

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Problem Background

This research attempts to investigate Thai's foreign policy toward Myanmar during Chuan Leekpai administration (1997-2001). They adapted to concept "Constructive Engagement" in Myanmar to develop democracy and protect human right.

It has been quite apparent from fact in the past that the bilateral relations between Thailand and Myanmar are not well about political (diplomatic and martial). It means the two states fought was and clashed to dominant minority tributary in most of times in the history and after the World War II, especially after 1962 the two had regarded each other as a potential adversary. Indeed, Thailand in modern time has the basic diplomatic policy to balance and not lose. Thailand has avoided all-out war against any neighbor or potential invading states in order to maintain and not risk independence and sovereignty. In the circumstance of Thai Anti-Communist policy in the capacity of Thai balance diplomacy and collaboration with the United State of America (USA). After WWII, the Burmese Army Coup detat led by General Ne Win was happened in 1962 and the introduction of the "Burmese Way to Socialism" was declared. It prompted the tension between Thailand and Myanmar (Burma) by Thai's complex condition which consist of alert for Red Burma, complicated relations with Burmese minorities, existence of Kuomintang (Kok Min Tang: KMT) troops in Thailand and so on. Burma believed that Thailand was the one of several

countries supported KMT troop in Burma. The existence of KMT forces in Shan State, Burma and then in Thailand generated the origins of so many problems of present Thai - Burmese relations such as Mutual mistrust from U.S.A. – China ideological discord, insurgency by ethnic minority forces in the border area, drugs, human trafficking and other smuggling problem.

The end of the Cold War and economic globalization changed political and economic circumstances in Southeast Asia. In particular, the Cambodian Conflict was over and Indo-China became more peaceful, at least big military conflicts went away. In adjustment to the new circumstances, Thailand decided to make itself an economic center on Southeast Asia mainland. This needed stable relationships among governments and orders inside each country, even though a country has domestic problem such as military dictatorship. In September 1988, the Burmese junta cracked down on a people's demonstration for democracy. Western countries and Japan stopped aid and imposed sanctions on Burma, while Thailand, other ASEAN countries, and China tried to foster good relations with the junta. Burmese isolation from the U.S., European Union, and Japan has not been matched by isolation from the rest of the world. Burma was hardly very isolated at all. In the case of South Africa, all the neighbor states approved sanctions; the elite, business, and the banking communities were geared to Western Europe and the apartheid government was eventually split on the issue. None of the above conditions resembles those in Burma.

Ironically, as the U.S. had sought to exclude Burma from the world the junta had begun the slow process of opening up. The economic sanctions against

the Burma had made it closer to other countries: ASEAN countries, China, India, Russia, and others. In particular, since the end of the 1980s, Thailand had altered its policy from a buffer policy to constructive engagement supporting the military regime of Burma.

The principle of non-interference is the original core foundation upon which regional relations between ASEAN member-states are based.¹ The principle was first lined out in ASEAN's foundation document, the Bangkok Declaration, issued in 1967. The Bangkok Declaration expressed that the member-states are determined to prevent external interference in order to ensure domestic and regional stability. The non-interference policy was reiterated in the Kuala Lumpur Declaration of 1997. It was further reinforced in the 1976 Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC), in which the principle of non-interference in members' internal affairs was explicitly referred to as one of the association's fundamental principles.²

On January 1, Myanmar assumed the chairmanship of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). In 1997 Myanmar joined ASEAN. Although Myanmar joined the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1997, the country's domestic politics and human rights record have consistently complicated its relationships and status within ASEAN. In 2005, due to its human rights controversy and criticisms from the West, Myanmar was pressured to

¹ Keling, M. F., H. M. Som, M. N. Saludin, M. S. Shuib, and M. N. Ajis. 2011. The development of ASEAN from historical approach. *Asian Social Science*. 7(7), pp. 169-189.

