

CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSION AND EXPECTATION OF FUTURE COURSE IN THE
RELATIONS BETWEEN THAILAND AND CAMBODIA

Prime Minister Thaksin could never have imagined that the end of his glorious Thai Rak Thai Party, which won the 6 February 2005 general elections by a landslide victory, and his downfall would come so soon. The other side of the double-edged sword was that he and his clique in the Thai Rak Thai Party had to struggle against the ever-growing public sentiment, which was spearheaded by the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD), vis-à-vis his business scandal and style of administration. The Thaksin Shinawatra's administration came to an end when the military staged a coup d'état on 19 September 2006 while Prime Minister Thaksin was attending the United Nations General Assembly in New York and ahead of the PAD's mass rally.

I. Application of theoretical framework to analyse the Thai - Cambodian relations under Thaksin's Administration

The phenomenon of the relations between Thailand and Cambodia under the Thaksin Shinawatra's administration can be simply explained by the "conflict theory" which is used as theoretical framework and tool to prove the hypotheses of this thesis. The occurrence of the anti-Thai violence on 29 January 2003 can be described as the interplay between the domestic politics and international relations as opined by Mr. Pitsanu Suvanajata, Deputy Director-General of the Department of East Asian Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand.¹ It was obvious that the Cambodian leader and many sides in Cambodia tried to make use of the untrustworthiness, prejudice and discord between the Thais and the Cambodians as political instrument in an effort to win the political support from the Cambodian people during the political campaign ahead of the general elections scheduled for 27 July 2003. The deed was not accomplished but instead it ended up with failure and caused great

¹ Interview with Mr. Pitsanu Suvanajata, Bangkok, March 3, 2008.

damage in the relations and cooperation between the two countries. Moreover, according to the process of international conflict approach as studied and proposed by Edward E. Azar, if the Cambodian Government chose to neglect the Thai Government's request to control the situation, both countries were on the verge of conflict, or probably war, since the Thai Government had duty to protect lives and properties of its nationals abroad by all means.

Moreover, the structural - functional analysis is helpful in making us understand that in the past, when Cambodia had internal problems such as lack of national cohesion and unity as the results of political struggle and war, the Cambodian leaders opted to turn their citizens' interest to international relations as is seen in the case of the conflict between Thailand and Cambodia over the issue of the ownership of Preah Vihear Temple in late 1950s to early 1960s, which finally led to the severance of diplomatic relations by Cambodia. The said analysis is still useful in the explanation of conflict between Cambodia and her neighboring countries, namely Thailand and Vietnam on the issue of unresolved land and maritime boundary lines since respectable figures of Cambodia and some Cambodian leaders try to politicize the boundary issues to draw attention and gain support from the public.

For the social psychological analysis, it is also beneficial for the study of the cause of the anti-Thai violence on 29 January 2003 in accordance with the frustration-aggression theory as proposed by John Dollard and Leonard W. Doob that "the occurrence of aggressive behavior always pre-supposes the existence of frustration and, on the other hand, that the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression". Most of the Cambodians are made to believe that they were taken advantage of and exploited by the Thais throughout history since Cambodia is inferior to Thailand in many aspects. Such feelings, aggravated by many matters such as sense of political, economic, social and cultural domination and roused by the acclamation of the Cambodian crowd in front of the Royal Thai Embassy, had developed into frustration and aggression which ended in the burning of the Thai Embassy and the destruction of Thai nationals' properties in Phnom Penh.

However, we should take the observation of Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff who proposed that the political dimension should be taken into account in the analysis of the cause of conflict rather than using exclusively the behavioral and psychological

approaches. For example, the reason the Cambodian leader let the protest occur until it developed into uncontrollable degree, the “invisible” hands that intensified the situation which nearly led to the conflict between the two nations, and the royal pardon given to the persons who were actively involved in the violence at the beginning.

After thorough study and research, it can be concluded that this thesis answers the questions that as appear in Chapter 1, and is able to prove the proposed hypothesis that “The Thai - Cambodian relations under Thaksin Shinawatra’s administration has reflected the sense of mistrust, discord, prejudice and domination as a consequence of history, nationalism and socio-economic disparity, eventually leading to misunderstanding and untrustworthiness between the people of the two countries” is true.

