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THAILAND'S RELATIONS WITH THE GCC STATES: AN ANALYSIS OF STATE AND NON-STATE ACTORS

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THAILAND'S RELATIONS WITH THE GCC STATES:

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ABSTRACT

Thailand's Relations with the GCC States: An Analysis of State and Non-State Actors

The aim of this research is to assess the potential role that Muslim-related private sector associations in Thailand can play in the international relations between Thailand and the Gulf states. The overall objective of the research is to investigate the nature and future direction of Thai-Gulf states relations through observing the way the state and the non-state actors each interacts with players in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) States and how the overall interactions shape Thailand's relations with the GCC States. The hypothesis of the research is that despite limited resources and identity attached to it, the Thai state will continue to play a dominant role in Thailand's relations with the GCC States, while the role of non-state actors will increase. The relations will expand more rapidly and efficiently if the state allows greater intervention from the non-state actors in some areas of interactions which are traditionally conducted by states.

In order to prove the hypothesis, the author depends on multiples Internatinal Relations (IR) theories, and uses a newly constructed model, based on James Rosenau's Two World of World Politics Model. The Universe of World Politics Model, like that of Rosenau, highlights the existence of the state-centric and the multi-centric spheres; however, it takes Rosanau's model further by recognising the significance of external environments that affect relations, including culture and the role of globalisation. Thailand's relations with the GCC States are studied in two folds: one through the dynamism within state-to-state interactions, and another through dynamism among private sector associations in Thailand. The overlapping area where state and non-state spheres intercept, plus culture and the role of globalisation, is the focus of this research. It brings to light the position of private sector associations in Thailand's relations with the GCC States in the contemporary world and in the future. The non-state actors selected in this research are both private sector associations: one is local, the Thai Islamic Trade and Industrial Association (TITIA), another is a branch of foreign private sector association, the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY). The data was collected through primary sources and unstructured interviews with individuals from both the Thai government and private sector associations that are used as case studies.

The research indicates that the hypothesis suggesting the greater role for private sector associations in Thailand's relations with the GCC States cannot be absolutely guaranteed; an increased involvement of private sector associations is less likely in these relations. The findings show that both of the private sector associations used in the case studies are reluctant, if not unwilling to act as proxies for the government in Thailand's relations with the GCC States. Such unwillingness is based on the associations' characteristics as well as the boundary that the government has created to prevent these associations from too much intervening in international relations, which has traditionally been viewed as state affairs. The findings highlight both the government's intentional and unintentional barriers for the participation of these private sector associations, including legal bodies and common practices among government officers.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis is my original work. All the materials presented in the thesis that are not my own work have carefully been acknowledged. None of the materials in this thesis has been submitted for any other degrees at this or any other university.

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DEDICATION

To my parents, Sawai and Jongjit Limlikit.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACD	Asian Cooperation Dialogue
AMED	Asia-Middle East Dialogue
APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BOI	Board of Investment
CICOT	Central Islamic Committee of Thailand
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
ICCI	Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry
IDB	Islamic Development Bank
IOR-ARC	Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation
ISESCO	Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOC	Ministry of Commerce
MOL	Ministry of Labour
OIC	Organisation of the Islamic Conference
OPEC	Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
TCEB	Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau
TITIA	Thai Islamic Trade and Industry Association
UNWTO	World Tourism Organisation
WAMY	World Assembly of Muslim Youth

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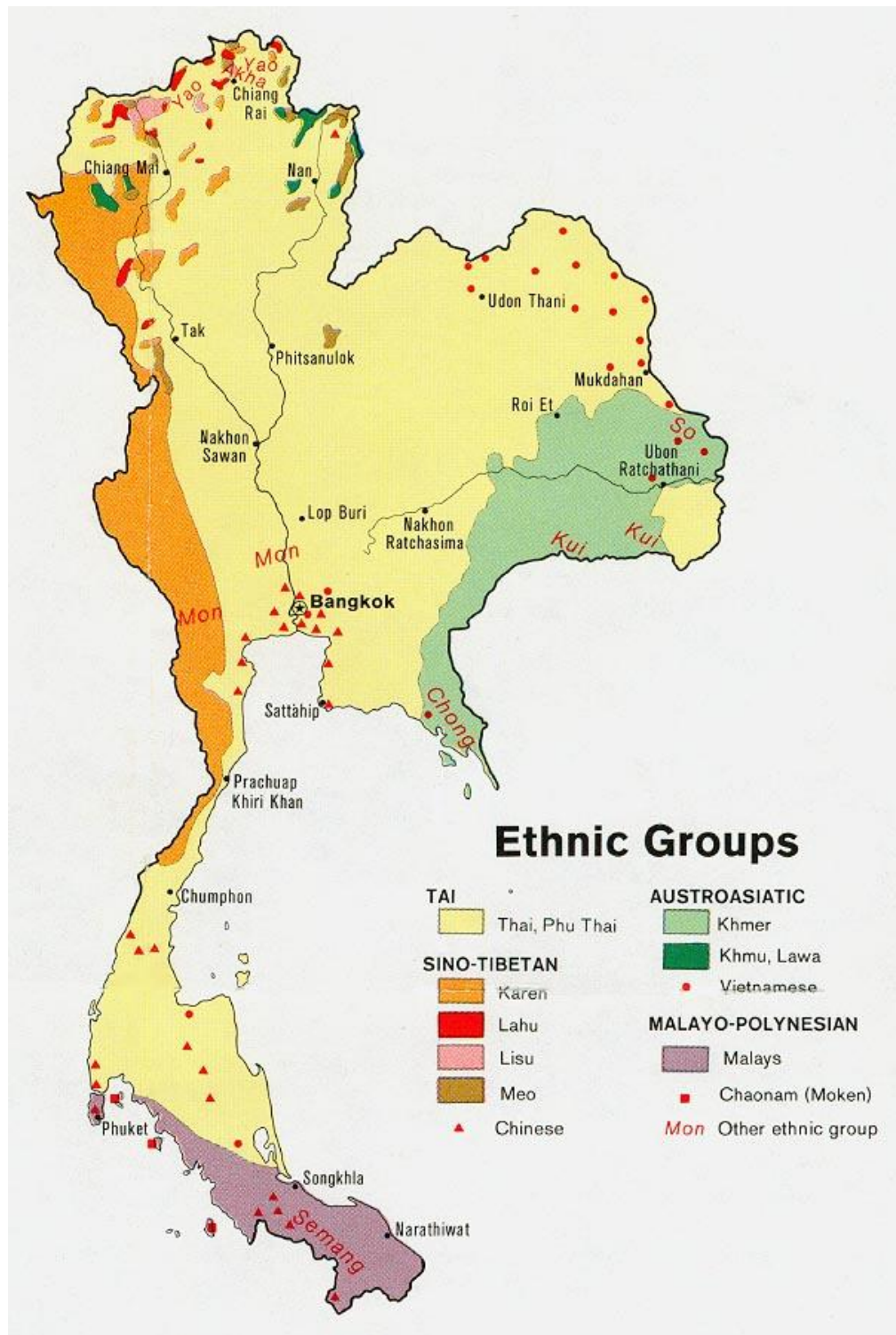
Source: Central Intelligence Agency (1974), the Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection, University of Texas at Austin.
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Source: Central Intelligence Agency (1995): The Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection
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PART 1

CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK AND BACKGROUND

Thailand's relations with the GCC States between 1997 and 2006 can be considered as one of the most interesting periods in the relations between the two sides. Since the establishment of relations, this period has shown to be one of the most active, where many initiatives and activities have been launched and increased. The lack of literature that studies and records the transformation of relations during this period is the motivation for this research. With the increase in the number and role of non-state actors in Thailand, it is particularly interesting to pair the concepts relevant to non-state actors with a traditional state-centric approach to examine Thailand's relations with the GCC States. The preliminary question to answer concerns how the research should be designed and to what extent the existing literature and background information can support the execution of the research.

The purpose of part 1 is therefore to provide the framework for how this research has been designed. In addition to explaining the aim and objectives of the research, it seeks to examine the research background, which consists of a discussion of the contribution of the research, relevant literature, methodology and the organisation of the research. It also discusses the theoretical framework and model used to conceptualise the understanding of information obtained. In order to understand the nature of Thailand's relations with the GCC States at the period under study, which is between 1997 and 2006, a historical background of Thailand's relations with the GCC States is provided. It is intended that the information obtained from part 1 will help equip readers with the theoretical concepts needed to analyse and understand the empirical content in part 2.

INTRODUCTION

1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

The rationale for this study is based on the view that, first, Thailand's relationship with the Gulf states has been understudied despite potentially active political and trade relations, not the least of which are the active interactions between Muslims in the two regions; second, little had been studied about the role of transnationalism and civil society in the international relations of Southeast Asian states; even less so in the case of Thailand, where there are large numbers of non-state actors, yet the role of these actors in international relations has received little attention.

The Middle East had long been considered peripheral in Thai foreign policy; there are several reasons for such view.[1] First, in the past, there was little contact between Thais and Arabs due to a lack of political and social compatibility. Second, the Middle East countries had not been significant trade partners with Thailand; most of the countries were poor and lack business and social attraction. Not until some countries in this region started to export oil, accumulate wealth, increase imports and build up more infrastructures did the Thais recognise them as hubs for labour migration, potential markets and oil sellers. Third, since there was a lack of interest and motivation to develop further relations, there were insufficient mechanisms to facilitate communications between Thailand and the Middle East region, both in terms of transportation and human resources. Lastly, much of the effort to develop international relations had been placed on traditional diplomatic and trade partners, which were the Western Hemisphere, East and Southeast Asian nations; thus there was lack of motivation to train or recruit staff with knowledge in the Middle East.

Not until Thailand started importing oil from the Middle East, as well as exporting Thai goods and labour migrants to the Arab states that started accumulating wealth from oil did Thailand begin to give more attention to the region. There was an urge on Thailand's part to expand new markets and diplomatic relations to the region. The

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[1] An interview with a scholar from Chulalongkorn University, Thailand. September 2008.

problem encountered once the Middle East came under the spotlight was the lack of staff and mechanisms that would facilitate the relations between Thailand and the Middle East. The study of the Middle East in Thailand, which has been small in number, has been done through an attempt of aggregately explaining the whole region, rather than specifying sub-areas. The outcome was that these studies have been so broad that they have not sufficiently provided an in-depth explanation, nor can they make it clear the vast differences among sub-regions and countries of the Middle East. The same can be said about policy making and application. Unfortunately, Thailand's foreign policy that is relevant to the Middle East fails to recognise the differences, politically and economically, among countries within the region. One same policy is applied to the whole region, despite differences between the oil-rich GCC States, Iran, Iraq, the Levant and North Africa. Worse is that one of the most relevant policies, the Look West Policy, extends to cover Africa and South Asian regions; thus, not only does it dilute attention to the region, but also tips the balance more towards South Asia.

Within meagre and diluted attention given to the Middle East, the Gulf States do not receive as much attention as they deserve from both the academic and policy-making realms. While standing out among all the Middle East states in terms of trade value, number of labour migrants, relationship among Muslims and oil trade with Thailand, the GCC States are still treated with indifference and receive similar attention as others in the Middle East whose connections are not as significant.

Studying about relations with the Middle East and the GCC States, like other parts of the world, necessitate international relations theory. In Thailand, most of the research in this field has been done through conventional International Relations (IR) theory, in which state-centric concept of IR has been the preferred approach; thus a great deal of IR research in Thailand has been conducted using realism, pluralism and neorealism. In the contemporary international politics, however, non-state actors and civil society have increasingly become prominent as additional players. In the case of Thailand's relations with the GCC States is no exception; in addition to relations between governments of the two regions, there has been an increase in the interactions among businessmen, trade

association, non-government organisations and the general public. In the attempt to study the nature of international relations between Thailand and the GCC States, therefore, it is important to embrace both state-centric aspects of the relations, as well as the non-state aspect. Pluralism, transnationalism and postinternationalism are alternative IR contexts that provide an explanation for the role of non-state actors, thus broadening the interpretation of the overall picture of relations. Thus the author of this thesis is motivated by applying part of Rosenau's model that highlights the co-existence of state-centric and multi-centric (non-state) worlds to examine Thailand-GCC States relations and seek to find an alternative explanation to the role of additional actors within the system.

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

As noted, while recently Thailand needs to expand diplomatic relations to the Middle East region, particularly the GCC States, where most of its Middle East revenues come from, the country struggled to find resources, both facilities and human resources, to respond to the urge to develop the relations. To address the problem over the lack of research, particularly that devoted to the Gulf region, this research aims to investigate the nature, trend and future direction of Thai-Gulf states relations through observing the role of the government and private sector. The research focuses largely on the interaction processes between the state and non-state spheres, with particular attention given to the role of transnationalism and non-state actors. The research includes the following objectives:

1. To provide explanations of the nature of inter-state relations between Thailand and the GCC States through state-centric, pluralist and postinternational approaches, which provides a mechanism for the understanding of traditional diplomacy and international relations.

   This objective can be achieved through examining the historical development of Thailand's relationship with the GCC States under two prime ministerships: that

of Chuan Leekpai and that of Thaksin Shinawatra. The state-centric, pluralist and postinternational concepts will be useful in achieving this objective.

2. To identify significant non-state actors, transnational movements and impacts of globalisation, with some links to the Middle East and the GCC States that affect the Thai state in the contemporary world and the ways in which these actors affect international relations with the GCC States.

    This objective can be achieved through looking at significant international relations phenomena and actors within them that are relevant to the Middle East, the GCC States and Thailand within the period under study; the outcomes of the impacts are also recorded and incorporated into the analysis. In addition, key actors within the events will be noted down and identified. The concepts of pluralism, transnationalism, and postinternaitonalism will be used to achieve this objective.

3. To provide an explanation on the development and the roles of some non-state actors relevant to Thailand's relationship with the Muslim world and the GCC States; and to provide an analysis of ways in which these transnational movements and non-state actors assert their influence and identity. In addition, to provide a prediction of future roles of relevant non-state actors in Thailand's international relations with the GCC States.

    To achieve this objective, the concept of non-state actor will be used to examine selected Muslim-related non-state actors in Thailand's relationship with the Muslim world; with small, non-state associations such as the Thai Islamic Trade and Industrial Association (TITIA) and the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY) Thailand office being examined in particular. Observations on the characteristics of these non-state actors will be noted and then examined through pluralism, functionalism, postinternationalism, and constructivism concepts.

4. To apply the understanding of the relations between the Thai government and Muslim-related private sector associations in Thailand to evaluate the role and potential that small non-state actors will have greater role in Thailand's international relations, and the possibility that the non-state actors will act as a proxy for the government in the realm of Thailand's relationship with the GCC States.

