

# **THAI-MALAYSIAN RELATIONS, 1967-1989.**

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled "THAI-MALAYSIAN RELATIONS, 1967-1989", submitted by Mr. Pullagura Jeeva Murthy in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY Degree, is his original work. This has not been previously submitted for any degree of this or any other University to the best of our knowledge. We recommend this dissertation to be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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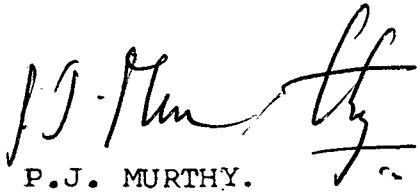
## PREFACE

This dissertation is a study of Thai-Malaysian relations. Both the countries are cooperating with each other in the realm of security, political and economic affairs despite their differences in the cultural moorings. Initially there were serious tensions on the common borders but the two countries defused them by establishing Joint Commission and removing the communication gap.

The thesis has been studied into five chapters. The first is the introductory chapter with historical background. The second chapter has tried to analyse the threat to the national security, mainly the insurgency movements in both the countries. Thus Pattani Liberation Front (PLF) and Malaya Communist Party (MCP) activities are discussed. Third chapter deals with the role of the Joint Commission to defuse tension on their common borders. Fourth chapter has analysed the existing trade and commerce between the two countries. The last chapter has concluding observations.

Many people helped me to write this dissertation. First of all, I am indebted to my supervisor, Dr. Ganganath

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CHAPTER I  
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Thai-Malaysia relations have proved to be a model of cooperation amongst the ASEAN states. Though the cooperation is spread into various areas, a scrutiny of this aspect proves that it is more intense in the security and economic areas. In order to have a proper perspective of the relations, it is necessary to have a background knowledge of the problems, geographical locations and history of the two countries.

The Kingdom of Thailand, which was formerly known as Siam, occupies the centre of the South-East Asian mainland, bordered by Burma to the West, by Laos and Kampuchea to the East, and by peninsular Malaysia to the South. Its total area is 513,115 square kilometres whereas Malaysia covers a total area of 329,758 square kilometres comprising the 11 states of peninsular Malaysia, with an area of 131,598 square kilometres, together with the two states of Sarawak and Sabah, in Northern Kalimantan (Borneo), with areas of, respectively, 124,449 square kilometres and 73,711 square kilometres.<sup>1</sup>

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1. The Fast East and Australia 1989, 20th edition, Europa Publications Ltd., London, pp.959 & 630.

Physical & Climatic Environment:

Apart from peninsular Thailand, which (except in the far South) consists of mainly narrow coastal lowlands backed by low and well wooded mountain ranges, the country comprises four main upland tracts - in the West, north, north-east and south-east surrounding a large central plain by the principal river, the Menam Chao Phraya. Because Thailand's central position within the mainland South-East Asia, while experiencing tropical temperatures throughout its entire area, receives relatively less rainfall than either Burma to the west or most parts of the Indo-Chinese lands to the east. In general, rainfall is highest in the south and south-east, and in the uplands of the west and, to some extent, in the higher hills in the north, but most of the rest of the country, in effect, constitutes a rain shadow area where the total annual fall is below 1,500 mm.<sup>2</sup>

Whereas both parts of Malaysia form part of the old stable massif of Sunda-land, though whereas dominant folding in the Malay peninsula is of mesozoic age, that along the northern edge of Kalimantan dates from tertiary times. In many respects Sabah and Sarawak display similar

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2. Valentin Chu, Thiland Today A Visit to Modern Siam, New York, 1968, p.16.

basic geographical characteristics to eastern peninsular Malaysia but in a more extreme form. Throughout Malaysia, average daily temperatures vary from about 21°C to 32°C, although in higher areas temperatures are lower and vary more widely.<sup>3</sup>

Thailand's main natural resources lie in its agricultural potential, and in particular in the capacity of the central plain that is Korat plateau to produce a substantial surplus of rice. Thailand is cultivating crops like maize, cassava (tapioca), kenaf (upland jute), beans and, more recently cotton and pineapple. It produces rubber and timber. Various minerals, including tungsten, lead, fluorite and lignite are being worked, and the countries' heavy dependence on energy imports has begun to lessen, following the initial exploitation of reserve of natural gas in the Gulf of Thailand.<sup>4</sup>

A great variety of minerals are known to exist in Malaysia. Tin in west Malaysia and to a lesser extent

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3. John W. Henderson, Area Handbook for Malaysia, Washington D.C., Y.P. 1970, p.17.

4. Valentin Chu, op. cit., 1968, pp.19 & 24.



oil in Sarawak most significantly effect the economy of the country. Other minerals that are available are copper and uranium. Rubber and, more recently, oil palm have flourished in this environment, although both are again showing some expansion in the eastern wing, particularly in Sabah, which to date has relied heavily upon its vast wealth in tropical timber.<sup>5</sup> Other minerals found in Malaysian Borneo, all of which are minor in value or occurrence, include antimony, bauxite, dolomite, iron ore, mercury, nickel, copper, cobalt sulfide, zinc, gypsum and talc. Extremely small quantities of diamonds, sapphires, and silver have been found.

Population:

The population as in mid-1988 was estimated to be 54,536,000, giving an average density of 106.3 per square kilometre. Although average densities fall to between one-quarter and one-half of this in West and North, the total area of really sparsely populated upland is small, and in general the population is much less unevenly distributed than in most other countries in South-East Asia. Similarly, the proportion formed by indigenous minority is around 700,000 Muslim Malays in the far south, a

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5. John W. Henderson, op. cit., 1970, p.18.

smaller number of Kampucheans near the eastern borders, and a total of 300,000 scattered hill peoples - Meo, Lahu, Yao, Lisu, Lawa, Lolo, Karen. Mainly in the far north and west, virtually the entire indigenous population belongs to the Thai ethnic group (which also includes the Shan and Lao) and subscribes to Buddhism, predominantly of the Hinayana form.

Excluding the Lao groups, the largest minority in Thailand may be said to be the Chinese. However, estimates as to their proportion of the total population vary and many Chinese have been assimilated into the Thai culture. Most are entitled to be, and have become, Thai citizens and in 1970 only 311,000 remained Chinese citizens. Metropolis like Bangkok and Thonburi comprised 5,609,352 population, of which the largest in the 1980 census were Songkhla (population 172,604), Chon Buri (115,350), Nakhon Si Thammarat (102,123) and Ching Mai (101,594).<sup>6</sup>

In the case of Malaysian population in mid-1987 it was provisionally estimated to be 16,527,900, compared with the revised June 1980 census figure of 13,745,241 of whom 11,426,613 were in peninsular Malaysia, 1,011,046

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6. The Far East & Australia 1989, op. cit., p.959.

were in Sabah and 1,307,582 in Sarawak.

However, the difference in density is not the only difference in the population of two wings of Malaysia. In peninsular Malaysia the indigenous population, apart from some 50,000 or so primitive animist people consists of Muslim Malays, though, according to the 1980 census, these form only 54% of the total population, which also includes 35% Chinese and a further 10% Indians (an ethnic term which applies to people from India, Pakistan or Bangladesh). In Sabah and Sarawak, on the other hand, Malays and other Muslim peoples are confined mainly to the coastal zone, while various other ethnic groups occupy interior areas. Nonetheless, there is also a large Chinese element, amounting to 30% of the 1979 estimate in Sarawak and 18% of the 1978 figures for Sarabah, so that in Malaysia as a whole Malays consisted 47%, Chinese 33%, Indians 9%, Borneo indigene 9% and other 2% of the population in 1977.

Peninsular Malaysia has at least 10 cities of over 100,000 people including Kuala Lumpur, while in east Malaysia Kuching, the capital of Sarawak, had a population in 1984 of about 150,000 and Miri one of about 90,000. In Kota Kinabalu, the capital of Sabah, there was an estimated population of 120,000 in 1984,

and in the port of Sandakan there was about the same number.<sup>7</sup>

National Problems:

In the Southeast Thailand there is ethnic problem in four southern provinces of Thailand, i.e., Pattani, Yala, Narathivat, and Satun. These provinces are dominated by the Muslims who comprise 80 per cent. The economic backwardness and non-intervention of Thais have driven these Muslims to oppose their central government. They have thus formed an organization known as Pattani Liberation Front. The basic aim of this organization is to preach secession of the four southernmost provinces of Thailand.<sup>8</sup>

Two centuries ago, the whole of the present Thai-Malay peninsula from Istumas of Kra down south to the present Malaysia-Thai border, belonged to the Malays. From about 1700 A.D. the Thais (Siamese), in pursuance of the Southward expansion, had conquered most of the Malay land. By 1769 A.D., the Thai invading forces had

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7. Ibid., pp.630-31.