II. Assessment of Thailand’s foreign policy towards Cambodia during Thaksin’s administration

In general, the conduct of foreign policy towards Cambodia under Thaksin’s administration encountered changes at certain levels as a result of various factors, both internal and external. Compared with that of the Chartchai Choonhavan’s administration which successfully boosted Thailand’s role vis-à-vis neighboring countries under the policy of turning the battlefield into the market place that eventually led to diplomatic rapprochements between Thailand and the three countries in the Indochinese region at the later stage. The goal of Thaksin’s administration was nearly the same, specifically after the anti-Thai violence in 2003, as it heavily exerted effort to firmly establish trust and mutual confidence between Thailand and Cambodia (as well as other neighboring countries) through various means and mechanisms, particularly ACMECS, cultural cooperation and assistance in numerous forms as this thesis has tried to elaborate in detail in earlier chapters. Therefore, it can be pinpointed that Thailand’s foreign policy towards Cambodia during Thaksin’s administration was rather successful in achieving its goals, although it was severely affected by political and social fluctuation and uncertainty in both countries. In

conclusion, I would like to summarize Thailand's foreign policy towards Cambodia under the Thaksin Shinawatra's administration as follows:

Firstly, Prime Minister Thaksin himself, who emerged as one of the most successful businessmen and Thailand's richest person, played a major role in initiating and guiding his government's foreign policy. His vast experiences in the political field and business world had been utilized and blended into the state affairs as it was clearly seen in his government's business-driven and CEO-ambassador-styled diplomacy. Thailand's economic role had been extravagantly boosted by his initiatives on the establishment of Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), Asian Bond to help Asian countries be capable of coping with future economic turbulence that is similar to 1997 financial crisis, BIMST-EC as well as ACMECS in particular. Some of his initiatives like ACD and Asian Bond have not yet been put into substantive practice, which is due to the fact that they face uncertain future after the forced termination of the Thaksin's administration, and many sides are doubtful about their effective impact. Moreover, some believe that they are just political instruments used by Prime Minister Thaksin to boost his prestigious role, and help promote him as candidate as a new leader of Southeast Asia, replacing retired Prime Ministers Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore and Mahathir bin Mohamad of Malaysia.

Secondly, Prime Minister Thaksin had linked domestic affairs with foreign affairs with the ultimate goal of having them complement each other, as it clearly appeared in the government's dual track policy. According to the study, we have learnt that the Thaksin's government much emphasized the building of a strong domestic foundation for strengthened national economy development with special attention given to the fostering of the grassroots economy, whereas, it promoted the export-led growth sector and linked the Thai economy with other countries through trade and investment cooperation. The said development strategy moved forward under the concept of "Local Link - Global Reach" by using the concept of CEO Governors and CEO Ambassadors as core mechanisms. A prominent example of the implementation of this strategy was the promotion of One Tambon One Product (OTOP) abroad, via the embassies and consulates-general, claiming that it was an effective way to help eradicate poverty and generate income among poor people living in the countryside. Another example in this regard was the promotion of

cooperation between the Royal Thai Embassies in neighboring countries and provinces in the border areas with a view to ensuring the close relations and mutual understanding between Thailand and neighboring countries, particularly Lao PDR and Cambodia.

Thirdly, Dr. Surakiart Sathirathai, Minister of Foreign Affairs during Prime Minister Thaksin's first term, was able to work hand in hand and play a role in the same direction with Prime Minister Thaksin. He was also regarded as a right-hand man and a key man as foreign minister who played an active role in pushing forward and translating government's major foreign policies into substantive practice. Moreover, he could mobilize tangible support from many countries in realizing the government's outstanding policies such as ACD, Asian Bond, APEC Summit in 2003 which was attended by leaders from 21 countries and economic territories, the celebration of 60th anniversary of His Majesty the King's accession to the throne in June 2006 which was attended by monarchs or representatives from 26 countries, including His Majesty Preah Bat Samdech Preah Norodom Sihamoni, King of Cambodia, as guests of the Thai Government, etc.

In the aftermath of the anti-Thai violence in Phnom Penh on 29 January 2003, Dr. Surakiart also played a major role in acquiring compensations from the Cambodian Government as an expense for the reconstruction of the Royal Thai Embassy, for damages occurred to the Thai officials and private sector in Cambodia as well as plotting the normalization process of diplomatic relations between Thailand and Cambodia after it was downgraded to the level of Chargé d'Affaires. He also organized the SARS Summit in Bangkok in April 2003 during which opened an opportunity for Prime Minister Thaksin to sell his idea of the Economic Cooperation Strategy (ECS) to his counterparts from Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar. Prime Minister Thaksin's proposal was agreeable and finally led to the organizing of the First ECS Summit Meeting in Bagan, Myanmar in November 2003 which gave birth to the Bagan Declaration as framework for cooperation on this regard and the alteration of its name from ECS to ACMECS at the later stage.

