security partnership has contributed to peace and stability in Southeast Asia and beyond. The annual Cobra Gold exercise remains the largest joint multinational military exercise in the region. The first ever Thailand-U.S. Strategic and Defense Dialogue was held last year. These are all testimony to our robust security ties and ongoing commitment to our strategic partnership and alliance.
- Equally important, our economic ties have played a key part in the prosperity of both our countries and peoples. Our bilateral trade has continued to grow despite the global pandemic, demonstrating the resilience of our supply chains. Last year, the United States became Thailand's second-largest trading partner, with total trade of over 65 billion dollars per annum. Thailand remains a strong investment and production base for the U.S. private sector in the region. At the same time, Thai investment in the United States has continued to grow and has contributed to more than 70,000 jobs across 26 states.
- Going forward, our shared priority is to promote supply chain resilience and investment cooperation, particularly on clean energy, electric vehicles (EV), smart industry, digital economy, and medical and comprehensive healthcare, among others.
- Our cooperation has also played a key role in social development and the betterment of our peoples' lives. Our long-standing collaboration in the field of public health is an excellent example. More than three years since the onset of the pandemic, Thailand continues to appreciate the partnership and support that we received from the United States on COVID-19 response, which have been a major factor in our efforts toward reopening the country and achieving economic recovery.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- Our close people-to-people ties have long provided a solid foundation for our relations. Our strong partnership is essentially built upon the goodwill and understanding between our peoples. As His Majesty the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej said during his historic 1960 address to the Joint Session of the U.S. Congress: (and I quote) "the friendship of one government for another is an important thing. But it is the friendship of one people for another that assuredly guarantees peace and progress".
- Today, more than six decades later, we are pleased to welcome over one million Americans travelling to Thailand each year. Many have chosen Thailand as their second home. Likewise, the United States has long been home to the largest Thai overseas community, including a large number of Thai professionals and students.
- I do hope that this 190th anniversary will be an opportunity to bring our peoples from all walks of life even closer together, especially through educational, professional, and cultural exchanges. In my capacity as Chair of Fulbright Thailand, I pledge to work closely with my American colleagues in this regard.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- Through our joint endeavors, we have achieved many laudable accomplishments together. While we look on the past with appreciation and pride, we must also look to the future, building upon our past successes, to further strengthen our partnership through friendship, understanding, commitment and mutual respect.
- In this regard, I would like to reaffirm Thailand's strong commitment to working with the United States to further strengthen the Thailand-U.S. partnership well into the next decade towards the bicentennial of the relations between both our countries.
- On this note, I wish to conclude by expressing my sincere thanks to Ambassador Godec and the U.S. Embassy, not only for hosting today's event, but also for the great work and numerous initiatives for cooperation and other events throughout the year, with a view to commemorating this milestone occasion. We start today with the results of the logo contest, and I am as excited as all of you to see the logo and meet with the winner of the competition this evening.

Thank you very much indeed. ขอบคุณครับ

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