8. Ganganath Jha, Foreign Policy of Thailand, Y.P. 1979, New Delhi, p.122.

reached the border of the Malay Kingdom of Pattani by their conquest of the other three Malay states of Ligor, Petalung and Singgora which the Thais renamed as Nakhon Sithammarat, Patthalung and Songkhala respectively. By the year of 1789 A.D. the Malay Kingdom of Pattani was conquered by the Thais, and the Malay Sultan was killed in the battlefield. From that time onward there is a revolt in this region against the Thai rule.<sup>9</sup>

Reasons for the Problem:

Thailand was never directly colonized and was a powerful Kingdom in the past, mainly because of its centralized administration, and its control over its territory. The incompatible aims of British colonial policy did not make this an easy process. On the other hand, the British were determined to protect their commercial and strategic interest and prevent the intrusion of any other power into the Malay peninsula. To avoid a clash with Siam and inhibit French aggression, Britain had decided to secure its interest in north in Malaysia indirectly by supporting Siam's claim to authority.<sup>10</sup>

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9. Majtaba Rajvi, "Thai Muslims", Pakistan Horizon, 32(3); 1979, p.59.
  10. Margret L. Koch, "Pattani and the Development of a Thai State", Journal of Malaysian Branch of Royal Asiatic Society, 50(2), 1977, p.69.

By the Anglo-Siamese treaty in July 1909 A.D., Thailand transferred the four Malay states of Kilantan, Trengganu, Kedah and Perlis to Britain. The states of Pattani and Salun were extended from the deal and were therefore left to be officially swallowed by the former. The Thais had close dynamic ties with British and Malays were left to be absorbed by Buddhist Thailand.<sup>11</sup> By this treaty, Thailand gave up any claim to sovereignty over the territory of South except Pattani region.

Thaicization of Malay Provinces:

The Thai Kingdom during its remarkable southward expansion led by Rama I's Maha Uparat. This process of domination continued till recent period. These provinces used to send the bungamas, ornamental parts with leaves and flowers of gold and silver, in return for Thai protection.<sup>12</sup> King Chulalongkorn (1866-1910) introduced the policy of administrative centralization known as the thesaphiban system of provincial administration, aiming at the extension of more direct control from Bangkok over subordinate areas including the Malay tributary states. But the Malay Raja of Pattani did not like this

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11. Virginia Thomson, Thailand and New Siam, Macmillan, p.165.

12. Ibid., p.179.

kind of centralized rule on these provinces. On the other hand, the rapid growth of British influence in British Malaya and the improvement of living conditions of the indigenous population which went with it, frustrated these rulers and people.<sup>13</sup>

Quest for Autonomy in these Provinces:

After Anglo-Siam treaty, the real problem has started. They have been fighting for more autonomy. With application of the highly centralized control which characterizes Thai administration in general, the four Malay provinces of Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat and Setul have been made somewhat reluctant partners of the Thai Kingdom. From 1906 onwards, the Thai Government encountered a number of uprisings both in Pattani and in the other Thai Malay provinces.<sup>14</sup>

After second World War there was a revolt in 1948. On 10 January 1948, Haji Sulong president of Islamic Religious Council and spiritual leader of an illegal Pattani people's movement, was arrested and charged with treason together with three of his fellow associates. Incidents like not paying taxes to the Thai rulers etc. occurred.<sup>15</sup>

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13. N. Haimindra, "Problems of Muslims", Journal of Southeast Asian Studies, Vol.VII(2), Sept. 1976, p.202.

14. Ibid., p.204.

15. Ibid., p.205.

Causes for this Problem:

The Government has persistently emphasized that the Muslims must learn Thai language. Buddhist culture is imposed on the Muslims. Administration in these provinces is dominated by Thai Buddhist government officials. Most of these officials do not speak Malay, which has created ill-feeling between administration and the Muslims. Thai economic structure is dominated by Thai Buddhist people and Thai-Chinese people. It is claimed that the area is rich in rubber and tin, but this wealth is controlled by the people of other regions of the country. Muslims do not have the necessary education or the capital for economic advancement of their areas.<sup>16</sup>

The Government policy of allocating land to Buddhist settlers may lead to changes in the demography of the region. Thus the land settlement policy provides strength to the separatist movement.<sup>17</sup> Thai-Muslims were forced to appear in court on Fridays, when Muslims were at congregational prayers, and to take oaths which were contrary

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16. Andrew D.W. Forbes, "Thailand's Muslim Minorities: Assimilation, Succession, or Coexistence?" Asian Survey, Vol.XXII, No.11, Nov. 1982, p.1066.

17. Margret Koch, Jor. of Malaysian Branch of Royal Asiatic Society, p.73.



to Islamic beliefs on threat of imprisonment.<sup>18</sup> These were some of the factors which aggravated this movement further.

#### The MCP:

The Communist Party of Malaya was established on April 30, 1930. As to the first appearance of the Communist activities in Malaya, many people hold that it was in 1920 when Lenin delivered a speech on the nationality and colonial questions - at the second Congress of the Communist International, emphasizing the importance of the Eastern Hemisphere in the World Communist revolution. However, there was also the assertion that Communism was introduced to Malaya as early as in 1913 by Tan Malaka, an Indonesian Communist supported by Comintern delegate G. Maring, who arrived at Java in 1913 to propagate Marxism.

#### The MCP's Growth:

Before the Comintern's influence spread into Malaya, the Communist activities were limited to some academic gatherings among a few intellectuals. Although there was such organization as "Marxism Research Association" and several of its branches, they were not the

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18. Cang Hu, "On the formation of the Communist Party of Malaya", Issues & Studies, Vol.12, Jan.-June, 1976.

organized units. Besides, the Communist ideas at the time were spread mainly among the Islamic Malays. This was because the Communist movement in Malay was first introduced by Indonesian Communists, who, during their promotion of Communism in their own country, operated under the cloak of Islamic organization.<sup>19</sup>

The Indonesian Communist movement was initiated under the guidance of Comintern's delegate G. Maring. He arrived in Java in 1913 and organized the East Indies Social-Democratic Association Semarang in 1914 to begin his infiltration activities. Meanwhile, he asked his followers Semaun, Raden Darsono, Tan Maleka and Alimin parmirodirdjo (all these people became Communist leaders in Indonesia) to join in the previously founded Indonesian organization Serikat Islam and take it as a shelter. Moreover, Semaun was even elected standing committee member of Serikat Islam in 1918. In May 1920 Semaun and some other organized the East Indies Communist Party and decided to seek membership in the Comintern. Later, the Communists organized their own Serikat Islam called the 'Red Serikat Islam'.<sup>20</sup>

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19. Short Antony, The Communist Insurrection in Malaya, 1948-1960, Y.P. 1975, London, p.19.

20. Ibid., p.20.

The Indonesian Communist work in Malaya was not carried out as smoothly as was expected. As a result, the Chinese Communists were instructed to take over the job. In 1922, the Chinese Communists were found to have stretched their influence into Malaya. The Singapore government learned that Russia had backed the establishment in Singapore of a "South Seas Center" to coordinate activities in Malaya and that "Center" was under the auspices of the CCP Central Committee. In 1923, the Chinese Communists followed the Comintern's instruction to register with the KMT and carried out their tasks under the guise of the new title. This policy of carrying on Communist activities under a legal cloak is similar to that of the Indonesian Communists in the earlier period.<sup>21</sup>

In 1924, the CCP for the first time formally sent delegates to Malaya where they inspected the progress of the "Marxian Research Association". Meanwhile, a Russian report dated October-November 1925 also disclosed the Chinese Communist activities in Singapore.

In the massive immigration of Chinese to Malaya in the years from 1925 to 1927, many Chinese communists

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21. Ibid., p.21.

might have arrived in Malaya. During that period, many Chinese seamen on British, Dutch and American ships were couriers of the CCP. Members of the communist-supported Nan-Yang Seamen's Labour Union carried Red literature and correspondence throughout Southeast Asia. With the help of the renewed efforts of the Comintern, the Malayan Communists made determined effort to gain power.<sup>22</sup>

The Malaya communists were forced to reorganise again in 1930, when the local government was irritated by communist riots and resorted to repressive action. At the third representatives' conference of the Nan-Yang Communist Party and its affiliated organizations they established the "Communist Party of Malaya". The newly established Malayan Communist Party was put under the supervision of the Comintern's Far Eastern Bureau in Shanghai instead of the CCP. The strength of the Malayan communists at that time accordingly to Mr. Joseph Ducroux, was about 1,500 party members, 10,000 Communist Labour unionists, fifty active women supporters and two hundred people in a settled organization known as the Anti-Imperialist League.<sup>23</sup>

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22. Cang Hu, op. cit., 1976, p.46.

23. Ibid., p.49.

On the one side Thailand was facing Pattani insurgency, and on the other side Malaysia was facing communist insurgency. These two insurgencies were offshoots of economic, social, cultural and colonial rule.