In the second term of Thaksin's administration, Dr. Surakiart was promoted to the position of Deputy Prime Minister and assigned to take care of foreign affairs which was officially run by his successor, Dr. Kantathi

Suphamongkhon. The said observation was supported by the fact that Dr. Surakiart was appointed as a Chairman of the Committee on the Development of Cooperation with Neighbors which was mainly responsible for making decisions, formulating guidelines of cooperation, overseeing the development projects with neighboring countries, all of which were important agendas in the Thaksin administration.

Fourthly, many policies of the Thai Government had won support from many countries including Cambodia, namely transformation of Thailand's role from aid recipient to aid donor, leading to the enhancement of various programs of cooperation with neighboring countries under the theme dubbed "Prosper thy Neighbors". The said cooperation included the development of roads and infrastructure in the form of the provision of grant aids and soft loans, extension of technical assistance in the fields of public health, education, science and technology, plenty of program activities under the ACMECS, etc. This effort of the Thai Government also reflected its determination to elevate its position to the upper level and in the meantime try to win the heart of and achieve better positioning and understanding in the eyes of people of neighboring countries.

Fifthly, mutual interest played an important role and became top agenda in the Thai - Cambodian relations. It was evident that the Cambodian Government wished to receive a great deal of assistance and cooperation from Thailand, covering all fields ranging from national development, poverty eradication, development of infrastructure including transportation network and electricity, border areas development, employment of migrant workers, technical cooperation, etc. Thailand has vigorously responded to the Cambodian request by providing assistance in conformity with its resource capacity and strength, with the hope that Cambodia, in return, shall help Thailand solve existing problems, and that development in Cambodia shall serve as an economic dam to help filter all social evils that may negatively affect Thailand. In the meantime, there are vital problems that have not yet been properly and permanently settled, particularly the huge imbalance of trade, demarcation of land boundary, delineation of maritime boundary and joint development in the maritime claimed area to the overlapping continental shelf which has barred the two countries from having a great opportunity to explore and exploit petroleum resources under the seas as well as develop fishery-related industries. The

said unsettled issues are considered as time bombs that may explode some time and become future sources of mistrust and misunderstanding, untrustworthiness, discord, and prejudice between the two countries since they involve huge economic interests.

III. Expectation of future course in the relations between Thailand and Cambodia

As I have mentioned earlier, since there are still flaws and blind spots in the relations between Thailand and Cambodia, it is therefore appropriate to propose possible policy guidelines for the promotion of closer relations and better mutual understanding between the peoples of the two countries as follows:

1. Help Cambodia to achieve its national development goals

Cambodia is standing at a critical juncture since it emerged from a post-conflict situation just more than a decade ago and moved closer to a more normal development paradigm. The increasing engagement of Cambodia at regional and global levels has reduced political and social uncertainty, which has contributed to the improvement of predictability. However, Cambodia's economy is still small and vulnerable. Stable economic growth at around 6 - 8 percent since the late 1990s has been heavily dependent on a few sectors such as garments and tourism, which are vulnerable to adverse changes in the global market and political conditions. If Cambodia is unable to diversify and broaden its competitiveness, the government's top policy for sound economic growth and motivation for poverty reduction could be seriously undermined.

To this effect, Thailand is in a strong position to cooperate with Cambodia to design joint strategies with a view to mitigating the negative effects originating from all issues by focusing Thailand's assistance on specific areas that Thailand is keen through training programs and transfer of know-how and valuable experiences on national development which is in line with the Cambodian agendas and policies, notably the Rectangular Strategy which was initiated by Samdech Hun Sen (See ANNEX 10). Such cooperation may include the strengthening of the effectiveness of governmental administration and the promotion of good governance which is essential

for the successful development and building up public accountability, improvement of agriculture sector, enhancement of productivity, tourism and natural environment and market accessibility, infrastructure and power development, development of private sector including small and medium-sized enterprises in particular.

2. Emphasize human resource development

As Cambodia is thriving along a path of development, there is a need for the Cambodian Government to prioritize its human resource development so that state mechanisms could function effectively and move toward the right direction this would benefit people at every corner of the societies and lead to fewer social conflicts that might be caused by malfunction or mismanagement of Cambodian authorities. To reach this target, Thailand is capable of providing adequate technical assistance to support human resource development and institutional capacity building through various bilateral projects as well as tri-lateral cooperation with other developed countries or international organizations.