To achieve this objective, case studies of TITIA and WAMY will be evaluated for their capability to manage international interaction on its own, as well as will be used to examined how this non-state actor interact with the government. The outcome of the evaluation will also reveal whether the small, non-state actor is willing to act as the proxy for the government.

5. To identify the most appropriate IR theories and theoretical framework for the understanding of Thailand's relationship with the GCC States, taking account of the changes in tradition of Thailand's foreign policy outlook, as well as the changes in the nature of contemporary international politics.

This will be achieved through evaluating the proposed theoretical model: the combination among the state-centric, pluralist, and postinternational approaches to see how well it can be used to explain Thailand's relationship with the GCC States. Other relevant theoretical concepts will also be thoroughly evaluated to see their significance and applicability to Thailand's relationship with the GCC States.

3. HYPOTHESIS

While there is a good potential for greater development in international relations, the progress in moving toward greater relations has been slow. The lack of political and cultural, and identity compatibilities are key obstacles which have led Thailand and the GCC States to not cross paths. The government, in particular, finds limitations in developing closer relations with the GCC States in many ways; being labelled as a

Buddhist state is one of the reasons that limit Thailand's ability to move closer to these countries.

This research hypothesised that while the government has limitations in developing greater relations with the GCC States, private organisations in Thailand can be used instead to drive the dynamism in the relations. These non-state actors can become more involved in international relations; and the nature of their involvement can be through the role of proxies. With less identity obstacles, the Muslim private sector associations will be able to facilitate greater state relations and also relations at popular and private sector levels, thus creating more dynamism within Thailand's relations with the GCC States.

The relations between Thailand and the GCC States have traditionally been led by popular relations, i.e. Muslim and Labour relations; and later states came in to facilitate the process of the popular interactions while began to establish the mechanisms of state relations. While civil society in Thailand has been developed and strengthened itself, it has the capacity to move further to manage larger tasks. This research hypothesises that the future relations between Thailand and the GCC States will be largely influenced by the state, with increased role of civil society. The future of Thailand's relations with the GCC States can be in the form of task sharing between state and civil society in international relations. One of the possibilities among Thailand's relations with the GCC States is the tasks shared between the Thai government and the Muslim-related private sector associations; these private sector associations are at a greater advantage because of their identity and the networks they have developed with the Muslim world.

Considering the content of hypothesis, it can be seen that this research can potentially contribute to the academic field in many ways; the contribution of this study is therefore discussed in greater detail in the next section.

4. THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

Overall, this research is intended as a contribution to the field of international relations, particularly in the sub-field of Southeast Asian-Gulf States Studies. The most significant contribution of this research is that this research is the first of its kind to examine the in-depth relations between Thailand and the Gulf States, as well as the Muslim world, with special attention given to the role of private sector associations and transnationalism.

This research will add knowledge to the field of international relations between Southeast Asia and the Gulf States, where only a small amount of research exists. Exists in even smaller amount is the research that specifically concerns Thailand's relations with the Gulf States. Second, this research provides a broader view to understand the nature of relationship between these two sides in the contemporary period, where the role of states in international interactions has been challenged by the emergence of transnational societies, enterprises and organisations.

Methodology wise, this research seeks to incorporate the combined analytical tools, consisting of state-centric, pluralist, transnational and postinternational approaches, as well as the recognition of cultural influences in international relations practices. This is significant because the traditional methods used to examine Thailand's international relations are largely state-centric, mainly focusing on the role of state-to-state relations. This research will therefore answer to changes in the nature of Thailand's relationship with the GCC States, where non-state actors and other functional agendas have become increasingly significant. And thus it will provide the explanation in the context that differs from most of the existing literature since there is very little research to date that focuses on the growing roles of non-governmental, local organisations in international relations, particularly that of the Southeast Asia region and Thailand.

The further implication of this research is that it can potentially be great use for the examination of other small states' relations that share similar characteristics to Thailand's relationship with Gulf States. Such a relationship is characterised by being

traditionally managed largely by state, but later is joined by emerging non-state actors. This research will be useful for scholars, diplomats and civil servants in understanding the changing context of international relations, which are more complex due to a greater number of actors and agendas; there will be the need to understand the role of these actors and how they contribute to traditional state-to-state relations. Scholars who are interested in international relations, particularly in South-South relations, the small states that emerged after the Cold War, and developing nations may benefit from the methodology and analysis in this research.

To support the hypothesis, surveying and commenting on the existence of relevant works is useful; in doing so, the research structure and methodology can be formulated. Therefore, the next section will discuss the literature survey.

5. LITERATURE SURVEY

5.1 General Observation of Literature on Thai-GCC States Relations

The preliminary examination of current research on Thailand's relationship with the GCC States reveals that there are very little literatures relevant to Thailand's relationship with the GCC States. Reich and Silverburgh's *Asian States' Relations with the Middle East and North Africa: A Bibliography, 1950-1993*,[2] which provides extensive detail on literatures about Asia's relations with the Middle East and North Africa, has very few notes on Thailand; and there has been no update on the bibliographic book on the topic about Asian states' relations with the Middle East and North Africa ever since. The preliminary survey additionally reveals other crucial facts, which influence way this research is going to be constructed empirically as follows in the subsequent sections.

5.1.1   Directly Relevant Literatures on Thailand-GCC States Relations

The survey shows that there is no literature that is directly relevant to Thailand's relationship with the GCC States in any aspect, be it political, economic or social relations. The research that has been done in Thai is largely focus on the study of the

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2 See Sanford Silverburg and Bernard Reich, Asian States's Relations with the Middle East and North Africa: A Bibliography, 1950-1993 (Metuchen, N.J., London: Scarecrow Press, 1994).

Middle East *per se;'* and scholars do not make connection to its relations with Thailand.[3] Some literature slightly discusses the relations as part of the context of Southeast Asia-Middle East relations or the GCC–ASEAN relations.[4] In addition, there was some discussion about Thailand's relations with the GCC States in the context of the role of Islam in Southeast Asia and the relationship between Thailand and Organisation of Islamic Conference.[5]

5.1.2 Existing Literature in the Contemporary Period

With the exception of agendas on terrorism and unrests in the southernmost provinces, which can be linked with the GCC States, most of the literatures on Thailand's relationship with the GCC States and the Middle East are not up-to-date. During the 1980s and 1990s there was a number of research on Islam in Thailand; and during the late 1990s and early 2005, there were some studies on Thailand's relationship with the Organisation of Islamic Conference.[6] Some research topics dwell on recurring issues during that periods and the interests fade once the issues have been resolved. This can be seen through the research on Thai labour migrants to the Middle East, which received much attention in the 1970s and 1980s; but the interest declined around the 1990s after the diplomatic strain between Thailand and Saudi Arabia, one of the biggest employers of Thai labourers in the Middle East.

5.2 Existing Literature on Foreign Policy of Thailand

The survey of literature on the foreign policy of Thailand reveals that there have been a good number of research projects conducted on this area by both Thai and Western scholars. The development of foreign policy in Thailand has long been studied; most of the studies emphasise the nature of the Thai state's behaviour in key periods, i.e. during and after the Vietnam War, the change in administrations' foreign policy, or key regional phenomena. With a wide ranging focus and a vast time span, the literature

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[3] For example, see Jaran Maluleem, *OIC and the Muslim World* (Bangkok, Thailand: Thailand Research Fund, 2007).

[4] See J. C Parrenas, *The GCC and the Development of ASEAN* (Abu Dhabi Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, 1998).

[5] See Maluleem, *OIC and the Muslim World*.

[6] Ibid.

survey on foreign policy of Thailand can be classified according to time periods, governmental administrations, or the key historical events.

5.2.1   Literature on Thailand's Foreign Policy in General

There are several research projects on Thailand's foreign policy, which can be classified according to certain periods. Scholars researching the Thai foreign policy during mid 1960s to 1980s argue that the policy had been largely shaped by perceived external threats, particularly threats from neighbouring countries; therefore, much of the research on foreign policy during this period focused mainly on the issue of security, particularly the prevention of the spread of communism from China, Vietnam, and Laos, and maintaining a good relationship with the United States for protection. Singh, for example, suggests Thailand's foreign policy during 1960s changed from the traditional policy of neutrality to leaning toward external powers for protection. [7]   Thailand's decision to seek a security guarantee from major powers can be seen in Thailand's active role in the establishment of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) in 1954. [8] Another expert on Thai foreign policy, Sukhri, argues in the same direction by suggesting the nature of threat Thailand perceived from the spread of communism from neighbouring countries; this, according to Sukhri, led Thailand to develop greater relations with the United States. [9] The tradition of Thailand's alliance with the United States began with Thailand allowing the establishment of the US military bases from 1961-1975, and with Thailand becoming one of the big recipients of US economic aid program. [10]

At the end of the Cold War, much of the research project on Thai foreign policy have been focused on the effect of global economy and globalisation to the foreign policy and on Thailand's role in the regional and global community. The work of Kusuma Snitwongse suggests the nature of the Thai foreign policy during the Chuan and Thaksin

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[7] L. P. Singh, "Thai Foreign Policy: The Current Phrase," *Asian Survey* 3, no.11 (1963), pp. 535-543.
[8] Ibid, pp. 535.
[9] A. Suhrki, "Smaller-Nation Diplomacy: Thailand's Current Dilemmas." *Asian Survey,* 11. no.5 (1971), pp. 429-444.
[10] Ibid, pp. 432.

administrations.[11] Kusuma's key argument is the dilemmas the two administrations faced in conducting their foreign policies, particularly with regards to attention to the country's principle or national interest. What Snitwongse did was examine the changes in Thailand's foreign policy under the two administrations and comment on the expanded and improved in relations between Thailand and regional and global powers, i.e. US, China and Japan. According to Kusuma, under the Chuan government, Thai foreign policy expanded to include several parts of the world as well as international organisations. In his conclusion, Kusuma comments on the nature of the Thaksin's administration foreign policy, and notes the potential use of business as a driving force for foreign policy.

From the survey, one can see the transformation of research interest in Thailand's foreign policy. Scholars have been keeping up with the key events that affect Thailand's foreign policy. One weakness of the existing research is that so much of the attention has been given to the traditional sphere of diplomatic relations, i.e. ASEAN, the United States or Europe. There are very rare, almost non-existent research projects that seek to examine the potential or nature of Thailand's foreign policy toward other global regions. While the current literature on Thailand's foreign policy has provided a good overview of the development and nature of foreign policy during different periods, there is a lack of literature that provides knowledge in the field of Thailand's foreign policy toward different global regions, asides from the country's traditional allies or neighbouring countries, this weakness can be found in the discussion on the lack of literature of Thailand's relations toward the GCC States in the next section.

5.2.2   *Literature on Foreign Policy of Thailand toward the GCC States*

While there have been a good number of research projects focusing on Thailand's foreign policy toward the Western Hemisphere and to other Asian states, the survey of literature suggests that there is no research that specifically focuses on Thailand's foreign policy toward the GCC States. This may be based on the fact that Thai foreign policy toward the region has been integrated into the larger context of Thailand's foreign

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[11] Kusuma Snitwongse, "Thai Foreign Policy in the Global Age: Principle or Profit?," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 23, no. 2 (2001).

policy toward the Middle East. So far, there has been no literature that examines such foreign policy in-depth. Most of the existing relevant literature solely focuses on the nature of relations, particularly in terms of trade and labour policy, not the body of foreign policy *per se*.

5.3   Existing Literature on Foreign Policy of the GCC States
5.3.1   Literature on GCC States foreign policy in General

The literature survey shows that there have been a large number of research projects on the development and foreign relations between the GCC States and the rest of the world.[12] Most of the existing literature focuses largely on the issues of oil and stability of the Gulf States, where scholars highlight the nature of the GCC States in terms of small size, limited manpower in military and oil-based economy; recognising the issues at stake, scholars working on GCC foreign policy seek to examine the topic over security and relations between GCC States and global powers.[13]

So far, there are very few books that focus solely on foreign policy of the GCC States, for as noted, most of the research projects that have been done provide a broad overview of GCC foreign relations, but not the analysis of the foreign policy making decision and the determinants of the foreign policy *per se.* Two research projects that are directly relevant to the foreign policy of the GCC States are that of Abdulla Baabood and Hassan Hamdan Al-Alkim.

In his work, Baabood explains the pattern of GCC foreign policy. His analysis, unlike other literature that focuses on GCC foreign policy and relations from external and

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[12] For example, see Gary Sick and Lawrence G. Potter, ed., The Persian Gulf and the Millennium: Essay in Politics, Economy, Security and Religion (New York: St.Martin Press, 1997); John Sandwick, ed., The Gulf Cooperation Council: Moderation and Stability in an Interdependent World (Boulder, Colorado: Westview, 1987); J.E. Peterson and Richard Sindelar III, ed., Crosscurrent in the Gulf: Arab, Regional and Global Interests (London: Routledge, 1988).

13 For literature on GCC States'security see Gregory Gause, "The Political Economy of National Security in the GCC States," in The Persian Gulf at the Millennium, ed. Gary G. Sick and Lawrence G. Potter (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997); Barry Rubin, "The Persian Gulf after the Cold War: Old Pattern; New Era." MERIA 3, no. 2 (1999). For literature on the influence of oil to the GCC States see, Jill Crystal, Oil and Politics in the Gulf: Rulers and Merchants in Kuwait and Qatar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

material factors like oil, largely focuses on the role of domestic political, economic and personal components of the GCC foreign policy.[14] Baabood suggests several internal factors that influence the nature of GCC foreign policy, including the institutional framework in GCC foreign policy making, socio historical factors like Muslim identity and tribal culture, economic factors like oil based-economy. These internal factors, when combined with external factors, have shaped the pattern of GCC foreign policy, which Baabood suggests as "not strong enough to direct regional and international politics of their own."[15] Baabood's view GCC foreign policy has been "cautious, conservative, and pragmatic," with the aim of preserving the *status quo*.[16]

Baabood's work provides a good in-depth knowledge to the nature of the GCC foreign policy making process. Prior to his analysis, Baabood provides sufficient background information over how foreign policy is made and agreed in the GCC States. His analysis also incorporates background information of the GCC foreign policy making process to discuss the strength and weakness of the policy; such information allows one to understand the underlying rationale of GCC foreign policies and the way in which these policies affect states' behaviour in international relations.

While Baabood provides good background information and analysis to GCC foreign policy, Al-Alkim's work focuses instead on the determinants of GCC foreign policy; his work therefore does not directly focus on the pattern of GCC foreign policy making and process, but instead focuses on historical background, the role of different factors that shape the foreign policy.[17] Different determinants, both internal and external, allow Al-Alkim to discuss the challenge to the GCC States' foreign policy in the future.