² Stubbs, R. 2008. The ASEAN alternative? Ideas, institutions and the challenge to 'global' governance. *The Pacific Review*. 21(4), pp.451-468

forfeit its turn at chairmanship under the institution's rotational rules. Therefore, when Myanmar's political and economic reform finally opened the door for the country to chair the organization years later, both Myanmar and ASEAN were ready to reintegrate the country into the regional community as a normal and equal member.³

YANGON (25 August 2011) – The United Nations Special Reporter on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Tomás Ojea Quintana, urged the Government to intensify its efforts to implement its own commitments and to fulfill its international human rights obligations. This is a key moment in Myanmar's history and there are real opportunities for positive and meaningful developments to improve the human rights situation and bring about a genuine transition to democracy," Mr. Ojea Quintana said at the end of his five-day mission to the country. "The new Government has taken a number of steps towards these ends. Yet, many serious human rights issues remain and they need to be addressed." For example "Tensions in ethnic border areas and armed conflict with some armed ethnic groups engender serious human rights violations, including attacks against civilian populations, extrajudicial killings, sexual violence, arbitrary arrest and detention, internal displacement, land confiscations, the recruitment of child soldiers, as well as forced labour and partnering.⁴ I call on the authority and all armed group to ensure the protection of civilians in conflict-

³ Myanmar's ASEAN Chairmanship: An Early Assessment. Retrieved 15 January 2013. From : <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Articles/Detail/?lng=en&id=183736>

⁴ Myanmar: "Serious human rights issues remain despite positive steps by the authorities," says UN expert. Retrieved 15 January 2013. From: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=11332&LangID=E>

affected areas and to accelerate efforts towards finding a political solution to the conflict.”

Thai Government has always given special attentions to the conflict between minority groups and Burmese army, thinking that if Thailand did not handle the situation properly, it could be escalated to be a bigger armed conflict between Thailand and Burmese. However, as politics in Thailand has not been so stable, different Governments might use different actions forward this conflict within Burmese border. So, it is interesting to study different Thai Government’s handling this sensitive issue.

After the effort by Thai government initiated by Prem administration and the “Open Door Economic Policy” by State Law and Order Restoration Council; SLORC (later changed name into State Peace and Development Council: SPDC), the Thai-Burmese bilateral relations had been gradually improved with some agreement of mutual cooperation such as setting up permanent border trade points and law enforcement against illegal drug smuggling. After the bloody crackdown on demonstrators urging the democratic reform of the country in 1988, the Burmese military gripped the political power stronger and stronger, the name of the country “Burma” had been changed into “Myanmar” by SLORC.

For the political aspect, after previous Thai governments had maintained the Pro-SPDC policy in the name of the “Non-Interference”, Chuan administration advocated the "Constructive Engagement” which tried to promote democracy and human rights protection.

It is significant, in order to consider political-economic steadiness of

Thailand which would contribute for stability of ASEAN and East Asia to study in detail for the range of Thai governments' contrasting or confronting diplomatic policies toward Myanmar and the reaction from Thai people including judgement of balance between economic national profit of Thailand and political-ethical rightness, Thai people's evaluation of profits would obtain from Thai government's foreign policies especially diplomatic policies for Burmese conflict and Thai people's determination about legitimacy and justice of Thai government.

For the Burmese conflict "Whether Thailand will be able to contribute for realization of Burmese Peace Process just like Cambodian one" is also a Life-or-Death important matter which affects national security of Thailand directly. The tension has been continued until present days with escalation in some period and comparative calm in some. Thailand has already intensively made effort for Burmese peace and democratization. Thai government under the second Chuan Leekpai administration (1997-2001) had the relatively hard line policy for Myanmar by enhancing the human rights and democratization which is called "Constructive Engagement" with soft stance for Burmese minority groups.

B. Research Question

From the background part of this paper, the writer likely to stand the research question on :

"How did Thai government implement the concept of "Constructive Engagement" toward Myanmar?"

C. Research Objectives

1. To study about the policy of Thai government under Chuan administration toward the conflict between the Burmese minority groups and the Burmese government.