When Malaysia was ruled by the British, the Malay dominated areas were handed over to the Thailand. It was the result of a power struggle between French and British. In June 1895 Lord Salisbury began the negotiations that culminated in the Anglo-French Agreement of 1896 guaranteeing the neutrality of the Menam basin. Under this agreement the remainder of the country was divided into spheres of British and French influence, but Salisbury insisted that the agreement had in no way affected these areas. Nonetheless, on April 6, 1897, Great Britain got Siam to sign a treaty promising not to cede any territory or to grant any concessions in the Malay peninsular South of Banglapan to a third power. On April 8, 1904, finally the Franco-British controversy over Siam ended. Both powers were free there after to deal separately with Bangkok. This is to maintain cordial relations with France. These were all techniques of the British to have an upper hand in this region. After this Britain had a treaty with the Siam also known as the Anglo-Siamese treaty of 1909.<sup>24</sup>

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24. Barbara Watson, A History of Malaysia, Pub. Singapore, Y.P. 1982, pp.192-93.

The 1855 treaty called 'Bowring treaty' is unique and in fact was a break-through for Great Britain to strengthen its position. The Bowring treaty was perhaps the most important. The English merchants were allowed free entry in all Siamese ports but were permitted to leave only in Bangkok. The years following the Bowring treaty were marked by the rise of British influence. The British power was becoming dominant in the Far East. Further, it was the starting point in the establishment of British shipping in 1884 in Bangkok (then the only international port) which constituted 61 per cent of the whole, and by 1898 it had risen to 78 per cent.<sup>25</sup> Thus, the Thai-Malayan relations were determined by the British rulers in the colonial period. In the beginning of the 20th century, Britain came out with territorial claims against Thailand on behalf of Malaya and in 1909 treaty.

The Anglo-Siamese Treaty 1909:

Britain had treaties with powerful nations in that region i.e., France and Thailand. The Entete Cordiale of April 8, 1904 finally liquidated the Franco-British controversy over Siam, and the problem with France on Siame was solved. In the year 1909 Britain had a treaty

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25. Thomson Virginia, op. cit., 1941, p.164.

with Siam. With this treaty the relations between these countries enter a new phase.<sup>26</sup>

Britain's sapping of Siamese authority in the peninsular states, known as empire building by persuasion, was conducted several times. One point of attack was Siam's unpopularity with Malays. It was true that Siam had changed her old policy of Laissez-faire to one of the greater centralization, in which local revenues were not equitably dispersed by Bangkok. Small nations had fed up with this kind of Siam's policies.

The negotiation of the treaty of 1909 was a long and delicate task. Although discussions began in 1904, the treaty did not become a reality until five years later when Siam transferred to Great Britain her sovereign rights over Kelantan, Trengganu, Kedah, and parted with an area of about 20,000 square miles.<sup>27</sup>

Moreover, the Siamese knew that the only way to save the northern peninsular states - Pattani, Trang and Puket - which were also beginning to feel the British pressure, was to arrest any further expansion by coming

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26. N. Haimindra, "The Problems of the Thai-Muslims in Southern Thailand", Journal of South-East Asian Studies, Vol.VII(2), Sept. 1976, p.203.

27. V. Thomson, op. cit., 1941, p.166.

to terms with Great Britain. A secret written agreement attached to the treaty of 1909 gave Siam a free hand in the peninsular states left under her control, except in the matter of granting military bases to a third power. This "concession" was of more practical value to Siam than all the rest of the treaty, including the breach it made in Britain's extreme territorial rights and the final establishment of Siam's financial dependence on London - both important factors in her future foreign policy.

With the treaty of 1909, Anglo-Siamese relations entered a new and prolonged period of smooth sailing, which remained undisturbed until Siam's change to a constitutional regime. Siam joined the war on the side of the Allies; and in the post-War period Britain regained her dominant position in Siamese economy and her influence in the administration, which the Germans had threatened. Moreover, in spite of all the sensationalism and nervous tension that has resulted from the establishment of the constitutional regime, Britain had maintained her lead among foreign nations in Siam; but she appreciates that the retaining of her strong position depended upon the preservation of the status quo, which was threatened from within by the aggressive nationalism of the assembly and the press, and from without by Japanese



economic position.<sup>28</sup>

When Malaysia became independent in 1963, it was believed that it will not be able to maintain good relations with Thailand. It was because of the ethnic and territorial disputes of the past. But the later developments have shown that both the states have taken realistic steps towards forging better relations. The following chapters attempt to analyse those aspects.

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28. Ibid., p.166.

## CHAPTER II

### PATTANI LIBERATION FRONT AND MALAYAN COMMUNIST PARTY

#### PATTANI LIBERATION FRONT (PLF) - Movement and its Demands:

The largest concentration of Muslims in the Southern provinces of Pattani, Yala, Narathival and Satul make up around 80 per cent of the total Muslim population. Most of the Muslims in these provinces speak Malay language a dialect of the language spoken by the Muslims in Malaysia.

In the Southern provinces a section of the Muslims is demanding a separate state and has taken to arms.<sup>1</sup> This separatist movement is led by two organizations known as the Barisan Revolusi National (National Revolutionary Front, (BRN) and the Pattani United Liberation Organization (PULO).<sup>2</sup>

#### Demands:

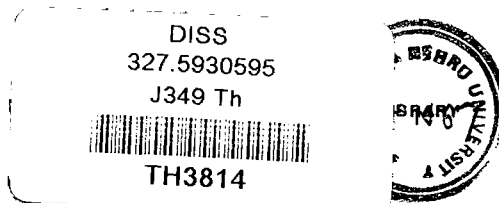
Meanwhile the people of the region submitted a petition to the Bangkok government. The demands are:

- (1) the appointment of a local Malay High Commissioner to govern the four provinces of Pattani, Yala,

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1. Engineer Asgar Ali, "Islam in Thailand: Resurgence or Consolidation", Islam & the Modern Age 14(1); p.60.

2. Ibid., p.62.



Narathiwat and Satun;

- (2) all revenues collected in the four above mentioned Malay provinces should be spent for the benefit and development of the area concerned;
- (3) Malay language should be taught in all schools in the provinces from standard I to standard IV;
- (4) the appointment of local Malaya to fill 80 per cent of the area's administrative posts;
- (5) the use of Malay language in all government departments in the area along side the Thai language;
- (6) the department of Islamic Religious Affairs of South Thailand should be allowed to promulgate its own laws, regulations relating to Muslim religion and Malay customs, with the approval of Malaya High Commission; and
- (7) Muslim religious courts (Mehkamah Shariah) should be separated from the Thai Civil courts and with authority to deal with the cases pertaining to Islamic religion.<sup>3</sup>

Government Measures to curb this Problem:

Unlike Malaysia, Thailand is treating Thai-Malay

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3. Mujtab Rajvi, "Thai Muslims", Pakistan Horizon, 32(3); 1979, p.62.

Muslims as equals. Thailand has been sending good officers to bring these people into the mainstream. Thai government has ensured equality of Muslims with Thai Nationals, and guaranteed freedom to follow the Islamic faith. Officials appointed to the Southern provinces in the future to be well-versed in Islamic customs and traditions and high Muslim officials were appointed to advise the government in southern region. Changing to the Muslim weekend; aid for construction of Mosques; observance of Islamic law in all matters of marriage and inheritance; acceptance of Islamic dress in all government offices; establish, at government expenses, of Central Islamic Institute with boarding facilities for intermediate and high school education; a special curriculum in Malay in the primary schools; and equality of entrance into the Thai army, navy and police.<sup>4</sup>

Not only Thailand but also Malaysia opposed this problem. Reason for this is that Malaysia too face some problems. Thailand, had sent police to patrol the Malayan frontier with a view to prevent infiltration into Thailand of insurrection elements from Malaya. Illegal immigrants from Thailand, however, continued

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4. Nantawan Haimindra, "Thai Minorities Problem in South" (Part 2), Jor. of SEA Studies, Vol.VII(2), Sept. 1976, p.220.

to enter Malaya in spite of Bangkok's promise of better conditions in the south.<sup>5</sup>

THE MALAYAN COMMUNIST PARTY (MCP) -  
Birth and Emergence of Communism:

According to some sources Communism was introduced to Malaya as early as in 1913 by Tan Malaka, an Indonesian Communist supported by Comintern delegate G. Maring, who arrived at Java in 1913 to propagate Marxism. After some time on April 30, 1930 the Communist Party of Malaya was established.<sup>6</sup>

In fact Malay Communist Party was never an indigenous movement. Communism was brought to Malaya in the early 1920s by agent of the Communist Party of China which itself became the most powerful offshoot of the Russian Communist Party.<sup>7</sup> Firstly Malay Communist Party was supported by Chinese, and slowly by Indian labourers also.