The geographical location and possession of oil have led to a good number of research projects on GCC States' foreign relations. However, it is interesting to see that there are

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[14] Abdulla Baabood, "Dynamics and Determinants of the GCC States' Foreign Policy, with Special Reference to the EU," in *Analyzing the Middle East Foreign Policies and the Relationship with Europe*, ed. Gerd Nonneman (London: Routledge, 2005), pp. 146.

[15] Ibid, pp. 158.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Hassan Hamdan Al-Alkim, The GCC States in an Unstable World: Foreign Policy Dilemmas of Small States (London: Saqi Books, 1994).

very few books that discuss the pattern of the GCC foreign policy *per se*; even less research has been done on the pattern of GCC States' foreign policy toward different regions of the world, particularly in the case of foreign policy toward Asia and Thailand, as will be discussed in the next section.

5.3.2 Literature on Foreign Policy of the GCC States toward Thailand

The survey of literature on foreign policy of the GCC States toward Thailand reveals that there is no literature on the topic. The most relevant literature which does exist, and which is rare, discusses the Gulf States' foreign policy toward Asia. So far, the research on the Gulf State's Looking East Policy has been the main discussion point within the foreign policy of the GCC States toward Asia. The survey of literature also suggests that the GCC States's foreign policy toward Asia is a recent phenomenon; the Looking East Policy came under the spotlight only in the 1990s.

The Gulf Yearbook has been the significant source for updated development on Gulf States. In the 2005-2006 volume there is a section that discusses the development and future of the Gulf States' Looking East Policy.[18] According to the author, Abdullah Al-Madani, the Gulf States have achieved a lot, politically and economically, in their attempts to strengthen relations with Asia. However, he notes that there are a lot of opportunities for the Gulf States to benefit from Asia, but these have either not been exploited or the process to do so has been slow.[19] The weakness of the Looking East Policy, according to Al-Madani, is that it gives so much attention to the economic sphere, while other spheres that have potential to strengthen the relations between the two sides i.e. educational, scientific, academic human resources cooperation, do not receive sufficient attention.[20]

While it may be possible to examine the role of bigger trade associations that are involved with Thailand's relations with the GCC States, the rationale for choosing

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[18] Abdullah Al-Madani, "The Gulf and the Policy Of "Looking East"," in *The Gulf Yearbook* 2005-2006, ed. Abdulaziz Al-Sager (Dubai, UAE: The Gulf Research Center, 2006), pp. 297-305.
[19] Ibid, pp. 305.
[20] Ibid.

TITIA and WAMY is based on the consideration of identity and expertise, which are significant factors, and in this sense both TITIA and WAMY therefore offer more advantages than other associations. While the Thai Chamber of Commerce has the section and staff that interacts with the GCC States, the overall objectives and focus of the organizations are geographically broad. In addition, the Thai Chamber of Commerce does not possess Muslim identity, in-depth knowledge and connection with the GCC States as much as TITIA and WAMY. The latter organizations solely focus on the Muslim world and their Muslim identity and knowledge have made their organizational profile fit suitable with the research project. The role of the Thai Chamber of Commerce and other non-Muslim private sector associations in Thailand's relations with the GCC States will be worth examining, but doing so can be another research on its own.

5.4 Conceptualisation of Thai-GCC Inter-State Relations
5.4.1 *Economic Explanations*
a. Asymmetrical Economic Dependence Arguments

Asymmetrical economic dependence is one of the key arguments in Thailand's relationship with the GCC States. This argument points out that Southeast Asian states depend on the GCC States more than vice versa. Such claim is based on Southeast Asia's dependence on oil, revenues from oil and labour remittances from the GCC States; therefore it characterises the region's relationship with the GCC region and the Middle East. While the majority of literature proposing this argument does not directly place Thailand at the centre of its discussion, the argument does have implications for Thailand.

Soo Ann *et al* published papers on economic relations between the Middle East and Southeast Asia delivered during the International Conference on Economic Relations between West Asia and Southeast Asia in Singapore in 1997; *Economic Relations between West Asia and Southeast Asia* highlights the significance of oil and petrodollars on Asian development and on the cooperation between the two regions.[21] In the volume,

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[21] Lee Soo Ann, ed., *Economic Relations between West Asia and Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of

several scholars agree that the oil-rich West Asian states should help facilitate the economic development of the Southeast Asian states through their oil revenues. Mel Chor suggests that this will strengthen the non-oil states' economies and enable them to pay off the debt from oil purchases.[22] In the same volume, Dhanapalan agrees with Chor; he suggests the need for more financial institutions in West Asia, notably in the Gulf states, to facilitate financial flow and administer loans for Asian development.[23] On the significance of Western Asian oil to Southeast Asia, Changkasiri suggests that the Southeast Asian states must aim for regional and interregional cooperation in the field of petroleum, as well as to ensure the supply of oil and to minimise its cost.[24]

Two decades has passed since the conference in Singapore, and the economic significance of the oil-producing states has become obvious, not only to Southeast Asia, but to the world. Financial institutions and off-shore banking have been established in Dubai and Bahrain. The discourses of the economic relations between the Middle East and Southeast Asia have altered to lean toward interdependence or mutual interest from the previous focus on asymmetrical dependency. However, such agenda continues to exist because the demand for oil from Southeast Asian states such as Thailand and Singapore remains the same if not higher. In 2004 Rodney Wilson discussed historical, institutional, financial and people-to-people links between ASEAN and the GCC. He then uses these links to compare and contrast the nature of the two regions, which later allowed him to predict the future of the economic relations between ASEAN and the GCC. According to Wilson, the market force and political development will continue to shape the nature of the economic relations between the two sides.[25]

Southeast Asian Studies, 1977).

[22] Alejandro Melchor, "Petrodollars: Myths and Realities," in *Economic Relations between West Asia and Southeast Asia*, ed. Lee Soo Ann (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1977).

[23] S. Dhanabalan, "The Asian Dollar Market and Its Role in Asian Development," in *Economic Relations between West Asia and Southeast Asia*, ed. Lee Soo Ann (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1977).

[24] Sivavong Changkasiri, "Oil Supply and Cost and Their Implications for Southeast Asian Development," in *Economic Relations between West Asia and Southeast Asia*, ed. Lee Soo Ann (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1977).

[25] Rodney Wilson, "Economic Relations between the GCC and South and South East Asia," in *The Middle East's Relations with Asia and Russia*, ed. Hannah Carter, and Anoushiravan Ehteshami (London: Routledge Curzon, 2002), pp. 115.

b. Trade-highlighted Arguments

Instead of focusing on economic dependency, some scholars choose to focus on the benefit gained from Thailand's trade with the GCC States. Their argument is that trade largely defines Thailand's relationship with the Middle East, thus both the governments and private sectors must encourage trade and manufacturing for export to the Middle East. The majority of scholars who believe that trade defines international relations between Thailand and the GCC States are government scholars, i.e. from the Ministry of Commerce. An example of the their publication is *The Promotion of Thai Products to the Middle East during Gulf War*, produced by the Department of Export at the Ministry of Commerce of Thailand, to inform Thai manufacturers of opportunity of Thai goods in the Middle East countries during the Gulf war.[26] Another example is *The Prospect for the Expansion of Thailand's Trade and Investment with the Middle East Countries*, written by the Department of Foreign Trade at the Ministry of Commerce; the report suggests trade opportunities in the Middle East market for Thai products. Also in the report is the formation about demands as well as political and economic conditions of each Middle Eastern market; the book concludes by pointing out that support should be provided to the Thai manufacturers in terms of country information, trade profile and trade law in each of the Middle East country.[27]

There are a few problems concerning the existing research that uses economic factors to explain Thailand's relations with the GCC States. First, economic relations between the two regions are largely subjected to political conditions, both domestically and internationally. Even though most of the scholars in the previous studies have shown their awareness of the impact of political factors on economic relations, little has been incorporated into their discussion. Therefore, without incorporating political factors into the analysis, an accurate explanation cannot be done. Second, almost all these arguments ignore other factors, the environment, and actors, which have become influential in economic relations, including the emergence of the halal market in many

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[26] Kawii Ruayreuan, *The Promotion of Thai Products to the Middle East During the Gulf War* (Bangkok: Department of Export Promotion, Ministry of Commerce, 1993).

[27] Paritta Durakit, Company for Ministry of Commerce, *The Prospect for the Expansion of Thailand's Trade and Investment with the Middle East Countries* (Bangkok: Department of Foreign Trade, Ministry of Commerce, 1994).

Southeast Asian countries, Islamic Diasporas, media and September 11, all of which have impacts on supply and demand of goods from both sides. Third, the research projects that use ASEAN-GCC or Southeast Asian-Middle East trade as case studies are virtually too broad; this is because each ASEAN state is at a different level of economic development, as well as having a different degrees of dependency on oil. Placing a generalised explanation on a group of states will only give a partial picture, while a more in-depth and accurate explanation can be obtained through a case-by-case analysis.

In sum, there is some research that uses economic factors to explain Thailand's relationship with the GCC States. Their explanations, however, cannot provide a whole picture of the relationship because it fails to take into consideration new agendas, including emerging actors, new environments and technology. The nature of Middle East and Southeast Asian economies, which are closely linked to politics, necessitates the incorporation of political aspects into the analysis, thereby yielding a more holistic picture of the relations.

5.4.2   Politically Based Arguments

Politically based arguments involve diplomatic, political and security agendas. A key argument is that the relations between the two interacting states have been forged by the need for protection and political benefit from superpowers. In this research, relevant work includes that of Koch, who suggests that the close ties with the United States through regional security protection have drawn the GCC and Asian states together.[28] Goh Chok Tong argues in the same direction, pointing out that the relationship between Southeast Asian and GCC States has been long developed and has been strengthened by mutual benefits, economically and politically, particularly since they are strategically significant to each other.[29]

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[28] Christian Koch, "Gulf-Asia Relations: A Post Cold War Geopolitical Perspective," *Gulf-Asia Research Bulletin*, no. 5 (2008), pp. 4-9. http://www.grc.ae/data/contents/uploads/Gulf_Asia_Bulletin5_5884.pdf. (Last accessed 4 April, 2009).

[29] Goh Chok Tong and "Asia and Middle East: New Era of Cooperation," *Asia-Gulf Bulletin* 4 (2007), pp.22. http://www.grc.ae/data/contents/uploads/Gulf_Asia_Bulletin_2007.pdf. (Last accessed 4 April, 2009).

While recognising the influence of Western superpowers within the region, there is the need to recognise the influence of regional powers, including Japan, China, India and Singapore. Some previous studies therefore proposed the regionalist perspective, suggesting that regional impacts define the nature of the relationship between Southeast Asian countries and the Middle East and the GCC States. Regional impacts range from the role of regional powers to regional grouping. Regional grouping wise, Parrenas suggests that there are political, economic and social benefits from the cooperation between GCC and ASEAN; this is because there are a lot of shared similarities and complementary political and economic bases.[30] This is relevant to Thailand, because as part of ASEAN Thailand follows the trend of regional cooperation between ASEAN and the GCC States, where both sides see the benefit of joint political and economic projects.

Examining institutional linkages has been proposed by several scholars as a mean to explore Thailand's relationship with the GCC States. The proponents in this field suggest that membership in international organisations helps enable Thailand to develop greater relations with the GCC States and the Muslim world. Jaran Maluleem suggests that the underlying reason for Thailand's membership with the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) is due to the urge for Thailand to exert itself in the global Muslim state community. According to Maluleem, being members has facilitated the relationship with the OIC members, including the GCC States through greater opportunities for jointed projects and meetings.[31]

While the existing studies on political relations between Thailand and the GCC States reflect the authors' attempts to identify issues at stake and to demonstrate how relations are developed and maintained, the problem with these previous studies is that their contents are not directly relevant to the key questions of the research. As noted, most of the studies relevant to Thailand's political relations with the GCC States are part of a greater geographically based study, particularly the Middle East-Asia, ASEAN-GCC studies; and there are very few literatures on the bilateral relations between individual ASEAN countries and the GCC States. Collective studies do not provide in-depth

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[30] Parrenas, *The GCC and the Development of ASEAN*, pp. 30.
[31] Maluleem, *OIC and the Muslim World*, pp. 24.

information, however, nor do they allow an accurate analysis. The relationship between individual ASEAN countries with the GCC States, for example, must be analysed case-by-case; this is because the factors that influence the bilateral relations of each ASEAN or GCC States are different; for example, Malaysia and Indonesia's political relations with the GCC States are partially influenced by Islam, while GCC States' relationship with Thailand and Philippines are traditionally influenced by the United States.

In sum, the existing literatures that explore Thailand's relations with the GCC States using political factors are usually part of the greater discussion on greater geographical and group relations. The weaknesses of the literature are that they are too broad. Observing the region *per se* cannot allow scholars to identify significant factors like Islam and the pressure of superpowers. The study of an individual ASEAN country with the GCC States, a study that is until now very rare, will therefore be useful.

5.5   Conceptualisation of Thai-GCC Non-State Relations

While little research discusses the impact of state mechanisms to Thailand's relationship with the GCC States, there is more literature on the impact of non-states actors, agendas and Islam in the relations. The key argument proposed by scholars in this field is that non-state actors and agendas are as significant as state actors; indeed, in the case of Thailand, these scholars suggest that the non-state mechanisms are the driving forces for greater state interactions. Therefore, the analysis of Thailand's relations with the GCC States should begin through examining non-state mechanisms.

5.5.1   People-to-people Relations

Labour migration has been a vital source of revenue to the Thai economy. With regard to Thailand's relations with the GCC States, labour migration is the early and very important agenda that preceded diplomatic relations between Thailand and the GCC States. Researchers on Thai worker migrants to the Middle East argue that labour migration is a stimulant to Thailand's relationship with the GCC States. Most of the research on Thai labour migration to the Middle East provides the information on procedures and protection for the Thai workers in the Middle East, particularly the GCC

States, as well as suggests the channels through which Thailand can cooperate with the GCC States to improve their welfare in the Middle East. Much of this research has been conducted by scholars at the Ministry of Labour; for example, Rananantha describes the relationship between Thai labour migration to the Middle East and Thailand's economic stability.[32] His argument is that worker migration has benefited Thailand in terms of revenue; at the same time, the government must strengthen its measures to protect these workers both pre-departure and in the host countries, which are largely the GCC States.