3. Strengthen relations and cooperation under the existing mechanisms

Cambodia became a member of ASEAN in 1999 after a few years of endeavor. ASEAN once served as cooperation framework that put pressure on Vietnam to withdraw its troops from Cambodia and helped mobilized assistance from the international community to promote peace and stability in Cambodia. Although there are new frameworks emerging since the end of 1990s, ASEAN still plays a major role in keeping all members closer and having mutual understanding through its various mechanisms and cooperation activities. The most important is that all members should cooperate to realize the ASEAN Vision to build the ASEAN Community within 2020 as stipulated in the Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (Bali Concord II) signed on 1 October 2003 in Bali, Indonesia which lays down the pillars for the ASEAN single community by 2020 namely:

(1) ASEAN Security Community (ASC) to enable collective efforts to combat terrorism and other transnational crimes in the region so that all members shall live in peace and harmony;

(2) ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) to envisage a single market and production base duplicating the Euro-style economic integration of the 1970s characterized by the free flow of goods, services, investment and freer flow of capital by 2020;

(3) ASEAN Socio-cultural Community (ASCC) to visualize Southeast Asia bonded together in partnership as a community of caring societies.²

To this effect, Thailand and Cambodia can closely cooperate under the ASEAN framework in order to join hands with other members to achieve the ASEAN Vision 2020 so that ASEAN can develop into a full-fledged community that would be beneficial for the promotion of mutual understanding as it once was .

Moreover, there are other frameworks, both at bilateral and regional levels, that Thailand and Cambodia can substantively cooperate for mutual benefits and closer relations such as:

(1) The Greater Mekong Sub-region which emphasizes the development of human resource and infrastructure, particularly transportation network, in a sustainable manner;

(2) Cooperation under the theme “Two Kingdoms One Destination” which would enhance capacity of the two countries in the promotion of world-class tourism due to the fact that Thailand and Cambodia have monarchs and homes of famous World Cultural Heritage sites, particularly Angkor Wat which was once known as one of the world’s seven wonders. This type of cooperation may extend to the development of Emerald Triangle between Thailand, Cambodia and Lao PDR which will become a unique ecological tourist destination since it is a meeting point of the boundary lines of the three countries in the same manner of current cooperation between Vietnam, Cambodia and Lao PDR under the Triangle of Growth. To reach this end, the governments of the three countries should expedite the demarcation of

² Association of Southeast Asian Nations Official Website, “Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (Bali Concord II),” <http://www.aseansec.org/15159.htm> (Accessed March 14, 2007).

the land boundary, de-mining and production of integrated plan of development in the said areas.

4. Revitalize various programs under the framework of ACMECS

Cambodia is among Thailand's immediate neighbors that showed strong support to the establishment of the Ayeyawady - Chao Phraya - Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS) at the beginning. Since cooperation under the framework of ACMECS comprises a great deal of activities and programs that are most beneficial to the development of the living conditions of people and the generation of employment in the border areas, Thailand and Cambodia therefore should join hands seriously in translating their cooperation under this framework into substantive practice. The said cooperation includes contract farming, relocation of industrial estates to the border areas which would help mitigate the issue of illegal migrant workers in Thailand, the purchase of agricultural products at 0 percent or a special rate of import duty offered by the Thai side which would help improve the situation of imbalance of trade volume between Thailand and Cambodia, the development of infrastructure particularly roads, electricity and energy, irrigation, capacity building and transfer of technologies concerned, and cooperation on healthcare service and tourism, etc.

5. Promote economic partnership through trade and investment

As Thailand gains advantage from having geographical proximity and easy accessibility to Cambodia by land and Cambodia is in need of foreign income to be used for national development, Thailand is therefore necessary to enhance its investment in Cambodia. Since Thailand's investment in Cambodia, such as big hotels, telecommunication companies, restaurants, casinos and consumer products, it has been as a creation of inequality and a feeling among Cambodians that they are under the Thai economic and cultural influence and domination. To settle such feelings and help reinforce the good image of Thailand's investment in Cambodia, the government should look deeply into the possibility of promoting the investments that

are more beneficial to the national development of Cambodia as well as joint ventures that open an opportunity for participation from the Cambodian side. Moreover, the Thai business circle in Cambodia should seriously pay attention to social investment by returning partial profits to help develop the community and its local people in certain forms such as the development or improvement of infrastructure, schools, temples, healthcare service, the protection and conservation of the natural environment and culture, the provision of scholarships, etc. All in all, special and greater cross-border market access, tax privileges and other preferential treatments provided and extended to Cambodia shall be beneficial to the promotion of trade competitiveness and economic growth of Cambodia. Moreover, the Thai businesspersons have strong potentials to enhance their roles in terms of trade and investment which would be beneficial to national development of Cambodia.