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5. Ibid., p.219.

6. Chang Hu, Issues and Studies, Vol.12, Jan.-June 1976, p.46.

7. Harry Miller, Jungle War in Malaya, Arthur Barker Limited, 1972, London, p.27.

The Communist movement had faced many difficulties. In spite of the difficulties the Communist movement made some headway, almost entirely among the Chinese. In April 1930, the Nanyang Communist Party was dissolved and replaced by the Malayan Communist Party, which was given the single aim of establishing a Communist republic in Malaya.<sup>8</sup>

One of the reasons for the formation of Malayan Communist Party was the economic depression, coupled with increased Comintern interest in the region. This led to a rapid expansion of the party, the Communists playing a leading role in the Malayan Anti-Imperialist League.<sup>9</sup>

When war broke out in Europe in 1939, the MCP claimed a membership of thirty-seven thousand. The MCP had treated both the British and Japanese as a "common enemy".<sup>10</sup> The CPM's aggressive role in the labour strikes of the 1930's led to arrest and a period of crisis and self-examination. Previous policies were condemned as "Left opportunism and the party turned to a young Comintern agent named Loi Tak, a Vietnamese educated

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8. Ibid., p.28.

9. Sim Richard, "Malaysia, containing the Communist insurgency," Conflict Studies, 110, Aug. 1976, p.4.

10. Harry Miller, op. cit., 1972, p.29.

in the USSR and France who had given militant service in the Shanghai Town Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. What was not known was that he was working for the British intelligence service. This fact, when discovered was later to have a decisive influence on the Communists' thinking: charges of police infiltration repeatedly resulted in witchhunts, one of which was to lead directly to the party's three way split in 1970.<sup>11</sup>

Nonetheless, Loi Tak's skillful leadership as General Secretary kept the party together through the upheavals of the late 1930's and during the Japanese occupation the CPM formed the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA) in March 1942 which through little more than an irritant to the Japanese, remained the principal resistance force. The communists emerged from the war as a legal party, organized and substantial, but racked by controversy. Our faction soon dubbed the "Chinese line" - advocated the armed seizure of power, but under the restraining leadership of Loi Tak the CPM chose the constitutional path through United Front tactics.<sup>12</sup>

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11. Sim Richard, op. cit., 1979, pp.5-6.

12. Ibid., pp.6-7.

By 1947 suspicious about Loi Tak's motives gained ground, and he suddenly disappeared, together with substantial party funds. He was succeeded by Chin Peng, then only 26, whose energetic leadership gave the party new vigour. An extensive re-organization was soon completed and by early 1948 former member of the MPAJA had been recalled to active service.<sup>13</sup>

The decision to launch the insurrection of 1948-60 was taken at the Asian Youth Congress held in Calcutta in February 1948. This Asian Youth Congress have ensured a degree of coordination in the insurgencies which then engulfed Burma, Malaysia, Indonesia and Philippines.

#### GUERRILLA NETWORK:

MNLA recruits came mainly from the border villages but also from urban support networks. Each family required to either hand over a large cash contribution or provide one son for jungle training. The CPM's chief propaganda instrument is its radio - Radio Suara Revolusi Malaya (Voice of Malaysia Revolution).<sup>14</sup>

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13. Ibid., p.7.

14. Lucian W. Pye, Guerrilla Communism in Malaya, Princeton University, pp.102-3.



Terrorism and its Politics:

The inability of the MRLA to carry out guerrilla warfare meant that the struggle in Malaya was not one between two armed opponents in which each sought to destroy or weaken the other in order to impose its political will, as is the character of war. Instead with the development of terrorism, the conflict became essentially one in which both the government and MCP sought to active direct political objectives in their relations with a common civilian population. The Government, especially under the new High Commissioner, General Sir Gerald Templer, increasingly viewed the struggle as one of winning over "the hearts and minds of the Malayan people" to the ideas of a free and democratic political process. In practice, the Government set itself the task of encouraging greater and greater public participation and involvement in the country's affairs. The fact is that MCP's power is reducing as guerrilla warfare turned into terrorism. After three years of terrorism, it was apparent that the party had to find new techniques to ensure the continued neutrality of the mass of Malayan Chinese.<sup>15</sup>

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15. Ibid., p.105.

Counter-attacks from British Malaya:

The MCP started multiplying year after year. British interests were disturbed by the MCP activities. To suppress the communists from Malaya, the British rulers introduced many policies and plans to counter MCP.

The Briggs Plan:

Sir Harold Briggs, who had retired to Cyprus in 1948 after distinguished military career, including Jungle Warfare in Burma. As a director of operations Ito plan to coordinate, and direct the anti-bandit operations of the police and fighting forces'. Briggs hardly altered a word, particularly in the statement of four vital suggestions for conducting the war:

- (a) to dominate the populated areas and to build up a feeling of complete security there in which will in time result in a steady and increasing flow of information coming in from all sources;
- (b) to break up the communist organization within the populated areas;
- (c) to isolate the bandits from their food and information supply organization which are in the populated area;

- (d) to destroy the bandits by forcing them to attack them on their own ground.

Briggs' plan meant to cut the enemy lines of communication between CTs and villages, and force the CTs out to battle.<sup>16</sup>

#### The Social Revolution:

Gurney and Briggs were now poised to implement speedily the largest social revolution ever known in Asia - the resettlement of 600,000 squatters into new villages, a revolution which ironically might never have been initiated but for the threat of communism, and one which was to prove a brilliant, unorthodox tactic in the war against guerrilla communism.<sup>17</sup>

#### The War of Words:

The psychological warfare philosophy that resulted was such a remarkable factor in helping to erode communism that it would become a standard pattern in many parts of South-East Asia. British empire had introduced measures like these and they succeeded in bringing areas into mainstream.<sup>18</sup>

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16. N. Barber, The War of Running dogs..., Collins, 1971, p.71.

17. Ibid., p.100.

18. Ibid., p.105.

Counterattacks after independence:

Lieutenant-General Sir Gerald Templer arrived in Malaya in early February 1952 as the new High Commissioner. He declared that his immediate objective was the formation of a visited Malayan nation. Towards this goal and that of undermining and eventually destroying the MCP, Templer introduced local elections, village councils and Chinese citizenship to over half the Chinese population; merged the war council with the executive council; and enabled the Chinese for the first time to enter the Malayan civil service. Towards the end of that year leaders of the major Malayan political parties were appointed by the government to the war Executive council so that they would bring about the destruction of the MCP.<sup>19</sup>

Malay Government Response: Police operations

In both the civil and military fields the acquisition of detailed intelligence on the insurgent's capabilities and intentions is a firm requisite. The government mobilized mass support through persuasion, terror and propaganda. The influence of the 'Bumiputra policy' on the special branch, where previously Chinese officers had predominated to deal effectively with CPM (largely

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19. Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonerd Y. Andaya, A History of Malaysia, p.261.

Chinese), now Malays were systematically promoted in preference to Chinese.<sup>20</sup>

Special branch focuses most of its work on the communist support network to interrupt the guerrilla's food supplies and deny them intelligence. The most successful special branch operation to date was a nationwide sweep "operation planet" launched in 1975 in direct response to the vigorous terrorist campaign of that year.<sup>21</sup>

Allegations of special branch infiltration led directly to the blood bath leading to the party's three-way split in 1970 and the CPM's newest Constitution contains a clause specially designed to counter this threat. Malayan government had also bought some legislations to neutralise MCP guerrilla activities in Malaya. The government delegation was secure in the knowledge that the war against the communists was being won. The government's programme of psychological warfare, food denial and the relentless pressure of the society forces contributed to the disintegration of guerrilla organization and lowering of MCP morale. In 1958 large number

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20. Sim Richard, op. cit., 1979, p.14.

21. N. Barber, op. cit., 1971, p.119.

of guerrillas surrendered, and major guerrilla incidents were reduced to a month.<sup>22</sup>

Legislations:

Malay government had taken stringent measures to repress this MCP activities. The new policy was first embodied in the essential (security cases) Regulation Act 1975 (supporting the International Security Act) which set aside important principles and provoked a furore in the legal profession. The constitutional (Amendment) Act denied the security suspects the right of habeas corpus etc. The University Colleges Amendment Act of June 1975 banned students from belonging to or expressing support for any political party or trade union, and disbanded most student bodies. In May 1976 the laws governing the carrying of identity cards were stiffened with maximum fine raised to M \$ 3,000. Amendments to the internal security regulation of 1966 approved on 28 June 1976 tightened controls on labour registration in industries particularly vulnerable to "subversive and anti-national activity."<sup>23</sup>

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22. Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonerd Y. Andaya, op. cit., p.263.