Surarat and Srinontha narrate their first hand experience of supporting migrant workers from Thailand in Saudi Arabia during the Gulf war.[33] Both authors suggest that the government should increase measures to support Thai workers in the Gulf, both through giving greater information to the workers, and through cooperating with Gulf States' authorities in providing protection for these workers. In addition, they suggest that greater knowledge about the Gulf should be provided to Thai government officers whose work is relevant to the Middle East. From the academic side, Chiengkul examines the nature of Thai workers in the Arab world, particularly the attitude of these workers and how the remittances are spent when the workers comes back. Chiengkul argues that the measures should be developed to support these workers, not only when they are abroad, but also when they come back.[34]

The studies of worker migration from Thailand to the Middle East faded from researchers' attention after the mid-1990s. This is due to the drastic reduction of Thai workers being hired and having their working permits approved after the diplomatic strain between Thailand and Saudi Arabia, one of the most important hubs for Thai migrant workers.

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[32] Prasong Ranananthana, *Thai Labour Migrants to the Middle East and Thai Economic Stability*, (Bangkok: National Defense College of Thailand, 1991).

[33] Singkorn Surayrat, and Seri Srinontha, *Thai Labourers During the Gulf War* (Bangkok: Department of Labour, Ministry of Interior, 2001).

[34] Witayakorn Chiengkul, "Migration of Asian Workers to the Arab World: The Case of Thailand," in *Migration of Asian Workers to the Arab World*, ed. Godfrey Gunatilleke (Tokyo: The United Nations University, 1986), pp. 54.

5.5.2 Islam

While the research on labour migration to the Gulf has been viewed as comparatively less relevant to the contemporary Thai-GCC States relations, the topic on Islamic connections between Thailand and the Gulf, and the greater part of the Muslim world continues to attract scholars. Interactions among Muslims in Thailand and in the GCC States dated before formal interstate relations. Hajj, the annual pilgrimage of Muslims, in particular, has drawn people of the two worlds together. In one of his works focusing on Islam in Thailand, Scupin discusses the significance of hajj for the Thai Muslims. He points out that throughout history, hajj has affected the socioeconomic status of Thai Muslims. The improvements in transportation from Thailand to Mecca have enabled more Muslims to attend hajj with lower costs.[35] His work has elucidated the historical part of the hajj in Thailand, which is considered to be one of the earliest interactions between the Thais and the Arabs in the contemporary period.

In addition to hajj some scholars have attempted to explore the relationship between Muslims in Southeast Asia and in the Middle East. One of the key scholars in this field is Fred Von der Mehden, who argues that there are different levels of relationship among the ASEAN countries with the Middle East. He thinks that contrary to general speculation, Islamic connections play a marginal role in the preference in economic and political connections between ASEAN countries and the Middle East. The non-Muslim countries like Thailand and Philippines are as much chosen as investment and economic destinations for Arabs as Malaysia and Indonesia.[36]

Similar to Von der Mehden, Jaran Maluleem in *The Pattern of Relationship between Thailand and the Muslim World* explores the relationship between Thai Muslims and Muslims in the rest of the world.[37] His methods include exploring attitudes of the Thai Muslims with Muslims in selected countries in the Middle East and South Asia. His

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[35] Raymond Scupin, "The Social Significance of the Hajj for Thai Muslims," *Muslim World* 72, no. 72 (1982).

[36] Fred R Von der Mehden, *Two Worlds of Islam: Interaction between Southeast Asia and the Middle East.* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993), pp. 27.

[37] Jaran Maluleem, ed., *The Pattern of Relationship between Thailand and the Muslim World* (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 1994).

arguments is that the Thai Muslims are well connected with the Muslims in the rest of the world; as it can be seen through dynamic movements of Muslims and Muslim organisations in Thailand against Palestinian cause, Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* protest.[38] Maluleem's survey on attitudes of Thai Muslims toward Muslims in the rest of the world reveals a combination of positive and negative attitudes. His conclusion is that there are significant relations between Muslims in Thailand and in the rest of the world, particularly in the Middle East and Southeast Asia, with the Middle East playing an important role as key educational providers to Thai Muslims.[39]

In sum, it is clear that there has been a comparatively fair amount of research done on Islam and labour migration from Thailand to the GCC States. As noted, migration between Thailand and the Middle East has become less active. However, the discussion about the role of the Islamic connection between Muslims in Thailand and the rest of the Muslim world is still active, indeed, even more active than in the past.

In contemporary Thailand's relations with the GCC States, there have been several newly emerging issues which the previous studies do not cover, including transnational Islamic links, the international linkages among non-state actors and private sector associations and foundations. Therefore, the survey reveals that additional research can be done to add to the field of non-state factors in Thai-GCC States relations.

5.6   Bridging of State and Non-State Factors

The previous discussions indicate that existing studies about Thailand's relationship with the GCC States are either solely state-centric or based on a non-state agenda. This final discussion will identify literatures that observe the interactions between the state and non-state actors among these states. While a few researchers have been interested in conducting research that examines dynamisms between state and non-state actors, there has been little research projects that reflect empirical research on the topic. Even less to no existent is the research that examines the interactions between state and non-state

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[38] Ibid. pp. 140
[39] Ibid.

actors in South East Asian States, where states have traditionally been viewed as major players in international affairs.

One of the most recent works that examine the role of state and non-state actors in world politics is the work of Smith *et al.*[40] The authors examine and assess the nature of transnational violence and terrorism in Southeast Asia. The authors attempt to insert nontraditional issues like transnational violence, into the study of Southeast Asian security. Thailand was included into small parts of the discussions, under the topic of the linkage between Southern militant groups and the international terrorist network. Most of the authors tend to believe that there was not much relationship between the Muslim insurgency in southern Thailand and international terrorist groups.[41] However, one of the authors, Zachary Abuza, notes that a military officer in Thailand claims that the Thai government believes that there have been "countries in the Middle East provid [ing] training, education, and financial support for fundamentalist groups in the south [of Thailand]."[42]

McCargo, on the other hand, criticises the previous work in its attempt to link Thailand with Islamic violence and the global war on terror. Specifically, McCargo was against the claim that Muslim insurgency in the south of Thailand is part of "a pan-Southeast Asian network of radical Islamic violence."[43] In McCargo's work, the involvement of Middle Eastern states has been reduced to a marginal level. In his view, the Southern insurgency was primarily driven by domestic issues marked by conflicts among different elite, political and local groups; in addition, the conflict can be accounted by the urge to regain political rights and justice of the Malay Muslims in the southern provinces.[44]

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[40] Paul J. Smith., ed. Terrorism and Violence in Southeast Asia: Transnational Challenges to States and Regional Stability. London: An East Gate Book, 2005. pp. 3-4.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Zachary Abuza, "Al-Qaeda Comes to Southeast Asia," in *Terrorism and Violence in Southeast Asia: Transnational Challenges to States and Regional Stability*, ed. Paul J. Smith (London: An East Gate Book, 2005), pp. 52.

[43] Duncan McCargo, *Tearing Apart the Land* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), pp. 4.

[44] Ibid, pp. 8.

In sum, there are very few empirical studies that bridge the state-centric and non-state agenda. Most studies focus on the topics of transnational movements. Such rarity reflects the need for further studies that bridge state-centric and multi-centric views together in order to understand the complexity of contemporary world politics in which there are more agendas. This requires applying combined tools for analysis on such topics as the nature of transnational Islamic associations and Thailand and networks of professional personnel between Thailand and the Middle East; both of these topics have an impact on non-state and state actors, particularly in terms of state security and the enhanced global Muslim *ummah*. The literature survey has shown that so far that there has been no consideration of these topics.

While the theoretical research on interactions between state and non-state actors emerged through postinternational concept in IR, the modest amount of empirical research has been conducted. With the scarcity of existing research and relevant materials, it is important to design a research methodology that is suitable not only to the empirical and theoretical content of the research, but also with the way that the information can be obtained; such topics will be discussed in the next section on methodology.

6. METHODOLOGY

6.1 Methodology

In conducting this research, a qualitative empirical research technique has been employed. A quantitative method was ruled out as a choice due to the nature of the research that explores the development of state relations and relations among private sector associations. Considering the framework of the research approach, the qualitative method can yield a more descriptive nature that will allow greater flexibility to present the analytical outcomes which are expected to be less systemic than quantitative outcome.

Methods wise, a combination of approaches has been used, including the use of semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and historical analysis. The choice of

multiple methods is based on a consideration of the way that information is kept and recorded, as well as the recent emergence of private sector associations at the time of research. As a result, a single method is not sufficient to bring enough materials for the analysis. This is because Thailand's relations with the GCC States have just received more attention recently; thus there was a lack of written records on the topic from both the government and private sector. It was not until recently that some Thai government agencies began to keep written records in computer format; prior to that the information and data needed for analysis was scattered around in different sources and some information was missing. At the beginning of the research, therefore, it was difficult tracing where the hard copies of the records were kept; in the case that there was no written record, it was necessary to perform semi-structured interviews with relevant government staff. In addition, the nature of relations that this research was interested in, i.e. the people-to-people relations between the two regions, is naturally not formally recorded.

The other benefit of semi-structured interviews is the ability to capture the opinions and comments of the staff, which are insightful and valuable to the research. Also, the relations between private sector associations and their counterparts in the Muslim world have just begun and they became active during the year when the research started, thus it was a good opportunity to directly observe it. Checking the media coverage over historical events helped to obtain greater information, checked public opinion of the events, and balanced the data obtained from the interview and participant observation.

With Thailand's relations with the GCC States being poorly recorded and computerised at the outset of the research, with the relations between private sector associations in Thailand and the Muslim world just taking off, the combined method is useful in that it increases the potential to gather the most information, thus enabling a more complete picture of Thailand's relations with the GCC States. The next section will explain in detail how each approach was pursued while in the field.

6.1.1 Analytical procedure

In order to analyse the data, the author divided the analysis into two main groups: state interactions and private sector associations. The state-centric and non-state worlds were then examined alongside to see the way they interact, using historical data and data from interview and participant observation. To analyse the nature of state relations, the author of this research looked at the development in three aspects: political, economic and social relations. From the information obtained, a trend is developed to reflect contemporary development and project future relations.

As for the trend on economic relations, the values of imports and exports and the percentage of oil purchased from the GCC States is combined with descriptive data gained from interview and media coverage. Such data is significant in that it reflects dependency on and the motivation for greater interactions between Thailand and the GCC States. As for political trends, the agreements signed between Thailand and each GCC State, the availability of embassies and the frequency and content of state visits received as much attention as the result from the interviews; these data enable the author to project the picture of political relations and the longevity of such relations. The trend in social relations helps identify the level of popular interaction, including the knowledge and perceptions among the Thais and the Arabs. The trend is constructed from looking at the number of GCC tourists coming to Thailand and the level of cultural and educational cooperation between Thailand and the GCC States. These activities contribute to bringing about a good understanding among each other.

In the case of private sector association, the overall pictures and trend on the development of the organisations are constructed and analysed in the same way as the case of interstate relations. However, most of the information obtained from examining private sector associations is from participant observation. To construct the trend, the size of organisations, the funding sources, the activities organised, and the relations to the Thai government are taken into consideration; this is because these factors help reflect the development and the future of the organisation and their readiness to act as proxies for the government.

While putting together different kinds of data allowed the author of this research to create the trend in relations and enabled her to predict the future of Thailand's relations with the GCC States, putting together the trend in interstate relations and in the development in relations between the private sector associations with the GCC States enabled the author to answer the key research question over the possibility of private sector associations becoming the government's proxies in Thailand-GCC States relations.

The case studies presented in this research are the two periods of Thai prime ministerships: Chuan Leekpai and Thaksin Chinnawatra. The Chuan administration (1997-2001) is highlighted here because it is seen as the era when Thailand's relations with the Middle East and the Muslim world were well developed, while under the Thaksin's administration (2001-2006), trade promotion and the violence in the Muslim south of Thailand have made the Thai relationship with the Muslim world an interesting case study.

A bit more elaboration should be given to the private sector associations selected as case studies. The associations chosen here are private sector associations that operate in Thailand: the Thai Islamic Trade and Industrial Association (TITIA) and the World Assembly of Muslim Youths (WAMY). The primary justification for selecting these two associations is based on the criteria that, first, the organisations are based in Thailand and widely accepted there; second, that they are transnational in nature; and third, that they are actively engaging with the Middle East and the Muslim World, of which GCC States are a part. The two organisations in the case studies are associations that interact with their overseas counterparts although their oversea interactions are based on different issues. WAMY's transnational interaction is largely based on its interaction with its headquarters and the WAMY office worldwide; while TITIA's transnational interaction is largely based on its relations with foreign organisations within the ICCI and the OIC member states. Both associations link their members with Muslims outside Thailand. While these associations both promote the international Islamic network, they are at different levels and have differing focuses. The

transnational-ness of the two organisations will help to elucidate the ways in which the Thai state handles transnationalism in addition to having to handle non-state state actors.

TITIA is a private sector association, based in Bangkok, which focuses largely on promoting trade between Thai Muslim entrepreneurs with their counterparts in the Muslim world. WAMY is the Thai branch of the Saudi Arabian-headquartered organisation that focuses on the development of Muslim youths in Thailand. The underlying explanation for selecting the two associations as case studies is based on the need to highlight the relations between private sector associations of different natures in Thailand and the Thai government. This is because the author believes that the nature of dependency and the willingness to interact with the government differ between local private sector associations and foreign private sector associations. Lumping local and foreign private sector associations as the same will not provide a precise result on the relations between private sector associations and the government, this is because the author fails to recognise if the differences in the organisations define the nature of the relations.

Despite being relevant to the Muslim world and having strong connections with Muslims in Thailand, TITIA and WAMY are different in terms of status within Thailand, their overall goals, their relationships with the government, and their implication to Thailand's relations with the GCC States. While greater details on each association will be provided in the latter part of the thesis, it is important to provide a brief overview of the associations here to help justify why they were chosen.

In terms of status, TITIA is recognised as a local private sector association. More specifically, it is a trade association registered according to the Trade Association Act B.E. 2509 (1966). As local private sector association, TITIA is subjected to less scrutiny from the government and its focus on national security; this is because it is perceived to conform to the regulations required by the Act. TITIA's goal is trade-oriented, with an aim to draw Muslim entrepreneurs in Thailand to interact with entrepreneurs in the Muslim world in different kinds of trade. Its goals and activities

have drawn cooperation from overseas counterparts and from private sector associations in Thailand; a lot of them are larger, long established private sector associations like the Thai Chamber of Commerce.

