

SPEECH BY HIS MAJESTY KING Bhumibol of Thailand
AT THE STATE BANQUET HELD AT PARLIAMENT HOUSE,
CANBERRA ON 28TH AUGUST, 1962.

I am going to dispense myself of calling you Excellencies and so on (hear, hear) (applause) because it takes time.

I just wish to thank you for this demonstration, just to tell you how much we are touched. And we are very grateful to the Government and people of Australia for the warm welcome.

Thank you for the kind words, Mr. Menzies, and may I add that we have advanced our Visit because no Visit would be complete without meeting you here.

And thank you also, Mr. Whitlam, for your kind words.

I will tell you something about Thailand, that "Thai" means freedom, but before that, I will have to tell you about a little conversation we had just now, Mr. Prime Minister and myself, as to how it comes that we had to put on this very stiff costume (Laughter) and I think that many of you would agree with me that it is really uncomfortable. (Hear, hear) (Applause).

But I also had to mention something else first as a politeness, but not only as a politeness, that we are very sensible to the kind attention of His Excellency the Administrator, Sir Dallas and Lady Brooks (Hear, hear) (Applause). They have greeted us in a very kindly way and we are really grateful.

It has been a long desire for us to visit this great country of Australia. We have heard so much about the beauty of the land - its flora and fauna - and above all, that this country has so many resources, natural resources, and with these natural resources, Australians have made much progress with hard work, and now Australia has become the greatest nation, the greatest industrial nation, in South East Asia. (Applause)

Mr. Prime Minister, you have said just now that we have many things in common -- the Thai nation and the Australian nation -- and would add something else, that we have also the love, the ideal of freedom, of justice. The Thai people have kept their freedom and they are Thai, that means free. They have kept their freedom with hard work also and not only hard work, but blood. They have defended themselves and they have tried to build up their country all through the years - centuries, as you have said, always fighting, keeping their freedom, and that is why our people are proud to be Thai. (Applause)

We have a long history but perhaps you don't know that we have a long history of democracy also. Seven hundred years ago, a King in the old Capital of Sukhothi had an edict and had carved in stone about freedom of trade and also he had a gong before his palace where any of his subjects could come and sound it; he would be received by the King and would get justice if there was any grievance. (Applause) I call that democracy, (hear, hear) that anybody can have justice, and this is seven hundred years ago, and all through history, we have this sense of justice and liberty.

Now about the relations between our two countries. In the past, you called Thailand, or Siam, a country in the Far East, but you saw that Far East that was from Europe, not from Australia. Now you have become Australians and our country is not the Far East, it is the Near North. (hear, hear) (Applause). And for this reason, I can say that we are much closer now, and the number of our students who come here is increasing. I hope that this movement will go on; that means that we will have more students coming here and I hope also that there will be more Australians coming to our country, so that we can understand each other better with knowledge and understanding and real knowledge, not the knowledge of hearsay (hear, hear). (Applause).

Apart from this kind of relation, we have also the relations with the organizations, that is the United Nations, the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East, the South East Asia Treaty Organization and the Colombo Plan. I don't have to say that I would like to urge more and more co-operation in the support of these organizations.

About the recent events in Laos, we were very pleased to see your reaction and you sent some of your forces into Thailand. We have visited them and I think it is a very good thing that they have come. It has demonstrated that both countries are ready to stand against any aggression and ready quickly. Back home we are very grateful for this quick action. (Applause) Not because we get your help but because we see that Australians realise now that Thailand is in fact the front line defence of Australia. (Hear, hear) (Applause).

To come back to similarities we have. We have many more similarities, not only in the field of freedom or sense of duty or all that has been mentioned, but in industry we have also the same trend of similarities. You have the wool, we have silk, but the animal or the beast that produces wool is much bigger than the insect that produces silk (Laughter) but it is similar. In sports, Australians we know excel in tennis and we, our boys and girls, also excel in badminton. (Applause) But here again, your tennis is much bigger than badminton and even in the fauna, we have in Thailand some birds, sparrows. You have sparrows, but they are much bigger. (Laughter) Don't laugh, because we call the ostrich or the emu the foreign sparrow. (Laughter) I could go on with the kangaroo also, that you are so proud of. We call it jingjo, but we call also the jingjo a little animal like this which is like a waterbug much smaller than your product.

In Australia we can see now that you have everything in much bigger dimensions than the things we have in our country. Even the doctor is flying; he is a flying doctor. We have only the very humble mobile units. (Laughter)

But the principal thing is not size. We have something in common which is the most important, and that is a warm heart. (Hear, hear) (Applause)

Mr. Prime Minister, you have been to Thailand many times, and each time it was a different time now the first time, it was in 1940? Yes, that is a long time ago. But he was the Prime Minister, and then each time he went to Thailand, he was still the Prime Ministers, so I just want to congratulate him for this record in premiership. (Applause).

I hear that you have been bothered by something on your visits, that is the mosquitoes. You don't like them much. It is a shame because perhaps we could receive you many more times and perhaps we should have the pleasure to meet you more often. That is why we have to come here to meet you. (Laughter) In coming here we bring the greetings of the Thai people, 27 million of them, to all your people in Australia, their goodwill, their good wishes, and to commemorate this Visit, we bring as a token of our friendship, as a token of our goodwill, this model of the Royal Barge. (Applause). I don't know to whom I will give it, because if I give it to the Prime Minister, Mr. Whitlam will protest, so I just want to give this model of the Royal Barge to this building. (Hear, hear) (Applause) And I hope you will receive it on behalf of the building. (Laughter) But as the building has no hands, I will ask both Mr. Menzies and Mr. Whitlam to receive it so that perhaps you will have unanimity in this also. (Laughter) (Applause) If you don't, it would be a shame; it would fall down and break into so many pieces that you could not put it together.

Now I want to wish every success and prosperity to this Commonwealth of Australia. My best wishes to the Government, to the Parliament, including the Opposition and thus to the whole nation and to all the people in this country, of this nation, of Australia.

Thank you. (Applause).