23. Sim Richard, op. cit., 1979, p.12.

Not only anti-communist policies but also progressive action against lands, when the CPM produced its land reform programme in mid-1975 the government promptly countered with a complete redrafting of the third Malaysia plan, giving much greater attention to agriculture and the fight against poverty etc.<sup>24</sup>

Military Action:

Malayan Government introduced military force in the troubled region. The first significant army drive on 25 September, 1971, code-named operation Loyalty Gerakan Sitia), was primarily a probe to assess the size of the communist phenomenon. In the process of bringing peace in the region, the Thai-Malaysian border agreement of April 1972 assisted the drive. To stop communist infiltration, government strengthened local self-defence, all civilian males between the ages of 18 and 55 and provided a continual patrol rota in key areas. In the operations against communists, American style air strikes had taken place. However pursuits were slow and wearisome, the communists fading into the jungle leaving mined and booby-trapped paths. Indeed, most security casualties were caused by booby-traps, easily the communist's most effective weapon. Thai-Malaysian joint operations had

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24. Ibid., p.13.

further isolated CTs.<sup>25</sup>

They have deployed the vigilant defence force - the People's Volunteer Groups (RELA). The 1979 mid-term review of the third Malaysia plan claimed some noteworthy success 43,600 landless families had been given land and the incidence of poverty in the peninsula had fallen from 44% in 1975 to about 37 in 1978. In this way Malayan government had won war against communist insurgents.

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25. Ibid., p.14.



### CHAPTER III

#### THE ROLE OF THE JOINT COMMISSION

The Muslim terrorists became very active early in the sixties in Thailand, and so did the Communists in Malaysia. Thailand decided to take help from the Government of Malaysia in bringing to book the communist terrorists active on Thai-Malaysian border. Malaysia's response was prompt and positive. In 1965, a border agreement was signed by Thailand and Malaysia. It provided for regular meetings between high and middle level officials to discuss cooperation against the Malay Communist Insurgents. Thus a General Border Committee, consisting of ministerial level officials from both countries, met every six months, alternatively in Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur. A Regional Border Committee, consisting of police and civilian officials stations in the border regions of each country met more frequently.<sup>1</sup> In March 1965, Malaysia agreed to establish a combined intelligence headquarters to combat communist terrorists along the border.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Thomas M. Ladd, "Malayan Communist insurgents & Thai-Malaysian relations", Asian Affairs on American Review, 4(6) July-Aug. 1977, pp.375-76.
  2. New York Times, 14 March 1965, cf. FEER, p.19.

These meetings led to discussions on specific types of cooperation aimed against the Malay Communist Insurgents (MCIs); and either as a result of the 1965 agreement or subsequent agreements a number of steps were taken. It was agreed that security forces of either country in "hot pursuit" of MCIs could enter the other country for a distance upto five miles. In effect, this meant that only Malaysian forces would cross the border, since the MCI sanctury was on the Thai side. A joint intelligence center was established in Songkhla town, commanded by a Thai, it was responsible for gathering intelligence about the MCIs, integrating information gathered by intelligence to Thailand and Malaysian officials. The center also developed strategy for joint action against the MCIs. Scores of Malaysian secret police were permitted to operate within the border provinces in order to assist the Thai police in gathering intelligence. Thailand also allowed some 500 troops of the Malaysian police field force to be stationed at any time (replacements were periodically rotated in) at Betong and Waeng. Such units went on joint patrol with Thai Border Patrol Police in these districts. Eventually, several Malaysian helicopters were stationed at a newly constructed airstrips in

Betong for patrol and combat support purposes.<sup>3</sup>

Such actions did not have an adverse effect on the MCIs in the border provinces. They had to abandon several camps and some of their men were lost in combat. They were forced to move frequently from one part of Subazea to another and they found it more difficult, though not prohibitively so, to obtain food and other supplies. However, these steps did not seriously weaken the position of the MCIs.

The Malaysian and the Thailand security officials met and conferred in Kuala Lumpur in February 1966. A joint communique issued on the subject started that both sides were especially pleased to take note of the tremendous progress achieved by the combined intelligence headquarters and would take steps to intensify their joint efforts to secure elimination of the communist terrorist organization in the border area.<sup>4</sup>

Thus the relations between Thailand and Malaysia were strengthening 1960 onwards. But there was a

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3. Thomas M. Ladd, op. cit., 1977, p.376.

4. Ganganath Jha, Foreign Policy of Thailand, Radiant Publishers, N.D., 1979, p.124.

tremendous change in relations not only with Thailand, but also with Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore etc. This is as a result of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) 1967.

Border Commission:

The Commission has played an increasingly important role over the years as a forum in which problems can be discussed and worked out and where personal relations can be cultivated. The Commission is normally headed by the Supreme Commander of the Thai armed forces and the Malaysian minister of home affairs (internal security). Matters concerning insurgency area as well as border security, narcotics questions, and a wide range of similar matters were discussed. The Joint Commission has presided over the nearly completed demarcation of the border.<sup>5</sup>

These kind of activities further facilitated co-operation between Thailand and Malaysia in dealing with terrorist activities on the Thai-Malaysian borders. In July 1968 a Thai delegation led by the Deputy Defence Minister, Air Chief Marshal Thawee Chullasapya, visited Kuala Lumpur. The visit resulted in an agreement between

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5. Aleksander Mikhailov, "Cooperation with ASEAN States", Foreign Trade, (6) 1989, p.22.

the two countries on 4 July 1968. Under the agreement, troops of both countries deployed on their common borders could go upto five miles in hot pursuit of geurrillas into each other's territories. They could also stay for 24 hours in each others territories after such an entry. Both countries mentioned in the joint communique that the existence of communists along the frontier was a threat to their national security and prestige.<sup>6</sup>

Soon there followed another comprehensive accord on 7th March 1970 providing for co-operation between the armed forces of the two countries against communist guerrillas operating on both sides of the Thai-Malaysian borders. It allowed armed forces of either country to be deployed in the territory of the other, and also permitted Thai and Malaysian aircraft to carry on air attacks against communist positions on both sides of the common borders.<sup>7</sup> Immediately after the signing of the agreement Tun Abdul Razak disclosed that 2,000 Malaysian troops were already deployed on the Thai

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6. New York Times, 6 July 1968, p.22.

7. G.N. Jha, op. cit., 1979, p.126.

side of the border to help the Thai forces in anti-guerrilla operations. The Malaysian Government's non-involvement had worked very much in weakening the movements in that region. Malaysia so far has stared clearly of Bangkok's Southern irredentist problem and has warned the pan-Malayan Islamic Party not to give any help to the Muslim separatist organization just across the border in predominantly Moslem provinces.<sup>8</sup>

In the process of the border security Tun. Dr. Ismail Al-Haji bin Dato Haji Abdul Rahman, Deputy Prime Minister and leader of the Malaysian delegation, at 14th meeting of the General Border Committee at Bangkok on May 30, 1972. In his speech he said, "Our security forces have continued to harass the communist terrorists by launching numerous operations against them. These operations have succeeded in making it impossible for the terrorists to remain long in any one area or indeed to move in large groups. They have instead been forced to break up into smaller

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8. "Thailand & Malaysia: A Study of Border Problems and Cooperation", FEER, Vol.70, No.49, 5 Dec. 1970, p.7.

groups for greater mobility to escape from our security forces."<sup>9</sup>

It is imperative that we do not let up the pressure on our common enemy. On our side of the border we have in recent months launched three major operations involving civil, military and police. The General Border Committee which provided a most valuable forum for us to meet, discuss and take counsel together on better and more effective measures to combat and deal with our common enemy.<sup>10</sup>

Among the matters considered at the meeting were study papers prepared by the regional Border Committee on the strategy and set up the communist terrorist organization and also various countermeasures against the terrorists. The committee was confident that these studies would help to greatly improve security forces operations against the terrorists.

General Border Committee agreed to make provision for sufficient reserve forces to be readily available to fight the terrorists in the border areas.<sup>11</sup>

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9. Foreign Affairs Malaysia, Vol.5, No.2, June 1972, p.53.