2. To study about the influence of those two governments' policies concerning national security, human security and economic development for Myanmar and Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS) toward the diplomatic policies.

3. To study about Thai people's evaluation for those two governments' policies for Myanmar.

D. Theoretical Framework

1. Diplomacy

In a broad sense, according to Kissinger, E.T.⁵ Diplomacy is the entire process through which states conduct their foreign relations. It is the means for allies to cooperate and for adversaries to resolve conflict without force. States communicate, bargain, influence one another, and adjust their differences through diplomacy. It is interesting to note that serious confrontations between the great powers since 1815 have ended in force only about 10 per cent of the time. The routine business of international affairs is conducted through the peaceful instrument of diplomacy.

⁵ See also: CNN factor; concert of power; globalization; international law; international society; misperception; multilateralism; reciprocity; recognition Further reading: Barton, 1996; Craig and George, 1998; Eldon, 1994; Kissinger, 1994; Sharp, 1999.

In a more narrow sense, diplomacy is the implementation of foreign policy, as distinct from the process of policy formation. Diplomacy may influence policy, but their main task is to negotiate with the representatives of other countries. Ambassadors, ministers, and envoys are official spokespersons for their country abroad and the instruments through which states maintain regular direct contact. Although messages are rapidly transmitted from one state to another today, personal, face-to-face encounters can put a stamp of privacy and authenticity on diplomatic exchanges. Formal diplomacy is a regularized system of official communication between states: the exchange of ambassadors, the maintenance of embassies in foreign capitals, the dispatch of messages through officially accredited emissaries, participation in conferences and other direct negotiations.

The importance of diplomacy arises from the fact that most foreign policy are stated very generally, without spelling out measures for implementation. A good diplomat must adapt such policy mandates to the circumstances of the moment. Moreover, there are numerous occasions when the demands of a particular situation might justify an exception to policy, and for this a state often relies on the wisdom of its diplomatic officers in the field. Few governments pursue a perfectly consistent policy that is articulated with a single voice. It falls to the diplomats to reconcile the competing voices and to give coherence, emphasis, and interpretation to their state's foreign policy.

Diplomacy has two faces. It is the vehicle through which a state asserts itself and represents its concerns to the world; it is also one of the principal means

for conciliating competing national interests. In other words, diplomacy aims to further a state's particular goals whilst preserving international order. It is the tool that states use to use to get their way without arousing the animosity of other states. Diplomats must constantly balance the need to protect their state's interests and to avoid conflict with other states.

There are three main functions of diplomacy – intelligence gathering, image management, and policy implementation. An embassy gathers information on the thinking of local political leadership the state of the local economy, the natural of the political opposition all of it critical for predicting internal problems and anticipating changes in foreign policy. Diplomatic representatives are the 'eyes and ears' of their government; their cables and reports form part of the raw material from which foreign policy is developed. Diplomacy also aims at creating a favorable image of the state. Modern communication makes it possible to shape perceptions and attitudes around the globe. States today have vast public relations apparatuses whose purpose is to place their actions and policies in a favorable light. Foreign embassies supply local news media with official interpretations and try to avoid negative publicity or explain it away. Finally, diplomats administer the overseas programs of the state. They negotiate military basing rights, facilitate foreign investment and trade. Supervise the distribution of economic aid, and provide information and technical assistance.

Some scholars argue that over time, there has been a marked decline in the importance of formal ambassadors. In the days when travel and communications were primitive, ambassadors had a great deal of authority and

discretion in the implementation of foreign policy. They might be stationed abroad for many years without receiving new instructions or returning home. Today overseas envoys receive large numbers of cables and instructions on a daily basis. Heads of state communicate directly with one another by telephone. Top policy-makers often negotiate directly with each other (*summit diplomacy*) or they send special envoys (*shuttle diplomacy*). Henry Kissinger, Secretary of State under presidents Nixon and Ford, raised shuttle diplomacy to a high art in the 1970s. As a result, the ambassador has become less important in the realm of 'high politics' - particularly in areas of military security – than in the past.