As for WAMY, its status is recognised as foreign private sector association that operates in Thailand. Its existence is, however, not formally recognised by the government as the organisation has not been successful in the application process set forth by the Rule of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare on the Entry of Foreign Private Organisations to Operate in Thailand B.E 2541 (1998).[45] The government requires that a registering foreign organisation has to submit the document that demonstrates the legitimacy of the headquarters in its establishment. WAMY headquarters could not provide the document in support of WAMY Thailand; this is because in Saudi Arabia, an organisation is considered *de jure* legitimate if it is established or supported by the Royal Family, thus there is no document of such nature, unlike organisations in the West, which the state regularly provides the document for the registered organisation.[46] With this regard, WAMY Thailand has no document to provide, and so it is not officially registered. Perhaps the other factor that can explain why WAMY has not been able to register is because of distrust from the government's part.   WAMY is considered by some government offices as a radical Muslim organisation; therefore, the decision to allow it to be registered has been delayed. Even though its existence has not been approved legally, WAMY has been widely accepted in Thailand at popular level and by several government offices. This can be seen by its support for the government's sub-units in several official functions, e.g. as interpreters for during state visits of Arab leaders and as staff of the World Scout Camp.[47] In addition, WAMY has been able to attract much support from Thai Muslims throughout Thailand.

Being a foreign private sector association, WAMY should have been bound by different legal bodies than as a local private sector association; the most relevant legal body is the

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[45] "*WAMY Thailand, Development and History*." (Document provided by the WAMY Thailand office via email correspondence with the author on 26 January, 2009).
[46] Ibid.
[47] Phone interview with a WAMY staff member on 26 January 2009.

noted Rule of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare on the Entry of Foreign Private Organisation to Operate in Thailand B.E 2541 (1998). [48] It is subjected to greater scrutiny due to concerns over national security. WAMY's focus is Muslim youth development and its additional activities are to provide support for local Muslim NGOs in Thailand. Tied with the headquarters in Saudi Arabia, WAMY receives full support and funding, thus, making it comparatively more financially independent than TITIA. Asides from relations with its headquarters, WAMY Thailand has developed strong relations with several domestic Muslim organisations. Not many of these organisations are closely connected with the government.

Should there be the need for the government to interact with private sector associations; local private sector associations like TITIA will be selected first. This is because the government is more familiar with the organisations and its network; and because TITIA is legally recognised as a trade association, which is perceived as being more appropriate to interact with. On TITIA's part, the trade network will be enhanced by support from the government; when combined with the fact that TITIA is less financially independent, and considering the network it has with the Thai Chamber of Commerce, it will be more willing to develop relations with the government.

While it may be possible to examine the role of bigger trade association that are involved with Thailand's relations with the GCC States, the rationale for choosing TITIA and WAMY is based on the consideration on identity and expertise, which are significant factors TITIA and WAMY are at more advantageous than other associations. While the Thai Chamber of Commerce has the section and staff that interacts with the GCC States, the overall objectives and focus of the organizations are geographically broad. In addition, the Thai Chamber of Commerce does not possess Muslim identity, in-depth knowledge and connection with the GCC States as much as TITIA and WAMY. The latter organizations solely focus on the Muslim world and their Muslim identity and knowledge have made their organizational profile fit suitable with the research project.

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[48] It should have been bounded by such regulation had it been able to register; however, since it has not, it is not bound to the regulation. It is however thought of being monitored by the government's security sections.

The role of the Thai Chamber of Commerce and other non-Muslim private sector associations in Thailand's relations with the GCC States will be worth examining, but doing so can be another research on its own.

6.2 Data collection

6.2.1 Semi-structured interview

There are two key reasons why semi-structured interview had been selected as one of the data collection techniques. The first reason is a lack of documents or written records on the relations between Thailand and the GCC States, unlike in the case of Thailand's relations with the Western hemisphere where written records on the nature of relations have usually been kept. With the lack of written records, there is a need to rely on the oral accounts of people who used to be or have been involved with Thailand-GCC States relations. Since there have already been several linkages between Thailand's relations with the GCC States, people who are involved in the relations scatter around according to the nature of their linkage; in order to assure that the entire picture of the relations is obtained, it is necessary to arrange interviews with people from a wide range of profession and state/non-state spheres.

The second reason for interviewing a wide range of people is due to the need to balance opinions and points of view. Concentrating the interview with only certain groups of people can mislead the information, and omitting certain groups of interviewees, i.e. members of the private sector associations may mean omitting important pieces of information which could be valuable to the analysis. In addition, without diversifying interviewees, there is the risk of an inaccurate account; this is because of the significance of representation, where most staff would like to present their organisations in positive ways. For example, government staff are less likely to mention any accounts that discredit their organisations due to organisational pressure and sense of belonging. The third reason for diversifying sources of interviewees is due to the need to highlight the areas in which interviewees do feel comfortable and more at ease answering questions. While government and private sector staff are keener to provide facts and points of view based on their involvement, academics are more at ease in providing academically

leaning points of view and are capable of analysing and criticising the nature of relations more freely.

Interviews have been conducted with 20 people from both the state and non-state spheres. Interviewees from the state sphere are diplomats from Thailand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, political and economic analysts from the embassies of the GCC States in Bangkok, and scholars from Thailand's leading universities—Thammasat University and Chulalongkorn University. Interviewees from the non-state sphere are executive members and staffs from the two private sector associations used as case studies—TITIA and WAMY. Detailed information on the interviewees can be seen below:

Detailed information of interviewees
State Realm

- Dr. Jaran Maluleem, Department of International Relations, Faculty of Political Sciences, Thammmasat University, Bangkok, Thailand.
- Eight officers at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Royal Thai Government.
- Two scholars at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand.
- Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, Former Foreign Minister of Thailand.
- His Excellency the Ambassador of UAE at the UAE Embassy, Thailand.
- Two political analysts at the Qatar Embassy in Bangkok, Thailand
- Letter answering interview question from the Saudi Charge d'affair at the Saudi Embassy in Bangkok.

Non-State Realm

- Mr. Anirut Smutkojorn, President to the Thai Islamic Trade and Industrial Association
- One staff from the Thai Islamic Trade and Industrial Association
- Two staff from the World Assembly of Muslim Youths (WAMY)
- Mr. Nitipoom Naowarat, leading journalist on foreign affairs in Thai Rath Newspaper.

It can be seen that the number of interviewees from the state realm is larger than that from the non-state realm. This is because of the availability of the staff in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in the embassies of the GCC States in Thailand; it was much easier to locate staff from these organisations. In addition, considering that state sphere in focus covers greater number of organisations compared to the non-state sphere that covers only two private sector associations under study, it is justified to see that the number of interviewees in the state sphere is larger. Selection of interviewees is based on their involvement in Thailand's relations with the GCC StatesGCC States, as well as their expertise in the areas. Selection is done through direct contact with the officials within relevant organisations and then through the snowball-referring scheme.

Three important limitations should be noted here regarding the interviews. One is that most of the government officials, particularly those from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, prefer their names to be undisclosed. Therefore, this research seeks to reserve their rights and does not identify them. In addition, some staff in private sector associations were reluctant to give an interview; this is partly due to distrust of staff toward outsiders. The last limitation was the time constraints of interviewees due to their position and responsibility, making it difficult for interviewees to answer all of the interview questions. It was therefore necessary for the author to be selective in asking questions, restricting them to their relevance to the interviewees. The interviewees' responses were then used in connection with the responses from other interviews to create a larger picture.

The questions used to interview were not similar, and were designed to suit the interviewees' position and responsibility, as well as their expertise and past experience. The questions were intended to be open-ended, giving the interviewees the highest possibilities to reply. Key questions include:

- The nature of their organisations (i.e. governmental units, private sectors associations), and their relations with the GCC States and other domestic organisations
- Their views over the nature of Thailand's relations with the GCC States,

- The nature of Thailand's foreign policy toward the GCC States and their comment,

- The future of Thailand's relations with the GCC States,

- The factors that influence the relations between Thailand and the GCC States,

- The impact of GCC policy on the relations, Thailand's relations to the Muslim world and its impact on Thai-GCC States relations

- The comment on the role of private sector associations in international relations

In conclusion, the semi-structured interviews allow the author to see the overall image of Thai-GCC States relations through firsthand experience of those involved. This method proved particularly useful because as there is not much written information on the subject some information could only be gained through interview.

6.2.2   Surveys of Newspapers, Government Records and Speeches

The historical analysis was conducted in this research through the data gathered from newspaper articles, government documents and publications. The newspapers chosen to study here were Thailand's daily English newspapers, the Bangkok Post and the Nation. Additional information which reflects attitudes and the structure of relations was also obtained from Thai newspapers, where selection was based on ranking of popularity. Therefore, Thairath, Daily News and Matichon, ranked on the top. Popularity of these newspapers reflects the better news quality and a greater chance of accuracy. In Thailand, most newspapers receive news regarding foreign policy and relations directly from the Department of Information in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which regularly holds press conferences on Thailand's foreign relations; therefore, newspapers provide a good reflection of government discourse.

Analysing the news content is an important tool to reveal the effects of states, and the outcomes of state interaction. As one learns that the state actor is an abstract and unobservable phenomenon, however, the effect of the state actor can be seen through the mechanisms being driven by such structure including the government's policies and actions. Media is the tool that reveals the state's affects, i.e. the result of the interaction

and the state's attitude. In addition, frequency of certain topics in the newspaper can reflect two main factors. First, the frequency of the news can show the level of interactions as a great deal of significant interactions will appear more often in news; thus the observation of the frequency of certain news over time can show the level of interaction. Second, the frequency of the news can show the level of popularity, interest, and significance; after all, newspapers try to sell news that people would like to know more and news that benefits the country. The frequency of certain terms can reveal prevailing attitudes, the environment in which states interact, and thus will help define political culture states are embedded.

In this research, the author divided news into three groups; the division corresponded to the year each foreign minister stayed in the office. The analysis was done through looking at the frequency of news, and certain terms, which highlighted significance. Each group will reveal the level of interaction between Thailand and the Gulf, the issues of interest and the perception and feeling Thailand has had towards the Gulf States. Comparing across three groups of news help reveal the trends, including state's attention, prevailing identity, interest and perception.

In addition to newspapers, this research also sought to gather information from government publications and official gazettes, including Thailand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Commerce's publication. In Thailand, several government agencies produce and circulate journals and magazines to promote their work and inform staff. In this research the Foreign Ministry of Thailand's Buakaew Magazine, which is issued fortnightly, was examined. Buakaew is generally distributed to Thailand's Royal Embassy worldwide, as well as circulated within the Foreign Ministry. Generally the magazine provides information about the foreign ministry's activities and developments in international relations between Thailand and other states; therefore information about state visits, agreement signings and the launching of new cooperation was obtainable. The magazine was very useful in exploring activities the occurred between Thailand and the GCC States.

Speech and statements delivered by key governmental figures are the other source for analysis. Much of international relations theory can be reflected through the statements, though checking whether the administrations actually behaved in the way they claimed is challenging and also worth theoretical analysis. Both governmental discourses and behaviours were checked to see how they corresponded to international theories.

6.2.3   Participant Observation

Participant observation was another method used in this research to obtain information for analysis. As noted, while information on the role of the governments and international organisations can be obtained through written sources like newspapers, the information regarding the role of private organisations in Thailand rarely appears in written sources. Part of the reason is that some associations have not become well known and their activities are held rather exclusively which does not attract much attention from journalists and key governmental agencies. Therefore, interview and participant observation in private sector associations helped obtaining some information. The author therefore has interviewed the staff of these organisations and asked for permission to participate in the activities of selected associations. During the period of June-September 2007, the Thai Islamic Trade and Industrial Association (TITIA) was preparing to host the 2nd International Islamic Economic, Cultural and Tourism Conference and the World of Muslims Exhibition 2007 with other government and public agencies in Thailand. The author was granted permission from the President of TITIA to participate in a TITIA meeting and preparation for the event, as well as to observe the organisation and management within the organisation.

Participant observation is a useful method for this research in that in addition to revealing the nature of the local private organisations, which do not appear much on written data, it provides an insight into relations between that organisation and the government and private organisations it interacts with. Participant observation also allowed the author to meet additional targeted interviewers, including government representatives, the local private organisations staff, and the overseas transnational organisation members.

The conduct of participant observation in this research helped construct a more complete picture of the non-state actor world, which once more provides a unique aspect to the research. This is because not only there were very few events organised by the private sector associations prior to this research, but also few researchers had been able to participate and able to learn more about the process and players within the events. The elements of trust, familiarity and connections are needed for the researcher to be able to obtain more insight and to participate in the exclusive events. Fortunately, in the case of TITIA, the author of this research has been familiar with the work of TITIA since 2003 during a Ministry of Foreign Affairs internship; therefore, it was not difficult to become part of the preparation teams, to be able to attend almost all meetings and to interview relevant individuals involving in the events. The existing familiarity with the committee and staff had helped facilitate the participant observation and as a result, the information gained from the observation and the participation is more detailed, more insightful and more accurate.

While it is clear that the novelty and lack of information on the Muslim-related private sector in Thailand have made other methods difficult, participant observation fills in the gap. In addition to filling the gap that other methods fail to achieve, the conduct of participant observation has been useful in several ways. The participant observation in this research is guaranteed to provide more information than many other sources; this is due to the author's ability to develop trust and support from the organisations. Thus information presented in the research is up-to-date and accurate and it facilitates further analysis.

6.3 The Parameters of the Study

6.3.1 Scope and Limits

As discussed, this research aims to explore the nature of Thailand's relations with the GCC States through examining the role of private sector associations in engaging in the interactions between the two sides. There are a few limitations that need to be clarified beforehand.

While the research discusses the role of non-state actors, one cannot deny the wide range of non-state actors that exist in Thailand. In order to set limits or scopes of the research private sector associations are the only one type of non-state actors that will be focused on. This is because the Muslim private sector associations in Thailand have shown an interesting development in terms of their relations with the GCC States and the Muslim world. The nature of the scope and limit of the research may have shifted to include a case study of Thai-Arab multinational companies and how it affects Thailand's relations with the GCC States had there been an increase in the interactions between the multinational companies of the two countries.

While the limitation of the case study might have been changed had there been more dynamism between Thai-Arab multinational companies, the decision to limit the argument to the question of task-sharing between state and private sector associations has been clear: state-centric view is insufficient, and there is the need to find additional theories to support it. Making the state irrelevant to this research is not the task that this research aims to achieve. It is naturally undeniable that states reserve most of the right in managing security and foreign affairs, the question regarding the intervention of non-state actors should be posed regarding the involvement not the change in authority. Thus the author's explanation and analysis is to demonstrate the nature and capacity of private sector associations in Thailand, and to suggest that their role may increase to a sharing task with states. These associations will complement the role of states in international interactions with some parts of the world, where states find limits in shared knowledge, identities or norms. In other words, non-state actors can act as proxies where the government finds limits in further developing relations; those limits can include political conflict or identity issues.

While there are several prominent global political incidents that took place during the period under study, the author intends to limit the scope of the research by refraining from discussing in great detail some of the incidents took place under the period of study including 9/11 incident and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. While these incidents clearly affected the relations between Thailand and the GCC States, in-depth discussion

on these topics may divert the focus of the research topics, which largely compares the nature of state relations and private sector associations in Thai-GCC States relations, and will add to the length of the research.