10. Ibid., p.54.

11. Ibid., p.56.

Joint Communique issued at the end of the 16th Malaysia/Thai General Border Meeting in Kuala Lumpur in November 1972. In this communique they increased military activities in the southern part of Thailand there had been an increase in the number of contacts and incidents. A number of communist terrorists were eliminated and several communist terrorist camps, weapons, ammunition and other equipment were recovered. These operations had caused disruptions to the communist subversion and training activities in the areas concerned.<sup>12</sup>

General Border Committees had tightened the control of the movement of essential supplies, possession of food stuffs and sales of arms, had caused considerable set back to the communist activities. In addition to these, establishment and expansion of the vigilant corps village self-defence groups further built up the spirit of self-defence amongst the rural and suburban population. Since the development of countermeasures had brought considerable success against the communist activities and propaganda, the committee felt that such measures should be maintained and where possible more amenities be provided to the

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12. Ibid., pp.73-74.



people living on the border. The committee agreed to establish a joint investigation of any trans-border incidents involving the loss of property or life.<sup>13</sup>

In addition, psychological operations have been intensified. Visits by top government officials and the various civic action programmes of security forces in the rural areas have boosted the morale of the people and increased their support for Government projects.<sup>14</sup>

19th Border Committee Meeting:

The General Border Committee Thailand/Malaysia held its 19th meeting in Kuala Lumpur on the 7th January 1975. The Hon'ble Tan Sri Ghazali bin Shafie, Minister of Home affairs of Malaysia chaired the meeting while General Tan Sri Kriangsak Chomnan, Chief of staff of Royal Thai Armed Forces led the Thai delegation. This Committee welcomed the participation of General Tan Sri Kriangsak as its joint chairman and looked forward to his contribution and leadership in further embracing the effectiveness of the General Border Committee.

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13. Ibid., p.74.

14. Foreign Affairs Malaysia, Vol.6, No.1-3, 1973, p.68.

In spite of the above actions, the Committee was happy and satisfied to note that the people in these areas and the workers on these development projects have actively participated in the fight against terrorists. The Committee was confident that with the continued cooperation of the people and determined cooperation of the people and the determined efforts of all civil agencies and the security forces, more terrorists would be eliminated and their activities curbed.<sup>15</sup>

Details indicated that Malaysian soldiers as well as police would be permitted the right of hot pursuit of guerrillas into Thai territory. More importantly the five mile limit on such chases was removed and Malaysian patrols were now be allowed to stay longer on Thai soil.<sup>16</sup>

After 1976:

The relations between Thailand and Malaysia have come closer and closer through border committee meetings. They have started taking very stringent measures

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15. 19th Thai/Malaysian General Border Committee Meetings - Foreign Affairs Malaysia, Vol.8, 1978, p.46.

16. Antony Polsky, "Thailand-Malaysia Shock treatment", FEER, Vol.63, No.11, 12 March 1970, p.8.

against communist groups in Malaysia and Muslim separatist movement in Thailand.<sup>17</sup>

Increasing military actions to drive out the communist elements on both sides. During March of 1976, cooperation between Thailand and Malaysia against the MCIs declined substantially. In March and early April 1976, MCI activity in Kedah seemed to be increasing, and a large group of MICs was supported in the jungle a few kilometres from the Thai border. On the Malaysian side authorities reacted with a massive sweep, employing about 3,000 security forces and substantial air support. Three MCI camps were captured and a number of the MCIs were killed or wounded. From April 17th through the early morning of May 1, Malaysian forces conducted several operations within the Thai territory.<sup>18</sup>

Later in 1976 there were some changes in their relations, with the change of the Government in Thailand. However the relations normalised with consensus. The relations were normalized when Malaysian leaders

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17. Norton, "Thailand-Malaysia cramp in the Toe", FEER, Vol.71, No.1, 2, January 1971, p.7.

18. Thomas Ladd, op. cit., 1977, p.380.

privately promised that Malaysia would come to the defence of Thailand should the latter be attacked by one or more of the communist states in Southeast Asia, and if Thailand in turn, would cooperate in stronger actions against the MCIs in the border region.<sup>19</sup>

In January 1977, Thai-Malaysian security forces (police and military) carried out a combined operation against the MCIs in Sadao District of Songkhla province. Some 2,000 Malaysians and 1,500 Thais were employed in these operations, one guerrilla camp was captured, and 25 MCIs were reported to have been killed. On March 4, 1977, a new Thai-Malaysian border agreement was signed which designed three types of cooperative security actions against the MCIs: (1) Unilateral operations against the MCIs on the territory of the security force taking the action which, if necessary and approved by the Regional Border Committee, could be carried into the territory of the other state if security forces are pursuing MCIs across the frontiers; (2) Combined operations against the MCIs employing the security forces of both countries, and to be led by a designed combined task force commander; and (3) co-ordinated operations against the MCIs in which the security forces of both countries conduct activities

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19. Ibid., pp.380-81.

in their respective territories, but can cross the border with approval of the regional border committee - for a short distance and for a limited period of time. It is obvious that this agreement contains provisions for "hot pursuit", but it also provides that the forces of each country must return to their own territory after a designated time or after a mission is completed. In the case of combined operations, there is no limit set on how far the forces of one state can penetrate the territory of the other, apart from limits set by the joint planners of the operation.<sup>20</sup>

In March 1977, a second combined operation was undertaken in Sadao. This time 3,200 Malaysians and 1,400 Thais were employed, the Malaysians attacking from the south and the Thais (police, army units) holding the line in the north. While several MCI camps were captured some supplies and weapons, seized, and 20 MCIs reportedly killed. While it was claimed by the combined task forces commander, Major General Mehmood Sulaiman, that revolutionary faction of the MCIs had been broken up, in fact the success of the

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20. Ibid., pp.382-83. See also in Sim Richard, Malaysia, . . . ., Conflict Studies, 110, Aug. 1979, p.17.

operation was questionable.<sup>21</sup>

Thais, too, are now deploying the more efficient US V-150 light armoured cars in the border region. Current Malaysian planning places greater emphasis on army-police co-operation.<sup>22</sup> The Thai government recently approved a Baht 4 millions (US \$ 200,000) special budget increase to support military suppression unit sent to the south.<sup>23</sup>

Thus in the first phase i.e. 1965-1975 the strengthening relations between two countries through agreements and negotiations etc. More importantly origin of the ASEAN in 1967, further deepen the relations between Thailand and Malaysia. ASEAN itself became a forum to discuss these problems in a cordial atmosphere.

In the second phase (1976 to present) they had taken very firm measures to suppress the separatist movement in South Thailand and Malay Communist Insurgent

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21. Thomas Ladd, op. cit., p.383.

22. Richard Sim, op. cit., 1979, p.15.

23. Antony Harrison, "Malaysia-Thailand Border talks", FEER, Vol.70, No.49, 5 Dec. 1970, p.7.

movement on the Malaysian side. High level officials and political leaders used to meet quite often to discuss the progress in their action against these elements through the Thai-Malaysian Joint Commission.

Of late Malaysia decided to build a concrete wall along a part of its border with Thailand, the latest sign of post-Cold War tension between non-communist countries in Southeast Asia.

Zounol Mahmood, Secretary-general of the Malaysian Home affairs ministry, said that the wall would cover about 100 kilometres of the frontier between Thailand and the Malaysia state of Kelantan. Construction is to begin later this year and will cost 7 million ringgit (\$ 2.5 million) he said.

Malaysian officials said that the wall would help stop flow of smuggled narcotics, cigarettes and other taxable goods from Thailand into Malaysia.

The main purpose of the existing barriers have been to prevent the infiltration of communist guerrillas into Malaysia from Thailand. The armed forces of both countries cooperated in the fight against the guerrillas who at last agreed to disband in 1989.

The decision to build the wall in Kelantan follows the recent arrest of 11 Malaysian forestry officers for alleged involvement in illegal logging in Thai-territory and seizure by Thai officials of goods from Malaysian traders at Padang Besar, just inside Malaysia.

Thai officials have complained that the pan-Malaysian Islamic party government of Kelantan is providing refuge for Thai Muslims demanding independence for Southern Thailand. Relations between Malaysia and Thailand have been strained by a dispute over fishing rights in the gulf of Thailand and South China Sea. More than 1,000 Thais have been jailed for illegal fishing in Malaysian waters.

Prasong Soonsiri, a former Secretary-general of Thailand's national security council, said that while ASEAN had been successful in managing intra-ASEAN conflicts, the sources of conflict have to be removed, such as unsettled border issues and territorial claims. Some ASEAN officials maintain that potentially explosive differences between member states need to be dealt with at a multilateral as well as bilateral level.



General Lisandro C. Abadia, the Philippine armed forces Chief of staff, said recently that ASEAN countries should now agree to "change the security situation from one of potential conflict to one of harmony and cooperation."<sup>24</sup>

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24. Richardson Michael, International Herald Tribune, Wednesday, July 10, 1991, p.7.