On the other hand, the growth of interdependence among states, and the expansion of the old Eurocentric state system into a global international society, has brought in its wake the emergence of an increasingly multilateral style of diplomacy. Multilateral management is essential for many issues that involve cooperative arrangements among governments. This is the case in such areas as nuclear proliferation, arms control, trade regulation, and the suppression of terrorism. The United Nations and other intergovernmental organization convene periodic conferences to deal with problems of food, population growth, the environment, and other issues of global concern. Since most of the less developed countries make the greater part of their diplomatic contacts at the United Nations, many issues of modern diplomacy are addressed in this multilateral forum.⁶

For the diplomatic policy for Myanmar, in the present political-diplomatic situation, it is the best stage or political arena for Thailand to act as the mediator

⁶ *ibid*

for Burmese internal conflict just in order to maintain its own national security and national profit. Therefore, Thailand is able to hold the leading role in Burmese Peace Building Process or Burmese Internal-International “Reconciliation”.

2. ASEAN Way

Since the post-independence phases of Southeast Asian states, efforts were made to implement regional foreign policies, but with a unifying focus to refrain from interference in domestic affairs of member states. There was a move to unify the region under what was called the ‘ASEAN Way’ based on the ideals of non-interference, informality, minimal institutionalization, consultation and consensus, non-use of force and non-confrontation. ASEAN members (especially Singapore) approved of the term ‘ASEAN Way’ to describe a regional method of multilateralism. Thus the signing of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia adopted fundamental principles.⁷

- Mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity, and national identity of all nations
- The right of every State to lead its national existence free from external interference, subversion or coercion
- Non-interference in internal affairs
- Settlement of differences or disputes in a peaceful manner
- Renunciation of the threat or use of force

⁷ "Overview Association of South East Asian Nations". Retrieved 27 February 2013.
From : <http://www.nti.org/treaties-and-regimes/association-southeast-asian-nations-asean/>

- Effective regional cooperation

The ‘ASEAN Way’ is said to contribute durability and longevity within the organization, by promoting regional identity and enhancing a spirit of mutual confidence and cooperation.⁸ ASEAN agreements are negotiated in a close, interpersonal process. The process of consultations and consensus is designed to engender a democratic approach to decision making. These leaders are wary of any effort to legitimize efforts to undermine their nation or contain regional cooperation.

According to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) in Southeast Asia, In point 3 stated about “Non-interference in internal affairs, So ASEAN Way make it impossible for Thai to interfere the domestic problem in Myanmar, even though the problem might threat Thailand Stability. So Chuan Leekpai try to find the correct policy in solving this problem.

3. Constructive Engagement

Constructive Engagement according to the policy taken by the Reagan Administration of the United States in the early 1980s,⁹ Constructive Engagement is a policy which advocates the maintenance of an economic and diplomatic relationship with an authoritarian state as opposed to imposing sanctions and embargoes on it. It has been described as “promoting economic and political ties, while at the same time pressing for democracy, open markets and human rights”.

⁹ Buszynski, Leszek, 1998, “Thailand and Myanmar: the Perils of ‘Constructive Engagement’”, *The Pacific Review*, vol. 11, no.2.

1. Its advocates believe that in encouraging and participating in the opening up of a country to foreign investments, it will also be facilitating the opening up of the country to more information, as well as foreign liberal influences and views promoting a greater awareness of human rights and democratic values.

2. By remaining “engaged” with the rouge state, Constructive Engagement advocates also believe that countries are more likely to be able to exert influence over its government and push it along the path to political and social reform.¹⁰

“Constructive Engagement” refers originally to the policy taken by the Reagan Administration of the United States in the early 1980s toward South Africa that practiced apartheid. The United Nations General Assembly and the world anti-apartheid movement executed a policy of economic sanction and isolation toward South Africa while the Reagan Administration advocated for active engagement with South Africa with a view to encouraging it to change its apartheid policy. In 1991, the then Thai Foreign Minister proposed to implement a “constructive engagement” policy toward Myanmar which was approved by the ASEAN Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in the same year. Since then, ASEAN has been consistently pursuing this policy, hoping to promote and accelerate the democratization process of Myanmar by means of such ASEAN-type engagement and ASEAN’s own influence.