6.3.2 Timeframe

The period between 1997 and 2006, which is being focused in this research covers three terms of administration.[49] The period between 1997 and 2001 the government was run by Chuan Leekpai's administration; and between 2001 and 2006 by Thaksin Chinnawatra's administration. Thaksin's administration last for one term and one year prior to coup d'etate took him out of power. Some discussions may be made in the period following the 2006 coup d'etat, where the legacy of the Thaksin's government still played an important role in Thailand's relations with the GCC States. There are different agenda within the three different administrations, as can be seen through the later-discussed policy statements, statements addressed in key events and press releases. Foreign policy, which is partly derived from domestic politics, differs in focus and thus result in the way Thailand portray herself and behaves in international stage.

The period under the two administrations is significant in Thailand's relations with the GCC States for several reasons. One is that the incidents that took place within these two administrations had some impact to Thailand's relationship with the GCC States, these include the Asian Economic crisis, Thailand's being granted as OIC observing member, 9/11 incident, and the unrest in Southern Thailand. The other reason is that, under Chuan, the relations with the GCC States were considered to have progressed more than before; and that the government agencies became more aware of the significance of the GCC States and the Middle East region. Thus one can consider this period to be one of the golden ages for Thai-GCC States relations. Under Thaksin's administration, tension between the government and Muslims in the south placed a challenge between Thailand and the Muslim world. The position of Thailand in the Arab world and in the GCC States, as well as the government's attitude towards the region was different from the previous government. Therefore, the content of the relations, as well as domestic

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[49] In Thailand, the government administration term is four years.

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politics during the two administrations help reveal the nature of state relations, and to see state-centric mechanisms within this relations which had been perceived and implemented differently.

It is also important to recognise foreign ministers under these particular administrations. Under Chuan, whose administration lasted four years, the foreign ministry was under Surin Pitsuwan. Under Thaksin, who won general election twice, thus had two sets of cabinets; in the first cabinet, Surakiat Satianrathai was foreign minister while in the later cabinet, the position was handed to Kantithee Supamonkol.

7. THE ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

This research is divided into three parts and six chapters. Part one consists of a theoretical and literature review. Part two discusses the state-centric realm, where nature and issues within state-to-state relations, including the affect of transnationalism, globalism and non-state actors on state, will be examined. In this part, theoretical concepts including state-centric realism, the role of transnationalism, globalisation, and constructivism on state will be used to examine the Thai state and how it resists the force of the globalised world. The third section is the non-state and transnational actors' realm. Attention will be devoted to the development and role of non-state actors within Thailand, as well as the potential of the private sector associations as the complementing or undermining the existence of states. In this part, a case study will be provided to demonstrate the influence of the non-state actor on the Thai state, and how the state responds to the organisation. The outcome of the two latter parts will allow us to revisit the theoretical concepts proposed in the first part, and justify how useful and practical the concepts are. Even more significantly, the outcome of the second and third parts will help us to be able to understand the nature of Thailand's relationship with the GCC States through a non-state centric approach, broadening the understanding of international relations in this region.

This introduction provides general information on the rationale and objectives, the methodology, the limits and the significance of the research; it also provides the results

of literature review on topics relevant to Thailand's relations with the GCC States. Chapter one provides an overview of theoretical concepts and models that are significant to the examination of Thailand's relations with the GCC States; it also identifies the direction of the theoretical debate in this research. Chapter two provides a descriptive background of Thailand's relationship with the Gulf States and the Arab world prior to the period under study. Chapters three and four provide the empirical examination on the state-centric realm, where they explain the nature of the Chuan and Thaksin administrations, as well as provide the analysis on the impacts of transnational and non-state actors on the Thai state under these two prime ministerships. Comparisons and analysis will be made based on these two chapters over how each government sought to resist those impacts and maintain its existence.

Chapter five and six discuss the development of private sector associations in Thailand and the potential for them to be more involved in Thailand-GCC States relations. Empirical study of the private sector associations, with special attention given to the Thai Islamic Trade and Industrial Association (TITIA) is examined. Chapter five provides a detailed examination of the development of TITIA and other non-state actors relevant to Thailand's relationship with the GCC States and the Muslim world, analysis on the capacity of these organisations will be discussed. Chapter six provides an examination and analysis of the capacity of WAMY through its role as a key host in the 2nd International Islamic Economic, Cultural and Tourism Conference and The World of Muslims Exhibition 2007 in Bangkok. Ultimately the conclusion provides the overall picture of the research as well as recommendations for further study.

8. CONCLUSION

The main aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of the research, whose rationale originated from the urge to explore in depth the relations between Thailand and the GCC States. While the GCC States have increasingly become more significant to Thailand, particularly in terms of trade, tourism and political alliances on the international stage, the development and contemporary nature of relations has been understudied. Thus the aim of the research is to bring more attention to such relations, with the focus on the role

of state and non-state actors involving in the process. The key research question in this research is whether there is a possibility that the Muslim-related private sector associations, who are more flexible in their organisational structure and share Islamic identity with the GCC States, can become more involved in Thailand's relations with the GCC States. With such key question the objectives and hypothesis have been set forth to direct the research process.

A survey of literature discussed in this chapter indicates the rarity of what is available directly on the topic of Thailand's relationship with the GCC States. The available literature relevant to Thailand's relations with the GCC States do not provide the in-depth study about the topic, for most of them are part of a greater geographical analysis. What they provide is still insufficient for the understanding of international relations; they do not provide mechanisms for the understanding of contextual Thai-GCC States relations. In addition, in the study of contemporary world politics, it is crucial to apply both state-centric and non-state approaches to the analysis. This particularly applies to the observation of the relationship between Thailand and the GCC States because while the Thai state claims an almost monopolistic authority to administer international relations with the GCC States, Islam and people-to-people relations can be seen as preceding state relations and sometimes helping to define the nature of government relations.

In order to conduct the research, qualitative methodology has been employed. Combined research methods, including semi-structured interviews, historical analysis, and participant observation, were considered best suited in light of the nature of Thailand's relations with the GCC States, which are rather recent; thus there has not been much written record and computerised data.

Choosing a suitable timeframe and limits was crucial in managing and controlling the research project. The timeframe chosen was the period between 1997 and 2006, covering three administrations and two prime ministers. The limit of the research is to explore the potential involvement of private sector associations in international relations

between Thailand and the GCC States; it does not claim that non-state actors will replace traditional state agencies; rather it provides alternative picture of how future Thailand's relations with the GCC States will be if the state and non-state actors share tasks.

Considering the rationale for the research, that the field of Thailand's relations with the GCC States in the contemporary has been understudied, the contribution of this research can be seen in many aspects. With regards to the project design and case study, choosing Thailand as a case study, as well as choosing to focus on the role of non-state actors in international relations provides a good framework for the future research about modern international relations among small states. In addition, this research focuses on non-state actors and provides an interesting case study for the further research as the development of civil society in Southeast Asian states is rather recent. In terms of the theoretical framework, this research provides an alternative to traditional IR theories by combining state-centric, pluralism and postinternationalism, with the focus of non-state actors. Method wise, although the examination of the bifurcated world has been proposed before, it is rare that it has been tested by applying it to real cases. Thus, the uniqueness in terms of case study selection, the concepts used, and the methods, as noted, will provide an inspiration for further research projects and contribute to the field.

The next chapter will provide the conceptual context for the current scholarship. It will help identify the contribution of this research and to locate it within the intellectual context.

CHAPTER 1
CONCEPTUAL CONTEXT

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to identify relevant theoretical concepts needed to understand the nature of Thailand-GCC States relations. In addition, it seeks to create a proper model equipped with theoretical framework that facilitates the understanding of the relations, based on the empirical findings. Choosing relevant theories that could help understand the empirical findings is a challenging task. This chapter seeks to explore the two realms of theories, the state-centric and pluralist views. The state-centric view is useful to understand the inter-state relations; it also yields a better understanding of the resilience of the state in the contemporary world.

This chapter seeks to explain the key concepts used in this research, particularly state-centric, pluralist and postinternational views. It also includes additional theoretical concepts that should be taken into consideration when examining international relations: constructivism, global context, and the role of individuals. Then the author introduces the work of James Rosenau, whose proposals and models will be employed to develop this research's theoretical framework and model. The last part of the section briefly explains how the models will be incorporated into the empirical study of Thai-GCC States relations, and between the GCC States and private sector associations in Thailand.

2. RELEVANT IR THEORIES AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
2.1 State-Centric Realm
2.1.1 State-Centric Approach
a. Definition and Explanation

At the outset, it is important to provide a definition for the term *state* being discussed here. According to Owen, there are two meanings that define state. The first meaning refers to "sovereign political entities,"[50] and the second meaning refers to the "set of

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[50] Roger Owen, State, Power and Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East (London: Routledge, 1992), pp.1.

institutions and practices which combines administrative, judicial, rule-making and coercive powers."[51] This research seeks to define state, using the combination of the two meanings of state suggested by Owen. Thus a state is a "sovereign political entities within which exist administrative, judicial, and coercive power." Placing states as the core analytical part has been a traditional practice in conventional international relations study. A state-centric view had been developed alongside the establishment of the contemporary "state" concept and the recognised significance of sovereignty, with the signing of the Treaty of Westphalia. According to Garnett, "Westphalia has provided the basic paradigm for understanding the international politics for three hundred and fifty years."[52]

As noted by Owen, the notion of sovereignty has been considered a crucial component of the understanding of state. Willetts soundly defines sovereignty that it is "the condition of a state being free from any higher legal authority. It is related to, but distinct from the condition of a government being free from any external political constraints."[53] To other scholars[54] the significance of "sovereignty" is reflected in their discussions on the role of states and state-centric approach for the understanding of international politics. One may argue, however, that the recognition of the role of state predates Westphalia. This is because prior to such phenomena there exists already a state-like community namely empire and polity as can be seen through Thucydides' *Peloponesian War,* where much attention has been given to the nature of state and inter-state relations.

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[51] Ibid.

[52] John C. Garnett, "States, State-Centric Perspectives and Interdependence Theory," in *Dilemmas of World Politics: International Issues in a Changing World*, ed. John Baylis, and N.J. Renger (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 40.

[53] Peter Willetts, *The Globalization of World Politics*, ed. John Baylis and Steve Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 358.

[54] See Maryann Cusimano, ed., *Beyond Sovereignty: The Rise of Transsovereign Problems* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2000); Fred Halliday, *Middle East in International Relations: The Power, Politics and Ideology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Anthony McGrew, "Globalization and Global Politics," in *The Globalization of World Politics*, ed. John and Steve Smith Baylis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

b. The Nature of a State-Centric Approach

In a state-centric view, states are viewed as the prime actors within the international system, thus outcomes and international relations phenomena are viewed as the results of state-to-state interactions. Proponents of state-centric concepts perceive that the sources of state power come both from material factors, i.e. forces, and economic resources. A state's power can be measured through its ability to acquire military capability, economic interests, loyalty from their citizens, and the ability to influence the outcome of international relations. Non-state actors are placed in secondary stances; this is because their roles are largely defined by the environment set by states.[55] With states playing the central role in the international system, the core agendas are highly state-related; thus, the agenda circle around the survival of states, particularly security and diplomacy.

While several IR theories focus on state as main source of argument, leading them to be considered as state-centric, realism demonstrates well the nature of state-centric view. It is important to recognise, however, that realism cannot be directly translated into state-centrism. Realism's general tenets include the claims that 1) states are the principal actors within international system, and that they are rational actors;[56] 2) security and foreign relations are perceived as vital factors for states' survival, thus making diplomats and military key personnel within international interactions;[57] 3) states struggle to maximise and safeguard their security and national interests; and 4) other aspects additional to security and foreign policy are considered to be the external environment where states interact, thus, are placed secondary to the core of realism.[58]

To Garnett, the nature of sovereignty provides three paradigms for the understanding of international relations, including "the sovereign equality of the member states under

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[55] Stephen Krasner, "Power Politics, Institutions, and Transnational Relations," in *Bringing Transnational Relations Back In: Non-State Actors, Domestic Structures and International Institutions*, ed. Thomas Risse-Kappen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Presss, 1995), pp. 279.

[56] Paul Viotti, and Mark Kauppi, *International Relations Theory* (New York: McMillan Publishing Company, 1987), pp. 45.

[57] Joseph Nye and Robert Keohane, *Power and Interdependence* (New York: HarperCollins, 1989), pp. 22-23.

[58] Ibid.

international law, the significance of power and interest as guides to state policy, and the comparative nature of the political arena in which the balance of power is the major regulating mechanism."[59] These paradigms provide a conceptual foundation for the state-centric approach, enabling scholars wishing to understand inter-state relations to treat all sovereign states as equal, and direct that the focus of the study should be power and interest, as they are at the core of states' activities. While sovereign equality should be treated the same, the power each state has is not, therefore, maintaining security and negotiating for national interests is the nature of state interactions. Such characteristic of state-centric can be summarised through Halliday's explanation that it is a focus on "actions of states" and on ways in which they are "able to dominate and control relations between different societies." Therefore, a "state-centric approach allowed for the discussion of war, diplomacy, international agreements…"[60]

c. Proponents

In championing the state-centric view, proponents point out that states, which are the core analytical factors, have endured changes in international politics. Thus the mechanism used to explain such enduring units is therefore always needed, making it resilient. Realism, for example, has been a useful tool for the understanding of international politics throughout history; it has never been considered obsolete. Pro state-centric scholars point out the need to use realism to explain wars and conflicts, which even though decrease in number, have never disappeared.