6. Streamline Thailand's policy towards Cambodia

Since Thailand and Cambodia were caught in the middle of longstanding historical misunderstanding, mistrust, discord, prejudice, the two countries therefore find it hard to come to term with each other. It is known that Cambodians have long felt that they are inferior to Thailand in terms of socio - economic development. To prevent the dispute from escalating, the two countries must try to erase the sense of prejudice and misunderstanding, untrustworthiness, discord, prejudice between the two people. Works or actions that may add fuel to the fire must be avoided and the Thai Government should seek cooperation from the Cambodian side to effectively cope with unforeseen and unknown circumstances that may negatively affect the good relations and understanding between people of both sides in the near future.

Thailand therefore has to address and prioritize all existing issues and make a pro-active determination to settle all pending issues properly and peacefully with Cambodia, by balancing between national interest and mutual benefits, particularly the demarcation of land boundary, the delineation of maritime boundary, the cooperation on the development and renovation of Preah Vihear Temple which was listed as UNESCO's World Heritage Site on 8 July 2008 for mutual interest and common heritage of mankind as well as the solution to a huge number of illegal

Cambodian migrant workers in Thailand. Thailand and Cambodia have to accept similarities and differences that may exist in the political system, social value, culture and level of economic development and identify their requirement for policy recorection for mutual benefits. To reach this goal, both sides should work together to promote a positive attitude among the Thai - Cambodian people through various programs of cooperation and exchange of visits among Thai - Cambodian people, to build up relations at people-to-people level, to conduct policy and cooperation in all areas with caution.

Mr. Pitsanu Suvanajata, Deputy Director-General, Department of East Asian Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand gave interesting recommendations on the policy guideline towards Cambodia, that the best approach for the promotion of mutual understanding should be the grassroots-based. Moreover, as Cambodia wants the par-on-par relations, therefore the new approach on bilateral relations should be created. A modified “Prosper thy Neighbors” should be introduced whereby “Culture of Surrender” to neighboring countries must discontinue. On the other hand, a “No-cross” line must be set up as well as preparedness of Thailand to perform whatever against any intolerable actions that might be undertaken by her neighbors. The pattern of relations between Malaysia and Singapore should be studied as a model.³

7. Make use of local people in the border area communities

In Thailand, there are a great number of people of Cambodian ethnic origin who understand Khmer and Cambodian ways of life. Those people have mingled along the Thai - Cambodia borders for hundreds of years, particularly in the southern part of Korat Plateau, and inherited local knowledge about their “homeland” and “neighbor”. Many of them share with the people living on the other side of present-day boundary lines the same myths, folklores and other stories and knowledge. The outstanding example of the said asset are the Khmer-styled Prasats that scattering in the areas of the lower Northeastern part of Thailand, Khmer dialects, art and culture like “Kantrum” (กันตรึม) which is a type of a traditional fast folk music played by

³ Interview with Mr. Pitsanu Suvanajata, Bangkok, March 3, 2008.

Khmer ethnics living in the lower part of northeastern Thailand near the Thai - Cambodian border areas.⁴ Quite clearly, this tradition of local understandings does not divide the world into the cartographic nations and regions as it appears at present. Unfortunately, those myths, elements of folklore and traditional stories have not been considered proper academic knowledge until recently. The government privileges the knowledge of the Thai centric position over the sub-ordination of its neighbors and marginalizes local knowledge. Now it is timely to seriously promote the local-traditional assets in an academic manner, which can be done under the framework of cultural mechanisms or cooperation between universities located at the border provinces.⁵ The research should link them with those in Cambodia and disseminate them to the Thai - Cambodian public. Therefore, the said assets are useful for serving as meaningful medium for the promotion of better understanding between people of the two countries at considerable level. To achieve this goal, concerted effort and cooperation from all sides concerned should build unity, harmony and promote cooperation in recognition that peace, happiness, and the well-being of the two countries can also be realized by the participation of all Thai people living in the border areas.

