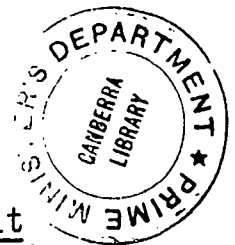


PRIME MINISTER'S TOUR OF SOUTH-EAST ASIA



Speech by the Prime Minister, Mr. Harold Holt
at Government House Dinner in Bangkok, Thailand

26TH APRIL, 1966

Your Royal Highness, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I thank you, Prime Minister, for your kind expression of welcome tonight and I thank your Government and people for the warmth and hospitality which I and my party have enjoyed since our arrival.

It was my great privilege to have an audience with His Majesty this afternoon.

I am delighted to pay this official visit to your country so soon after your own visit to Australia on which you were accompanied by senior Ministers of your Government.

Your visit to Australia was a source of great satisfaction and encouragement to my Government.

Although this is my first visit as Prime Minister, I have visited Thailand on previous occasions and on each occasion I have had the pleasure - if I may use the words you have employed - of observing at close range the way of life and thinking of the Thai people.

Your way of life is indeed peaceful and freedom-loving, in keeping with the beautiful environment of your country.

A visitor like myself sees something of your rich cultural heritage in the beauty of form and colour of your traditional building and works of art and handicrafts.

This heritage, there can be no doubt, lives in the hearts of your people.

You have referred, Prime Minister, to the positive role of Australia in this region.

We in Australia have come to expect from Thailand a beneficial and deeply-informed contribution to regional affairs.

Your country, with its long history of sovereign independence and its deep-rooted national life, has surely a most significant part to play in the future.

Australia's origins and traditions are very different from your own.

We have no comparable background of long participation in the affairs of South-East Asia.

Our two countries, however, work closely together in fruitful association.

The friendship and close co-operation which Thailand extends to us greatly enhances our feeling that we have a constructive part to play in the region as a whole.

As modern Governments we share the same goals of bringing to our peoples the fruits of prosperity and national development.

Our two countries both take a comprehensive view of the problems of the region.

We look outwards towards regional co-operation and the sharing of skills and technology.

Australia and Thailand recognize that the security of the region is vital to the stability and progress to which we are dedicated.

Our two countries are fully conscious of the critical nature of the struggle now being waged to ensure the freedom and independence of the region.

We share the same conviction that through our own efforts and in partnership with the effort of others this historic struggle can be won.

May I now invite all of you to join me in a toast to the good health and happiness of His Excellency ~~the~~ Prime Minister of Thailand, to the continued advancement of Thailand, and to the further strengthening of the close relations our two countries now enjoy.