So far, there is no other alternative proved as resilient as states, even with changes brought by globalisation. To Krasner, "there is no evidence that globalisation has systematically undermined state control or led to the homogenisation of policies and structures."[61] Denying the resilience of state is a rare phenomenon. In 1970, Keohane and Nye, who had sought alternative actors to states and suggested the emerging significance of transnational relations and the non-state actors, predicted that the role of

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[59] Garnett, "States, State-Centric Perspectives and Interdependence Theory," pp. 41.
[60] Halliday, *Middle East in International Relations: The Power, Politics and Ideology*, pp. 229.
[61] Stephen Krasner, *Sovereignty : Organised Hypocrisy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 223.

states as key actors in world politics might be eroded and undermined by non-state actors.[62] Two decades later the two scholars admitted that states had been more resilient than they expected; thus, instead of ignoring them and finding alternatives to them, ones should incorporate states into the attempt in understanding international politics.[63]

A state-centric view is therefore necessary as long as states exist. The retreat of states, which would shake the analytical tools as well, has so far been less likely. The proponents of the state-centric view recognise this fact, and use the resilience of state as the key argument to support their view: if state is resilient, so will be state apparatuses used to examine state relations.

d. Criticisms

The criticisms over the insufficiency of the state-centric view are not new. Criticisms of the view come from several scholars. According to Halliday, a state-centric view alone might not be able to provide sufficient explanation to the international politics. [64] This is because the state-centric approach may fail to capture the significance of non-state actors and their international interactions, both among themselves and with states, that maybe significant to the understanding of world politics.[65]

Willet points out that the problem of the state-centric approach lies in the way that the "state" is being defined.[66] States can be thought of as a legal person, country, or the government apparatus. In choosing state-centric as a concept to explain IR phenomenon, one has to be clear which definition of state will fit with the nature of the analysis. If scholars fail to define the concept of state that they want to focus on, the analysis can be too broad and does not provide sufficient explanation. Lacking sensitivity to the size, power and economic resources from one country to the other is also another challenging issue of the state-centric view. Although sovereign states are bound by international law

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[62] Their argument can be found in Keohane, *Power and Interdependence,* pp. iv-xv.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Halliday, *Middle East in International Relations: The Power, Politics and Ideology*, pp. 230.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Peter Willetts, "Transnational Actors and International Organizations in Global Politics," in *The Globalization of World Politics*, ed. John Baylis, and Steve Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 359-361.

to be equal, in reality international politics are constrained by difference in military capability and economic power.

Several authors including Beeson and Strange soundly point out that studying the authority, rather than sovereignty, which is one of the highlight of state-centrism, provides a more useful framework for understanding international relations in which he believes actors consist of more than just states, and these actors increasingly determine the political and economic outcomes of the systems.[67] The question of authority versus sovereignty, which has been widely discussed in the contemporary international politics, suggests the constraint in that sovereignty is not the only factor that affects the system but also the authority that can influence the outcome of the system. Unlike sovereignty, the sources of authority in international politics are broader, and include different actors, including multinational companies, international organisations, and social groups. Thus a state-centric focus on sovereignty is not broad enough to cover contemporary international politics.

The criticism from the pluralist school is that the state-centric view excludes other components of international relations, i.e. non-state actors, international organisations and individuals. It does not have the sufficient mechanism to understand new actors and issues that recently became significant in contemporary international relations, including issues on environment, technology, human rights, organised crime and terrorism.

As early as the 1940s, David Mitrany, the founder of functionalist theory, accounted that focusing solely on international politics--diplomacy, power and security--prevents states from benefiting from functional cooperation. For Mitrany, other functional agendas are equally important with the political agenda. Prioritising the political agenda prevents states from effectively cooperating on other agendas which can potentially spill over to improve political relations.

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[67] For more information, see Mark Beeson, "Sovereinty under Siege: Globalization and the State in Southeast Asia," *Third World Quartertly* 24, no. 2 (2003); Susan Strange, *The Retreat of the State: The Diffusion of Power in the World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Liberal transnationalists like Keohane and Nye see the obsoleteness of the state-centric view in that it excludes non-state and transnational actors. [68] These actors have increasingly become significant, and can potentially determine the outcome of contemporary international relations, thus they should be incorporated into an understanding of world politics. Skjelsbaek (1972) argues in the same direction that in the contemporary world, a state-centric view cannot explain all aspects of international politics; states find themselves having limited ability to penetrate and manage some fields while non-state agencies can fare better and have as much or even more influence over international politics.[69] Constructivists, on the other hand, point out the needs to understand the significance of ideological aspects like norms and identity, stating that such concepts are lacking in state-centric view (Katzenstein 1996, Wendt 1999).[70]

There are also criticisms on the state apparatus, including security and diplomacy. In modern international relations, wars and conflicts are less relevant; or when they became relevant, diplomacy cannot prevent or lessen their intensity. The criticisms over state apparatus open the new gate to a new way of diplomacy, which embrace non-state actors and international institutions [71] as an alternative solution for problems within international politics.

The critics of state-centric views also draw attention to the challenges that states are facing in the contemporary world. As the focus of the analysis, the survival and strength of states is significant. Thus, there is a strong link between the state-centric view and the challenge modern states encounter. The survival as well as the changes in states will determine the durability of the state-centric view. The challenges contemporary states are facing are discussed in the next section.

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[68] See Keohane, *Power and Interdependence*, pp. iv-xv.
[69] Kjell Skjelsbaek, "The Growth of International Nongovernmental Organization in the Twentieth Century," in *Transnational Relations and World Politics*, ed. Joseph S. Nye, and Robert Keohane (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1972), pp. 86.
[70] See Peter J. Katzenstein, *Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
[71] Brian White, "Diplomacy," in *The Globalization of World Politics*, ed. John Baylis, and Steve Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 253.

2.1.2   States in a Globalised World

The end of the Cold War and forces of globalisation have led states to be challenged in different ways. The challenges came from changes in the environment, actors and factors related to states. This section seeks to identify the challenges states face, as well as how states counter those challenges.

a. The Ways in Which States Can be Challenged

Challenge to States' Sovereignty

It cannot be denied that sovereignty is one of the most important elements for states. This is because sovereignty defines a state's right not only to exist, but to also exercise power over its own internal affairs and to be accepted externally. Sovereignty defines a state's legitimacy to function domestically with its own citizens as well as legitimacy to be accepted and respected within the international political environment. The 20th century world politics have seen the sovereignty of states under threat in several ways, including states' losing the ability to control the clearly defined boundaries and identity. Demarcated territory and state identity restrict external intervention and grant states authority to manage their own domestic affairs. In the globalised world, the flow of information, people and material sources occur so rapidly and on such a large scale that states find themselves unable to control and counter these cross-border flows. In terms of identity, the flow of information and communication have encouraged the solidification of ethnicity and non-state group identity, i.e. diasporas, that can draw away a state's legitimacy and the loyalty that a state used to enjoy from their citizens. Thus the sense of nation-state, which most states have been trying to cultivate, has been challenged by these deterritorised boundaries.

Another challenge to modern states is the potential loss of legitimacy, which is collectively acknowledged by state's exercising authority and power. In the past, the ability for a state to protect its citizens has easily contributed to the legitimacy of states. However, in the modern world, the question of legitimacy has been raised more often. States' attempting to manage domestic affairs are sometimes questioned i.e. the case that states harm or fail to protect their citizens; and such behaviours do affect the legitimacy

of states; such phenomenon has led states to be criticised and undermined by external players, including other states or groups of states. In addition, as legitimacy is also rooted in loyalty to people, states are also threatened by the increased skills individuals have obtained, which have affected their relations with states. According to Rosenau once individuals have become more skilful and have obtained more knowledge, they depend less on the state and have greater potential to find the alternative agency to states[72] or to states other than their own.

Challenge from the Emergence of Other Alternative Institutions

Another significant element of state sovereignty also includes state's authority. Traditionally, as states are the legitimate exerciser of military and man power, therefore, it is perceived that traditional states are equipped both with sovereignty and authority; in addition, states are perceived as accumulating wealth and are heavily in charge of trade and economic development. In the modern world, when threats from other states is less likely, and when other agendas i.e. trade, human rights, or environmental problems have become more significant, states' authority tends to be perceived as shifting to additional players. The question of sovereignty vs. authority has not so much been a debate in the past because both notions had been admitted as firmly guard by states. In the modern world, however, other institutions have emerged and tend to have as much capacity to challenge the tasks once belonging to states. Examples of these alternative institutions include multi-national companies, non-government organisations, and international organisations.

The emergence of non-state actors threatens the way that states exercise their authority and policy making. This can be seen through the emergence of human rights movements that question states' behaviour. For states to cooperate with non-state actors can be complicated, and states' policies might "go awry," as claimed by Cusimano.[73] Several difficulties that states encounter in dealing with these problems include the

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[72] James Rosenau, *Turbulence in World Politics: A Theory of Change and Continuity* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 3-5.
[73] Maryann Cusimano, "Sovereignty's Future," in *Beyond Sovereignty: Issues for a Global Agenda*, ed. Maryann Cusimano (Belmont, CA:Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2000), pp. 327.

states' lack of mechanisms to deal with them, as well as the nature of the transsovereign problem, which is rooted both domestically and internationally.[74]

With the challenges that states face in the contemporary world, most states, in their attempt to maintain their existence and not to be replaced by alternative institutions, have shown to adjust themselves to counter these changes, as will be discussed in the next section.

b. How States Adjust Themselves to Challenges

As mentioned, globalisation and recent changes in international politics, i.e. the end of the Cold War, have brought about some challenges to modern states. As noted, states have been viewed as resilient mechanisms and so far there has been no alternative that can be proved as effective as states. However, with non-state actors becoming more powerful and efficient, there exists the possibility that states' authority or functions may be shifted to these non-state actors. Therefore, it is understandable why states have been adjusting themselves to counter the challenges.

There are several ways for states to maintain sovereignty and to address challenges in the globalised world. According to Cusimano one of the ways states have done is to downsize and decentralise themselves in order to allow non-state actors to take over some functions that used to belong to states.[75] To many scholars, leaving some of the responsibilities for non-state actors is useful for states, since it allows states to be responsible for fewer burdens, thus making them more focused. Leaving some responsibilities to non-state actors also enables states to handle newly emerging agendas.

c. Surviving the Emergences of Some Non-State Actors and Transnationalism

In order to resist the proliferation of non-state actors and transnationalism, which can potentially threaten states' sovereignty, states try to strengthen law and control over borders and markets.[76] To control and limit the role of non-state actors, states also try to

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[74] Ibid.

[75] Cusimano, "Sovereignty's Future," pp. 280.

[76] Ibid, p. 315.

strengthen law and regulations over private sector, non-governmental organisations, and private groups. To control the flow of people, goods or ideas, states also increase state-to-state cooperation and enlist non-state actors to help with the problems.[77] States also resist non-state actors through such methods as the banning of funding, claiming that the activities of the organisations are contradictory with traditional values, and that the actors are results of external interferences.[78]

As non-state actors and transnational movements can project both positive and negative effects, states take into consideration such facts. Those that destabilise states' existence have been resisted while those whose goals correspond and benefit states are being adjusted into and interacted with. Adjusting themselves and coordinating with non-state actors is the mechanism that helps to increases states' legitimacy and allows them to adjust themselves to the nature of contemporary world politics. The example of states' adopting characteristics of non-state and transnational actors can be found through the extreme, when states themselves establish state-run NGOs, which are sometimes called GRINGOs,[79] or uphold some of the values promoted by some of these NGOs, including environmental protection or human rights promotions.

In summary, it can be seen that states counter changes in the contemporary world and changes resulted from emergences of non-state actors in two ways: one is to evolve and adjust themselves to fit with the changes, and the other is to resist those changes and the influence of non-state actors.

Trying to understand international interactions and relationships between states in the contemporary world using the state-centric approach alone cannot yield a holistic picture. One of the main reasons is obsoleteness, that the theory does not have sufficient analytical tools that can explain changes and agendas in modern international politics. Second is that the framework of a state-centric view is narrowly defined, thus excluding some actors and environments that are not state-related, though maybe significant to the

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[77] Ibid.
[78] Halliday, *Middle East in International Relations: The Power, Politics and Ideology*, pp. 234.
[79] Ibid, pp. 236.

analysis. However, proponents of the state-centric view still insist that international phenomenon still need states as a theoretical tool, i.e. military and diplomacy continue to function and are largely influential to international politics. Since the argument over the resilience of states is still valid, it is impractical to abandon the state-centric view. What should be focused on therefore is the search for additional concepts that can fulfil what is lacking in the state-centric view.

2.2 Pluralism

2.2.1   Nature and Explanation of the Pluralist Approach

Pluralism is rooted in liberal concept within International Relations, it is commonly recognised so due to its several variances.[80] However, the root of pluralism is still mostly based on liberal concept. Therefore, to understand pluralism, it is worth examining the nature of liberalism.

According to Timothy Dunne, liberalism is "an umbrella term" which refers to a concept that rejects "the realist view of the primacy of the state and the coherence of the state-as-actor."[81] Instead, liberalism is "an ideology whose central concern is the liberty of individual...the state must always be the servant of the collective will, not the master…"[82] With its highlight on individual, liberalism also emphasises the importance of individual freedom and ideas; for liberals, war is unnecessary and can be avoided. In addition, according to Steve and Baylis, liberals are sceptical about the idea that state is the only main actor in world politics, but they do not deny its significance; to liberals, there are other players that are as important in world politics.[83] For liberals, cooperation among states is important. Steve and Baylis provide a summary picture of world politics according to liberal idea as follows:

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[80] Ibid.

[81] Tim Dunne, "Liberalism," in *The Globalization of World Politics*, ed. John Baylis, and Steve Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 179.

[82] Ibid.

[83] John Baylis, and Steve Smith, ed., *The Globalization of World Politics* (Oxford: Oxford Universith Press, 2001), pp. 4.

> The picture of world politics that results from the liberal view is of a complex system of bargaining between many different types of actors. Military force is still important but the liberal agenda is not as restricted as is the realist one. Liberals see national interests in much more than military terms, and stress the importance of economic, environmental, and technological issues. Order in world politics emerges not from a balance of power but from the interactions between many layers of governing arrangements. [84]

From the description of liberalism above, which can be applied to understand pluralism, it is clear that pluralism does not abandon the significance of states; however, the concept is broadened to accommodate other actors and ideas. For pluralism, conflicts can occur; that's why liberals maintain that the military is still important. However, the means to avoid conflict and war can be done through using other agendas and key players beside states. It can be seen that pluralism is more receptive to progress and changes in world politics more than realism. This is because its conceptual bases, which promote ideas and individual freedom, can accommodate changes i.e. technology, globalisation or emergence of new non-state actors. Ultimately, it can be noted that pluralists emphasise cooperation; interestingly and ironically, one of the reasons for diversity within pluralism has to do with the means by which cooperation can be attained.

In summary, the pluralist view provides an alternative way to understand international politics, starting from the number and influence of actors within the system; the key agendas, which result in the contents and process within the international system. In terms of number of players, pluralists suggest multiple players, thus the significance and supremacy of state has been reduced and distributed other players. The increase in number of players corresponds to greater diversity of the agendas within the international system; thus pluralism allows greater flexibility for the analysis of the environment of international politics in the modern world.

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[84] Ibid.

As noted, there are differences among pluralists; each cluster provides different explanations for international politics. The differences are largely subjected to key elements they believe to encourage cooperation, including actors, the environment or ideas.[85]

2.2.2   Selected Variances of Pluralism

An increase in new international relations agendas and actors, as well as the less likeliness of war and conflicts with increasing attempts among states to cooperate, has made pluralism one of the most appropriate approaches to investigate international politics. As noted, pluralism is a broad concept but has stemmed out into different variances because pluralists provide different explanation to how cooperation can be achieved. It is important therefore to discuss some variances of pluralism, which are closely relevant to the discussion in this research.