## CHAPTER IV

### TRADE AND COMMERCIAL RELATIONS

Trade relations between Thailand and Malaysia are negligible. Trade transactions between these two countries are very less. The trade between these two are in primary commodities like food stuffs, petroleum, minerals, and petroleum products and to some extent manufacturing products. Trade between these two countries are with agricultural items, it is because, Malaysia and Thailand are agriculture based countries.<sup>1</sup>

#### POLITICAL COOPERATION:

To boost trade among these Southeast Asian countries, organizations like Association of South-east Asian Nations (ASA) and Maphilindo and ASEAN came into existence. Despite its weakness and imperfections ASEAN is now more consolidated than in the late 1960s. Unlike ASA and Maphilindo, it has survived and became a useful political mechanism through which regional stability and national interest can be promoted. Though the association has not yet eliminated the roots of interstate disputes, it has provided member

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1. Asean Economies, Asia Yearbook 1978, FEER, p.71.

states with the treaty of amity and cooperation under which its signatories are obliged to refrain from the threat or use of force and shall at times settle disputes occurring, which in turn might trigger regional instability, has now been reduced.<sup>2</sup>

#### ECONOMIC COOPERATION:

Despite recent developments, progress in regional development and cooperation has been slow. They have been several hampering factors. A crucial problem was that member states' unwillingness to sacrifice some of their national interests for the sake of greater regional benefits. Firstly, for ASEAN to make some headway, political will and vision are needed so that short-term interests can be reconciled with long-term objectives. Secondly, it needs an effective organizational structure to cope up with the emerging problems. Thirdly, the weak industrial bases and competitive economies constitute another constraint.<sup>3</sup> Economic cooperation will develop only very slowly in the years immediately ahead. To strengthen these countries'

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2. Shee Poon-Kim, "A Decade of ASEAN, 1967-77", Asian Survey, August 1977, Vol.XVII, No.8, p.766.

3. Ibid., p.769.

economic structure, ASEAN firstly is likely to strengthen its political and security cooperation, particularly if external threats and internal subversion continue to be interconnected problems. ASEAN is been trying its level best to make intra-ASEAN trade relations more effective.<sup>4</sup>

#### MALAYSIA AND THAILAND TRADE: ITS CHARACTERISTICS

For Malaysia exports are very important. Of course the trade between Malaysia and Thailand is in decimals, but valuable. Exports have for a long time accounted for more than one-half of the total national income. Even as late as 1978, the ratio of exports to GNP stood at as high as 41 per cent. The ratio of imports to GNP is also substantial, that is, 36 per cent although the ratio has tended to fall over time due to the emergence of import-substitution activities.<sup>5</sup>

#### MALAYSIAN'S EXPORTS TO THAILAND IN 1975:

Malaysian exports to Thailand in 1975 is 1.49 per cent of its total exports to ASEAN countries. The trade between Malaysia and Thailand is very negligible. As a result Malaysia has run into sizeable deficits with Thailand. Malaysia has accordingly maintained intraregional commercial links with its immediate

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4. Ibid., p.770.

5. Palmer D.R. and Thomas J. Reckford, Building of ASEAN 20 years of Southeast Asian cooperation, published with the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C., 1987, p.168.

neighbours. Malaysia's exports to Thailand is also dominated by mineral fuels, which account for 72 per cent of the total.<sup>6</sup>

THAILAND'S EXPORTS TO MALAYSIA IN 1975:

Thailand's exports to Malaysia in the year of 1975 account to about 3.98%. Thailand was the only ASEAN country which has registered trade surpluses with all its ASEAN partners in 1974. Exports to Malaysia has increased and has risen from 4 per cent in 1970 to 6 per cent in 1976. Thailand's exports to Malaysia, trade consists mostly of food items 74 per cent and crude materials 16 per cent.<sup>7</sup>

Malaysia's trade in 1985-86 and 1987 with Thailand are as follows:<sup>8</sup>

	1985	1986	1987
Exports Thailand	1,007.1	1,110.4	1,115.2
Imports Thailand	1,297.2	923.7	1,288.7

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6. Mohmad Ariff, "Malaysia & ASEAN Economic Co-operation," ASEAN Economic Research Unit, Current Issues, No.9, p.60.
  7. Ibid., pp.66-69.
  8. The Far East and Australia, 1989, 20th Edition, Europa Pub. Ltd., England, Malaysia, p.646.

Thailand's trade with Malaysia in 1985-86 and 87 are as follows:<sup>9</sup>

	1985	1986	1987
Imports Malaysia	14,825	10,118	13,898
Exports Malaysia	9,646	10,025	9,971

The trade between Thailand and Malaysia is increasing with small fluctuations. These two countries are trading in the field of raw materials and are also exchanging their technologies. ASEAN helped them in that endeavour. They are adopting plans and programmes to develop trade and commerce among themselves. To improve member countries trade relations, the ASEAN came into existence. To bring economic change in these countries preferential trade agreement (PTA), provision of non-tariff and finance were formulated.

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN):

ASEAN is a regional organization established in 1967 to accelerate economic growth, social progress, and cultural development in Southeast Asia. This organisation has taken many initiatives to bring co-operation among these countries through economic and

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9. Ibid., Thailand, p.980.

political actions.<sup>10</sup>

ASEAN Trade Co-operation and Prospects:

On 24 February 1976, a meeting of the ASEAN Heads of the governments was held in Bali to review the activities of the Association, and this has resulted in the Declaration of ASEAN concord which outlines the programme of action for co-operation among ASEAN countries in the various fields.<sup>11</sup>

The second ASEAN summit was held in Kuala Lumpur from 4 August to 5 August 1977. One of the vital and difficult subjects discussed at the summit was the Preferential Trading Agreement (PTA) which is aimed at fostering the intra-ASEAN trade. The summit finally agreed that the PTA scheme should come into effect on 1 January 1978. In Manila meeting they decided to implement PTA on 1 January 1978.<sup>12</sup>

The ASEAN summit was followed by the Economic Ministerial meeting at Pattaya on 4 September 1977.

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10. Rahman Ibrahim and Mansor Md. Isa, "Non-Tariff Barriers to expanding Intra-ASEAN Trade", ASEAN Economic Bulletin, July 1987, p.74.

11. Ibid., p.74.

12. Saw Swee-Hock, Asean Economies in Transition, Y.P. 1980, Pub. Singapore, p.267.

At this meeting, it was agreed that each member country would be invited to submit at least 50 new items at every future meeting to be held by the Committee of Trade and Tourism. As a result 755 items in 1 September 1978 and 1 March 1979, another 500 items were added, bringing the total number of items under the PTA scheme to 1,326.<sup>13</sup>

Several years of implementation of PTA, and despite the rapid economic growth of the various ASEAN countries especially in the manufacturing sector, intra-regional trade has not been expanding at the expected rate. Studies have indicated that tariff reductions under PTA have had a marginal impact on intra-ASEAN trade (Ooi 1981 and Tan 1982). These studies point to the importance of non-tariff barriers impeding trade among ASEAN countries.<sup>14</sup>

Non-Tariff:

A 10 per cent across the board bilateral tariff reduction scheme has been in operation between Singapore and Thailand and between Singapore and the Philippines. This arrangement was rejected by the other two member

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13. Ibid., p.268.

14. Rahman and Mansor, op. cit., 1987, p.75.



countries - Malaysia and Indonesia.

Intra-ASEAN trade presently accounts for less than 17 per cent of the total ASEAN trade. Therefore, the scope for ASEAN nations to draw more of the import requirements from within the ASEAN region is enormous - it would open up more opportunities for foreign investments and encourage the inflow of advanced technical know-how to the region, thereby contributing to further economic development of the member nations.<sup>15</sup>

The establishment of a free trade area involves the abolition of tariff and quantitative restrictions between the participating countries; but each country retains its own tariffs against non-member countries. The establishment of a free trade area on a selective basis, that is, the abolition of tariff and of other import restrictions on certain crucial commodities of the ASEAN region. The primary products of the ASEAN region, such as rice, crude, oil, and some selected durable consumer goods, can be chosen as the main commodities for the initial experiment of a free trade area.<sup>16</sup>

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15. Saw Swee Hock, op. cit., 1980, p.268.

16. Ibid., pp.269-70.

The ASEAN Finance Corporation (AFC):

The ASEAN Finance Corporation (AFC) was established in 1981 as a co-operative venture of commercial banks in ASEAN. Its objectives are to finance ASEAN industrial cooperative projects and to provide venture capital. The ASEAN Finance Corporation (AFC) was set up to finance ASEAN industrial cooperative projects and to provide venture capital to ASEAN entrepreneurs.

AFC's Services:

1. Project Finance: standard medium and long-term leading;
2. Debt/Equity participation: Provision of equity capital and participation in the issue of debt;
3. Treasury services:
  - (a) Provision of short and medium-term credit to ASEAN financial institutions.
  - (b) Provision of Intra-ASEAN trade finance via bankers' acceptances, letters of credit etc.
  - (c) Other treasury services, e.g., foreign exchange dealing.<sup>17</sup>

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17. H. Edward English, "Dynamic Comparative Advantage and the Search for a Coherent Industrial Policy in ASEAN", ASEAN Economic Bulletin, July 1988, p.71.

