

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION

Historical evidence shows that contact between the Philippines and Thailand dates back from the fourteenth century long before the coming of the Spaniards to the Philippines in 1521. Both countries were then part of a flourishing trade in the Orient.

During the Spanish regime, Manila became the connecting link between Thailand and Spain. A tripartite arrangement existed in which Thailand sent envoy to Manila instead of Spain. In turn, the Spanish envoy to Thailand was appointed by the Spanish Governor-General in the Philippines. For almost three centuries and a half, relations between the two countries were carried out and conducted by Spain and similarly during the American regime, by the United States.

In 1935, the United States of America permitted the establishment of the first Thai consulate due to the increasing number of Thai nationals who mostly went to study in the Philippines.

In 1943 during the Japanese Occupation of Manila, a puppet republic was set-up. Thailand, having allied itself

with the Axis Powers earlier, extended recognition immediately to the Philippine Japanese Puppet Republic under Laurel, Sr.

The Axis Powers lost the Second World War and the legitimate Commonwealth Government of the Philippines which had been exiled in Washington, D. C., was restored. The following year witnessed an abrupt decline of relations between the Filipinos and the Thais. The Thais had to make adjustments in their international affairs with the Allies, while the Philippines had to lay initial steps to pull out the country from the ravages and ruins of war.

This period also marked the inauguration of preferential trade with the United States which placed Philippine trade heavily dependent on American trade.

On July 4, 1946 the Philippines became a full-sovereign state in simple but symbolic ceremonies. The Royal Thai Government sent an envoy to witness the proclamation of independence.

It is interesting to note that the first Philippine legation in Southeast Asia was established in Bangkok in 1949. A fortnight after, a Treaty of Friendship between the Philippines and Thailand was concluded. Much earlier, however on September 26, 1946, Thailand had already extended recognition to the Philippine Republic under Manuel A. Roxas.

On April 27, 1953, realizing the mutual benefit that could derive from co-operation in aerial travel, an Air Agreement was concluded providing for a system of collaboration in aerial navigation.

Political co-operation between the Philippines and Thailand was evident in some of the regional conferences they attended. For instance, in the Baguio Conference of 1950 and that in Bandung in 1955.

Institutional co-operation between Thailand and the Philippines had its roots with the establishment of SEATO. The area of institutionalized co-operation obviously has been enlarged with the formation of ASA. There is no doubt that both countries derive mutual benefits from their membership in these organizations.

The factors conducive to the growth of political co-operation and closer friendly ties between Thailand and the Philippines can be deduced from their geographical propinquity, identical economy, and political and cultural kinship. These factors tend to bring about similarity of interests and outlook as well as similarity of problems. It is but then logical that both peoples find themselves in basic agreement with respect to the solution of common problems to the end of strengthening their common interests.



-130-

A certain degree of community of interest is already incipient in both countries and can easily be discerned. They are the only Southeast Asian countries which are openly supporting the West because they do not feel and believe that their national honor and prestige are compromised by their alliance with the West. And thus their common membership in SEATO and heavy military and economic dependence on the United States.

Historical evidence and the empirical data available justify the present writer's conclusion that the relations between these two sovereign states have been almost perfect and devoid of any significant misunderstanding. Judging from the facts herein presented, it is not presumptuous to predict that a clash of national interests is most unlikely and that relations between them can long endure.

Philippine-Thai relations can well serve as a model of joint and co-operative efforts of two sovereign states. Thus, it can easily become the nucleus or starting point from which regional co-operation may be obtained.

There are two approaches by which two or more states may be linked together--by co-operation and by integration. Integration, even without amalgamation is difficult to secure and seems quite an idealistic, in contra-distinction

to co-operation which is a practical and more flexible approach.

Theoretically, SEATO and ASA fall under the category of security-communities of the pluralistic type; in other words the members of these organizations are assumed to be integrated without complete merger or amalgamation. Even taking into consideration the almost perfect political relationship between them and the presence of the rudiments of an administrative machinery, the present writer does not believe in the feasibility and practicality of integrating without completely merging the Philippines and Thailand as a sub-area in the region.

Integration requires the assumption of major responsibilities. While the Philippines and Thailand may be willing to subordinate a fair proportion of their national interests to the common goals, their resources are not adequate and sufficient to be deployed and bear the heavy strain of shouldering financial and military responsibilities.

Moreover, integration requires a core of strength around which all processes are to revolve. The Philippines and Thailand are more or less equal in strength and natural resources. One thing more, establishing the core of strength by comparison dissipates rather than integrate peoples of political communities.

It should also be clarified that the Philippines and Thailand under SEATO or ASA are not security-communities of the pluralistic type by themselves. It only means that the regional organizations are. Hence, it is Thailand vis-a-vis the rest of the members of SEATO or ASA. The same case applies to the Philippines.

At most, the present writer wishes to come out categorically with regional co-operation as the practical rationale behind the need for expanding the already excellent relations between Thailand and the Philippines. It is more flexible and will require relatively lesser time than integration. Integration is quite rigid in form and will take considerable time. It is to be admitted, however, that it is a step further than regional co-operation.

For the latter part of this chapter, we shall concern ourselves with regional co-operation, as the broad goal for developing, enriching and enlarging the area of political co-operation between the Thais and the Filipinos.

Regional co-operation is an inescapable phenomenon. In the first place, it is dictated by reason of necessity. No state can now survive without having to collaborate with the rest of the members of the international community. Interdependence is becoming more and more inevitable and embedded in the political life of states. In the second place,



it is the only stable basis for world peace and the foundation of progress and advancement of a group of peoples.

Moreover, regional co-operation is a must because the fate of the nations composing a region is linked and shall be decided by the same circumstances of time and place. The question of survival poses the greatest challenge to regional co-operation.

Probably, there remains only one question to be answered by this thesis--How may the almost perfect and genuine co-operation between the Philippines and Thailand be still enlarged? Recommendations and suggestions to enlarge the area of co-operation shall be made in the following broad lines:

1. Political. Political co-operation may be better achieved through the framework of bilateral agreements. Since the Treaty of Friendship stipulated the conclusion of a consular convention, a treaty of commerce and navigation and a treaty of extradition and whereas, as yet no treaty has been concluded on these fields, it is high time that something be done about this. There is no more effective instrument to hold two states together than legal obligations created in a treaty.

The President of the Philippines should return the state visit of their Majesties, King Bhumipol and Queen

Sirikit as soon as possible. This will strengthen and mutually cement the friendly ties between the Philippines and Thailand.

Greater mobility of persons and goods across their territorial boundaries should be explored. Probably, it can be done by removing administrative and political rigidity presently involved.

2. Economic, The problem of common export commodities should be gradually solved by diversification and specialization.

Slow liberalization of import restrictions contributes to bigger importations only if foreign exchange resources are adequately available. Shortages of resources of foreign exchange may be remedied by establishing a barter arrangement to explore wider markets for intraregional trade. This is recommended only after a minimum amount of bilateral trade has been achieved.

For the meantime, Thailand should explore the possibility of permitting Filipino entrepreneurial technology to come in while it provides it with capital.

3. Socio-Cultural. To make any projects successful, it is better to get as much people as possible involved in said undertakings. This may be accomplished by breaking down cultural and language barriers.



Some specific recommendations may be that of setting-up information centers within the framework of their respective embassies; emphasizing studies on Southeast Asia in the university level, exchange of lecture-culture professors and encouraging more cultural missions to tour without much cumbersomeness.

Finally, let the present writer reiterate that relations between Thailand and the Philippines are almost perfect in the sense that there is no substantial misunderstanding between them.



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