ASEAN’s “constructive engagement” policy toward Myanmar is

¹⁰ Legal Issues on Burma Journal No. 7, December 2000 Burma Lawyers Council. Retrieved 28 February 2013. From : <http://www.ibiblio.org/obl/docs/LIOB07-ConstEng.htm>

implemented chiefly on two levels, namely, the multilateral level of regional organizations and the bilateral level of relations between the ASEAN member states. The acceptance of Myanmar by ASEAN as its member is the most important and fundamental embodiment of the engagement policy. ASEAN hopes that Myanmar after joining ASEAN would open more widely to the outside world, carry out necessary reforms and adopt ASEAN's values, code of conduct and traditional practices so as to promote the resolution of the Myanmar issue. Since acceding to ASEAN in July 1997, Myanmar has involved, in an extensive way, the building of the ASEAN Community and signed a considerable number of agreements and treaties on integration cooperation in the political, security, economic, social, cultural, and other fields. In the meanwhile, Myanmar has also entered the system of various Free Trade Areas formed between ASEAN and China, Japan, India, the Republic of Korea, Australia, and New Zealand as well as the various dialogue and cooperation mechanisms that ASEAN has set up with countries and regions outside of the region. Hence, in spite of the sanctions and isolation imposed by the Western countries on Myanmar, ASEAN succeeded in helping Myanmar establish lot of channels of contact with the outside world through its own effort and the various political and economic cooperation mechanisms and platforms it formed with many countries.¹¹ Thai policy for Myanmar under Chuan 2 administration had characteristics such as (1) Promotion of democracy and human rights protection in Myanmar. (2) Destruction of

¹¹ "Non-Intervention and ASEAN's Role in Conflict Management = Stanford Journal of East Asian Affairs" (PDF). Retrieved 28 February 2013.

UWSA's Thai destined illegal drug factories inside Myanmar. (3) Discouragement of trade and investment acceleration for Myanmar until improvement of political situation. So, the concept of "Constructive Engagement" is a kind of foreign policy. That Thai no need to interference in internal affairs of Burma, but just want to overcome the problem in Burma.

E. Hypothesis

Thai government under Chuan Leekpai administration implement the "Constructive Engagement" toward Myanmar by promote democracy and human rights protection in Myanmar including minority ethnics.

G. Research of Method

In this writing, the writer uses several ways to collect the data in order to discuss the problem, they are follows:

- Media search, collecting the data from media likes the internet in order to find references and sources to accomplish the explanation of the problem.
- Library research, this method used to study the relevant sources in order to discuss the problem and by using the qualitative research the writer will also get secondary and data.
- Data analysis, the data gained from the internet and library (books), were checked for the relevancy in order to be used as the sources in the final paper arrangement.
- Proving hypothesis, derived from the meaning of the title, the

discussion of the problem, and data analysis.

H. Scope of the Research.

The writer limits the time in order to make the research on topic. which the research is conducted. The scope of discussion started from the beginning of the role of Thai government in the peace building process in Myanmar. Thai government under the second Chuan Leekpai administration (1997-2001) this time limitation used in order to ease the observation of the problem as well as to avoid complexity of the further analysis.

I. System of writing

The system of writing this undergraduate Thesis consists of five chapter. CHAPTER I will be explaining about the Problem Background, Research Question, Research Objectives, Theoretical Framework, Hypothesis, Research of Method, and Scope of the Research, and System of Writing. CHAPTER II Will discuss about ASEAN and the principle of Non- Intervention. CHAPTER III Explain about the Policy of Thailand toward Myanmar: Concept of Constructive Engagement. CHAPTER IV Discusses about the Policy of Thailand toward Myanmar: Practice Constructive Engagement. CHAPTER V will give the conclusion from all of chapters and also give a suggestion.