Recipients of AFC's loan and equity activities are required to be:

- (1) an ASEAN Industrial Joint Venture (AIJV) project;
- (2) a project under the ASEAN Industrial Complementmentation Agreement (AICA); or an ASEAN industrial project;
- (3) a project involving two or more ASEAN countries;
- (4) a project in one ASEAN country that promotes intra-ASEAN economic cooperation; or
- (5) a small to medium-sized ASEAN financial institution.

Very little debt or equity activity has taken place under either category 3 or 4, while no loans have been made in category 5. Another important function of the AFC was to act primarily as an intermediary between financial institutions in ASEAN.<sup>18</sup>

This way ASEAN and its committees and corporations have been working for its member countries, it has been intensifying economic cooperation among these countries. Comparatively there is a change in the

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18. Ibid., p.72.

trade growth in these countries. Apart from trade growth there are many challenges and pressures to face.

ASEAN - Economic and Political Challenges:

Firstly, it is not practical to expect a customs union or a common market to be set up in this region in the near future. Establishing a customs union involves the elimination of substantially all the tariff and other forms of trade restrictions among the participating countries and the setting up of uniform tariffs and other regulations on foreign trade with non-member countries. These two critical requirements seem impossible to meet in the near future.<sup>19</sup>

Secondly, controversy prevails regarding the efficacy of trade as an agent of economic growth in the developing countries at large. Critics argued that international trade maintains the exploitation of the developing economies by mature industrialized countries. In other words, they hypothesize that the existence of the trade gap and the saving gap has been the major constraint on the economic growth of many

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19. Saw Swee Hock, op. cit., 1980, p.270.

developing countries.<sup>20</sup>

Thirdly, in the ASEAN context open economies are in fact vulnerable to instabilities caused by external factors. Nonetheless, the economic experience of ASEAN as a whole points to a more optimistic note on the issue of trade. International trade can stimulate latent indigenous forces for development, provided the essential positive and self-reinforcing responses exist in the Asean economies.<sup>21</sup>

Analysis of the Asean trade pattern and development brings out the realization that most Asean economies fail to develop an export market for manufactures or to increase the processing of primary exports. In determining the future growth rates of both traditional sector exports and exports of manufactures, a large measure hinges on the volume of world demand for Asean agricultural and mineral resources, and the extent of open-door policy demonstrated by the industrialized countries.<sup>22</sup>

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20. Janamitra Devan, "The ASEAN Preferential Trading Arrangement", ASEAN Economic Bulletin, November 1987, p.202.

21. Saw Swee Hock, op. cit., 1980, p.271.

22. Ibid., p.271.

**POLITICAL CHALLENGES:**

Sometimes ASEAN economic co-operation may be disrupted by internal instability which will be greatly aggravated by changes in national leadership in ASEAN countries and communist threat to these Asean open-economies. Given the fact that communism is receding in the future it may not become a threat to the ASEAN.<sup>23</sup>

The rate of progress in ASEAN economic cooperation appears to be rather slow, making for a dismal performance. In evaluating ASEAN's performance, however, one must not lose sight of the fact that the beginning of ASEAN economic cooperation really began in 1976 at Bali and not in 1967 at Bangkok. Since the Bali summit, ASEAN has attempted quite successfully to compensate for its inactivity during previous decade. Seen in this perspective, ASEAN's performance since the declaration of the concord in 1976 has been fairly significant, although there is still much to be desired.

A study of the economies of Thailand and Malaysia proves that they are growing fast. On the basis of World Bank figures, Malaysia's GDP per capita in 1980 was about \$ 1700. Malaysia's overall growth rates have

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23. Mohamed Ariff, op. cit., 1981, p.171.

been impressive, averaging 7 per cent per annum in the 1970's.<sup>24</sup>

On the basis of World Bank figures, Thailand's GDP per capita in 1980 was a little under \$700, making it a middle income developing country. Thai economic performance over the past two decades has been impressive annual growth rates averages 8 per cent in 1960's and 7 per cent in the 1970s and 9-11 per cent in 1980s.<sup>25</sup> The Thai and Malaysian economies are greatly influenced by the ASEAN. This organization has been playing a vital role in boosting the trade of these two countries. Both countries have been benefited by the ASEAN. In comparison Thailand benefited a lot. For example, in the intra-ASEAN trade is more important to Thailand's exports than to its imports.<sup>26</sup>

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24. Brian Wawn, The Economies of ASEAN Countries, Macmillan, London, Y.P. 1984, p.38.

25. Ibid., p.135.

26. Ibid., p.173.

## CONCLUSION

Thailand and Malaysia are strategically located in the middle of Southeast Asia. Both countries are rich in mineral and natural resources. The land is fertile in both the countries, and their economies are mainly based on agriculture. Thailand and Malaysia are beautiful with flora and fauna. That is why they are attracting foreign tourists from all over the world. Malaysia is very rich in resources like rubber, tin, petroleum etc. It is exporting these items in a big way. On the other hand Thailand is a rice producing country with natural resources.

Malaysia is multiracial and multireligious society, i.e., Malays, Chinese and Indians. If Chinese and Indians are combined together, the Malays come into minority. But all the communities are not equal constitutionally. Malay government has introduced "Bhumi Putra" policy or Sons of the Soil. Because of this, Chinese and Indians have been facing many problems. This kind of treatment towards the minorities have prompted the Chinese to indulge in communist movement in Malaysia. The Malay Communist Party (MCP) is active on Thai-Malaysian borders. But on the Thai



side, Pattani Liberation Front (PLF) is active on the Southern provinces.

Behind Pattani movement and Communist movement in Malaysia, economic, social, political, cultural, ethnic, and religious factors are the important issues. For example, Thailand is a Buddhist country, whereas in the South, 80 per cent population are Muslims. Whatever policy Thai government takes it generally contradicts the Muslim population in the South, on the basis of religion. Whereas in Malaysia due to political reasons such as reservations to the natives of Malay population has provoked other ethnic groups. So labourers of Indian origin and Chinese started a movement against Malay rule.

Secondly, in southern tip of Thailand there is an insurgency movement. In fact this area is rich in natural resources but poor in development, which is because of lack of infrastructure. Here economy is in the hands of Chinese tradesmen. They have been exploiting these natural resources. Due to this, the people in this area are poor, and therefore these people are highly antagonistic towards Thai administration. So they started armed struggle to stop exploitation

and are asking for a separate state from Thailand.

To eradicate this problem Thai Government has taken many policies and programmes. Such as appointing Malay speaking officials in this region and establishing schools, polytechnics and mosques etc. And there is no bar for the Malay Muslims to join into the Thai military forces. This is how this government has been trying to bring these people into the mainstream.

On the military front also Thailand and Malaysia came together to solve this problem along the Thai and Malaysian borders through the formation of a joint commission to resolve the disputes at their common frontiers and curb the activities of MCP and PLF guerrillas.

The Chinese community in Malaysia are quite unhappy with their government. In fact the government of the Malaysia is giving more and more advantages to Malay population, for instance in politics, reservations in government jobs. All these things have frustrated the Chinese and some of them have started an armed struggle against Malaysian government under the leadership of the Malay an Communist Party (MCP).

But the government is very rigid to suppress this kind of communist insurgency. Government have introduced many anti-communist politics such as administrative and military actions. Government has sent massive military force, and Government has intensified combining operations. Administratively, they have sent spy groups and stopped food supplies to these areas and carried psychological warfare against these communist people.

As a result of efforts of the ASEAN, the relations amongst member-nations improved. There has been greater integration of the people of the region and their conflicts have been resolved in a peaceful manner.

Again, the role of the Joint Commission is unique. It brought officials of the two countries closer. This became a medium, from which both officially chalked out master plans, strategies and programmes. As a result of it they removed certain weaknesses or their military fronts. Both countries have cooperated in patrolling this jungle region. They have succeeded in curbing insurgency movements.

Recently Malaysia has been thinking or constructing a wall on the border between Thai and Malaysia.

Of the four Malaysian states along the 575 kilometre border with Thailand. The reason that Malaysian officials gave is that the wall would help stop the flow of smuggled narcotics, cigarettes and other taxable goods from Thailand into Malaysia.

In the case of the trade and commerce between these two countries, ASEAN as a regional organization is playing a vital role. Of course the trade between Thailand and Malaysia is increasing and there is a slow rise in the growth of these two countries. For instance ASEAN has established several committees and commissions to bring these countries closely together. As a result of Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) both countries are benefited. ASEAN has categorised the products of the member nations into tariff and non-tariff goods. All these activities are to improve trade between these countries. Due to this kind of ASEAN's coordination, the ASEAN countries are accelerating their economic growth.

Finally it can be stated that Thai-Malaysian cooperation and relations are a model for the Third World Countries. Whereas many states in South and Southeast have the hangover of their historical past

and tendency for confrontation against the neighbours, Thailand and Malaysia have buried the tensions generated by their historical past and paved the way for greater integration and cooperation. That policy benefited both the countries.

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