8. Identify the historical incorrectness to tune up mutual understanding

One of the factors that breed misunderstanding, untrustworthiness, discord, prejudice and mistrust between people of the two countries is inaccuracy of historical textbooks. To wipe out such source of hatred and discord, the Thai and Cambodian Governments should seriously take into consideration the comparison of historical events appearing in the textbooks or even the Royal Chronicles of both sides, which includes the birth of nation-state as well as in the case of Phraya Lovek and even the Legend of Preah Ko Preah Keo. Then address their differences and gradually disseminate the outcomes of the study to the acknowledgement of the public in the

⁴ Wikipedia, "Kantrum," <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kantrum> (Accessed March 18, 2007).

⁵ This interesting idea was proposed by Thongchai Winichakul, "Trying to Locate Southeast Asia from Its Navel: Where is Southeast Asian Studies in Thailand?," in *Locating Southeast Asia: Geographies of Knowledge and Politics of Space*, eds. Paul H. Kratoska, Remco Raben and Henk Schulte Nordholt (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2005), pp. 124 - 126.

form of academic research. It is very difficult to correct the elements of the said sources at the earliest stage since it may be met with disagreement and resistance from many sides, particularly groups of scholars and nationalists. This is important and could be put into effective practice under the Joint Committee for the Promotion of Cultural Cooperation between Thailand and Cambodia as well as independent cooperation between Thai - Cambodian universities and academic circles.

The most important thing is that both sides should join hands to make understanding with the public that people living in this region are “kin” and “relatives”, not just brothers or sisters. If this is done properly, I think that the degree of nationalism and hatred shall subside meaningfully.

9. Pass on Thailand’s experience on sufficiency economy to Cambodia

As Cambodia just emerged from the post conflict era is and on its way to cope with poverty and national development, Thailand may be in a position to disseminate successful experience on the sufficiency economy to Cambodia. The Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy (PSE) was initiated and carried out by His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej for more than 25 years to help Thai people at all levels, ranging from families, communities, and nations, to learn about a balanced way of living or the middle path as an appropriate conduct in various aspects of life. It aims to help people better meet the challenges arising from globalization and to achieve sustainable development. Thailand has applied the concept of Sufficiency Economy since the economic crisis in 1997 aiming to create balance and sustainability in various areas of agriculture, community empowerment, poverty reduction, sustainability in economic growth and competitiveness. The gradual recovery of the Thai economy has made fruitful result owing basically to such application.⁶ With this effort, the United Nations, by Mr. Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary General, had presented to His Majesty the King of Thailand the United Nations Development Programme's First Human Development Lifetime Achievement

⁶ Department of Information, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, Press Release, “The Ministerial Conference on Alternative Development: Sufficiency Economy 8 - 10 November 2004,” November 10, 2004, <http://www.mfa.go.th/web/200.php?id=3184> (Accessed February 4, 2007).

Award. In his speech, Mr. Annan said that His Majesty the King's "Sufficiency Economy" philosophy, which emphasizes moderation, responsible consumption, and resilience to external shocks, is of great relevance worldwide during these times of rapid globalization and it reinforces the United Nation's efforts to promote a people-centered and sustainable path of development.⁷

In this connection, if Thailand can share its successful experience and best practices in the application of the sufficiency economy in real life situations to Cambodia, particularly in the areas of agriculture, integrated farming system, poverty reduction, rural development, generation of extra income by producing handicrafts from locally available materials for home uses and sales, etc. it would greatly help Cambodia to shortcut its endeavor in this regard and assist in the eradication all of social burdens that Thailand has to shoulder at the grassroots.

10. Have a close relations with Cambodian younger generations

In 2000, Cambodia had a population of 12.7 million people which increased to 14.4 million people in 2006.⁸ A large number of the population under 30 years old with a good educational background is growing dramatically. It is interesting that they were born at the time that Cambodia is in the national and democratic construction process. This is very important in the sense that Cambodia's younger generation has become a vital resource and they shall play a greater role in the national development in future. Therefore, Thailand should lay out an appropriate strategy to promote the close relations and good understanding with those from the Cambodian younger generation. This could be done through various ways and means such as enhancement of educational and technical cooperation, promotion of exchange activities in cultural and tourism fields, etc. This undertaking is not only beneficial to the promotion of closer relations between people of the two countries in the future but will also help reduce the sense of prejudice, hatred and discord between people of the two countries in the longer term.

⁷ The Nation On-line, May 26, 2006, http://www.nationmultimedia.com/2006/05/26/headlines/headlines_30005016.php (Accessed February 4, 2007).

⁸ The World Bank Group in Cambodia, "Cambodia Data Profile," April 2007, <http://devdata.worldbank.org/external/CPProfile.asp?CCODE=KHM&PTYPE=CP> (Accessed August 7, 2007).