Since the large part of this research concerns the role of non-state actors, particularly organisations, in encouraging greater interactions and cooperation, liberal institutionalism is very relevant. Tim Dunne provides an explanation of the transformation of the concept, pointing out that at the beginning liberal institutionalism focuses on the role of international institutions in carrying out the tasks a state cannot undertake; however, by early 1970 the attention to only international institutions was added by additional non-state institutions, including transnational cooperation and non-government organisations.[86] According to Dunne, in the 1980s there was the transformation of liberal institutionalism to neo-liberal institutionalism; there are a few differences between liberal institutionalism and its new version. Among those differences include the role of actor, neo-liberal institutionalists, led by Robert Keohane, believe that while non-state institutions are important, they are still subordinate to states.[87] The other difference neoliberal-institutionalists seek to point out concerns the motivation for states to cooperate; to them, states make decision to interact with other

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[85] Further explanation can be seen in Dunne, "Liberalism," pp. 165.
[86] Ibid, pp. 171.
[87] Keohane, *Power and Interdependence,* pp. 8. As quoted in Dunne, "Liberalism," pp. 176.

state with "absolute gain" as key goal; thus it does not matter "if another state will gain more from the interaction."[88]

The significance of liberal institutionalism is the emphasis on additional actors in the international system. The move to embrace additional non-state actors and accepting the resilience and undeniable dominant role of states reflect the practicality of the concept. Therefore, liberal institutionalism and its neo relative are suitable and able to provide a considerably broad understanding of international relations.

While liberal institutionalism provides an explanation largely on the role of actors in international relations, with particular emphasis on states and organisations, it does not provide a sufficient explanation on the overall environment of international politics, which also consists of smaller units, including individuals, companies and movements. Liberal internationalism fulfils this gap by emphasising on the role of interactions among these smaller units in promoting international relations. Liberal internationalists believe that "contact between the peoples of the world, through commerce or travel, will facilitate a more pacific form of international relations."[89] The transformation of liberal internationalism also took place in 1990s, with the ideas that conflicts can be avoided among liberal states; liberal democracy is therefore promoted.

In this research, the essence of liberal internationalism concentrates on the promotion of the interactions among people through different means including trade, tourism, education and cultural promotion. Unlike liberal institutionalism, the focus is given to the micro-unit i.e. individuals and small companies. This concept therefore assures that most of the components, both micro and macro units, in the international system are taken into consideration.

The noted two variances of pluralism, as noted, helps provide an explanation for additional actors and agendas within international politics; thus there is already some explanation for actors and components of the system. Questions arise, however, over

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[88] Ibid, pp. 176.
[89] Dunne, "Liberalism," pp. 176.

additional explanations as to how these actors are related to one another within the system of international relations. With changes in international politics, where new actors and agendas emerge, there is a need for concepts that can help explain the pattern of relations among these actors.

Complex interdependence, as proposed by Keohane and Nye, offers the view of global politics differently through the then-predominant realist view; the world politics with "a minor role of force, less dominance of security issues, and multiple transnational contacts,"[90] and to see "how asymmetrical economic interdependence could add another instrument in traditional realist struggles for power."[91] According to the two scholars, there are four main characteristics of complex interdependence, including multiple channels, increased linkage among states and non-state actors, absence of hierarchy among issues, and minor role of military force.[92]

To complex interdependence scholars, multiple channels refer to the condition in which international interactions consist of actors from various sectors. The example provided by Keohane and Nye included the direct interactions between bureaucrats in different countries over the tasks they have in common, the interactions among nongovernment elites in meetings or conference related to their business, and the interactions among multinational enterprises.[93] The absence of hierarchy among issues means foreign affairs agenda, which used to place military security as top agenda, is broaden and becomes more diverse.[94] Several other issues besides security can become vital to the national interest, and require as much attention. Therefore, instead of looking the military agenda as a deeply embedded foundation of the foreign agenda, the complex interdependence concept horizontally lays down various issues on equal ground, pointing out that any issues can be significant to international relations, as any can affect national interests and affect the country's security.

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[90] Keohane, *Power and Interdependence*, pp. 21.
[91] Ibid.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid, pp. 26.
[94] Ibid, pp. 27.

While traditional IR theorists claim that military force is crucial to national power, Keohane and Nye point out that in complex interdependence, threats among countries will decline to almost nonexistent, thus reducing the need for military force.[95] This point corresponds to the previous claim that the complex interdependence concept demonstrates the absence of hierarchy among issues. Increased linkages among actors are the outcome of multiple channels and the broadened global issues. According to Keohane and Nye, the intertwining of diverse issues, combined with the diminished influence of military and security concerns, restrain major powers from threatening smaller states for fear of the spill over effect to other issues. With this regard, there is less hierarchy within the international system. Complex interdependence also encourages the boundary-crossing interconnections between bureaucratic governmental institutions, local organisations, private organisations, or the multinational enterprises which then stimulate the increased establishment of transnational and transgovernmental relation.

Complex interdependence is being discussed separately here to highlight its principles that emphasise the nature of relations among actors, particularly the pattern of dependence and interactions, which is more specific than what is provided by neoliberal institutionalism. The nature of relations among actors come in the form of more dependence, where military is no more the only source of dependence among states and non-state actors anymore. The concept of complex interdependence should be considered as an appropriate additional explanatory tool for the relationship among actors within the system. The highlight of complex interdependence is that it accommodates new environments in international relations, where the security issue is less dominant, transnational actors emerged, and the international relations can be done through multiple channels.

While the two variances of pluralism have identified actors and the ideas attached to them and complex interdependence has set the stage by explaining the pattern of relations among these actors, the remaining explanation needed is on the motivations in

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[95] Ibid.

which these actors interact and why these actors and the issues they bring to the table can promote international relations more efficiently than what has been done solely by states. Functionalism can provide an explanation on such a nature because it seeks to promote international interactions based on functional issues.

The key argument of functionalists is that states should seek to cooperate on functional issues with other states while trying to avoid the complication of political and bureaucratic processes.[96] According to David Mitrany, the pioneer of functionalism, certain issues can be managed through international arrangement without the involvement of the political federation.[97] Mitrany suggests that this form of cooperation bypasses the issues of formal sovereignty. The outcome of functional cooperation does not only yield mutual benefits in issues at stake, it can spill over to enhance the political agenda that states have toward one another.

Joseph Nye further explained Mitrany's argument known as the "Form follows function", principle.[98] The first explanation is that "cooperation will only work if it is focused on particular and specific activities which are currently performed by states but which would be performed more effectively in some wider context."[99] The second point is that "the form which such cooperation takes should be determined by the nature of the function in question, thus for some functions a global institution will be appropriate while for other regional, or even local, institutions are all that is necessary."[100]

The essence of functionalism is therefore based on the attempt to reduce the focus on the central government and distribute greater responsibility to sub-government units, and other non-state agencies. The expertise and efficiency of the governmental sub-units and the non-state agencies is the key that functionalists argue that international cooperation and international agendas can be achieved in more efficiently without delay.

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[96] David Mitrany, "The Functional Approach to World Organization," *International Affairs* 24, no. 3 (1948).
[97] Ibid.
[98] Keohane, *Power and Interdependence* As quote in Kirsten Ainley, and Chris Brown, *Understanding International Relations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 121.
[99] Ibid, pp. 119.
[100] Ibid, pp. 119-120.

Therefore, the motivation for actors to interact in the new environment can be explained through the functionalist perspective that with their functional focus, international cooperation and tasks can be achieved easier than relying on the state alone.

So far, we have identified actors, which have been broadened to cover non-state actors and individuals, while states are admittedly continuing to be dominant players within international relations. We also have identified the environment and nature of the system, in which actors interact through increased contacts, through more linkages, multiple channels and a less conflict-prone environment. We also have seen that the nature of the interaction between actors can be a more functional focus, where not every task has to be handled by central government and that the governmental sub-units or non-state actors can function better to get the tasks done. Therefore, it can be seen that from the pluralism umbrella we have obtained sufficient concepts to explain the nature of world politics. The next part provides additional explanations on the value of pluralism and the criticisms on the concept.

2.2.3   *Pluralism's accommodation of Non-State Actors*
The liberal tradition of international relations has long promoted and accommodated the explanatory mechanism for the emergence and increased role of non-state actors in international relations. It is therefore worthwhile noting the contribution of non-state actors in international politics within the discussion of pluralism.

The role of non-state actors has, undeniably, become visible in international politics. Ranging from small non-government organisations to larger multinational companies, the contemporary international politics see that non-state actors have affected international relations in many ways. It is not unusual to see that some non-state actors have become so powerful that they can affect states' behaviour and policy-making. In addition, non-state actors can change international norms. While in most cases, states continue to be important players within world politics, Risse-Kappen points out that

states still need non-state actors "to achieve economic growth, to gain new policy-relevant ideas, to create international institutions, and to monitor regime compliance."[101] Bringing non-state actors into the analysis is therefore important as the understanding of these actors and their roles provides a more complete picture of international politics.

According to Willetts, non-state actors refer to "any actor that is not a government."[102] Halliday suggests a broader and more specific definition of non-state actors, from traditionally heavily focusing on non-government organisation (NGO) during post-1960 to "encompass all that is non-state, i.e. business and banks, religious movements, social movements, and criminal organizations."[103] Josselin and Wallace's definition of non-state actors parallels with Halliday's definition. For them, non-state actors also include the organisations that are "largely or entirely autonomous from central government funding and control: emanating from civil society, or from the market economy, or from political impulses beyond state control and direction;" and that are "operating as or participating in networks which extend across the boundaries of two or more states—thus engaging in 'transnational' relations, linking political systems, economies, societies;" and lastly that are "acting in ways which affect political outcomes, either within one more states or within international institutions—either purposefully or semi-purposefully, either as their primary objective or as one aspect of their activities."[104]

One crucial factor to keep in mind when examine non-state actors is the way these actors are defined. The term *non-state actor* is so broad that it covers diverse kinds of organisations. The term being so broad and ambiguous has been made more difficult with the growing number of non-state actors in the international relations environment. The differences among these non-state actors yield different impacts to international relations; thus without specifying the type of non-state actor to be studied, it is difficult to obtain a precise analysis and understanding. Therefore, in analysing the role of these

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[101] Risse-Kappen, ed., Bringing Transnational Relations Back In: Non-States Actors, Domestic Structures and International Institutions, pp. 285-286.

[102] Willetts, "Transnational Actors and International Organizations in Global Politics,"pp. 358.

[103] Fred Halliday, "The Romance of Non-State Actors," in *Non-State Actors in World Politics*, ed. Daphne and William Wallace Josselin (Basingstoke:Palgrave, 2001), pp. 21.

[104] Josselin, ed., *Non-State Actors in World Politics*, pp. 4.

actors in international relations, one of the first tasks should be clarifying the type of non-state actors that will be examined and analysing them according to their specific characteristic. Such a way can help limit the scope of analysis and avoid the confusion rooted in the linkages among non-state actors, i.e. between non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and inter-governmental organisations (INGOs),[105] between the multinational companies and the private sector associations, or between the diasporas and ethnic movements.

This research is interested in the definition provided by Josselin and Wallace, which is broad and embraces wide ranges of organisations that exist within domestic and international circle. The case studies of non-state actors in this research are selected with this definition in mind: they are largely autonomous from the Thai government, they operate in transnational network, and their behaviours have impacts on political outcome within state or international institutions.

In terms of the impacts of non-state actors on states, it is not unusual to see close relations between some states and non-state actors. Many non-state actors are still dependent on state funding, and are willing to serve as conduits for the foreign policy of their government.[106] As discussed, some non-states actors are even controlled and partially funded by the government. The role of non-state actors on states can be divided into their negative and positive impacts.

On a positive side, the non-state actors provide support to states by covering the tasks states do not do or fail to do. These organisations undertake the roles that states find themselves being limited from or bound by legislation or rules that they have set up for themselves.[107] In addition, these organisations also lower the cost incurred to the government. Being more flexible than the government, non-states actors can manage the interactions more efficiently than the government. According to Halliday, the way non-state actors affect states is through the "good causes" these agencies use to influence

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[105] Halliday, "The Romance of Non-State Actors," pp. 22.
[106] Josselin, ed., *Non-State Actors in World Politics*, pp. 258.
[107] Rosenau, *Turbulence in World Politics: A Theory of Change and Continuity*, pp. 276.

states' activities; a good example of this is human rights, with the work of Amnesty International, OXFAM, etc.[108] These non-state actors are also partially responsible for bringing technology and financial flow into contemporary international politics.

The negative impacts of non-state actors to the state include threat of the likelihood that the governments fail to monitor or control international interactions initiated by non-state actors, in which some of the projects can threaten national security. On well-being, as discussed before, some illegitimate non-state actors, i.e. insurgent groups and religious movements, can undermine state security. In addition, when the governments fail to monitor the multi-channel interactions run by these non-government actors, there is always a risk of conflicts among the actors, or their agreement may contradict the governments' policy. Other negative impacts include the possibility that the proliferation of non-state actors can draw away people's loyalty to states if those non-state actors can respond to their needs more efficiently.

Most of the sceptics on increase attention to non-state actors come mostly from the proponents of state-centric view. One criticism on placing much attention to these actors is based on the fear of increased complexity of the international relations system, which has traditionally been simplified by highlighting only the network of state relations. Considering a large number of non-state actors existing within the system, plus differences in their characteristics and focuses, it makes analysis even more difficult. In addition, sceptics point out the overemphasis of non-state actors; their argument is that the emergence of these organisations is not a phenomena.[109] To them, non-state actors have existed long before and as their effect on international relations was not significant, they had not received much attention. Another argument takes into consideration the question of high-low politics; sceptics on the influence of non-state actors point out that these actors, despite their increased influence in international relations, do not affect high politics, which are the notion of security and war, which are considered to be the core of state relations.[110]

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[108] Halliday, "The Romance of Non-State Actors," pp. 29
[109] Keohane, *Power and Interdependence*, pp. 371.
[110] Ibid.

To counter these criticisms, one significance solution is to recognise the limit of state-centric approach and how broader view like pluralism can help understand international politics better. The contemporary world sees the necessity in concepts that can accommodate changes; and this research points out that pluralism and complex interdependence are suitable tools to explain this environment. The principles of complex interdependence and pluralism emphasise more diverse agendas with no hierarchy on the agenda, as well as the reduced significance of the military. Therefore, the question of high-low politics can be tackled by regarding the low politics as equally important. As for the argument over the overemphasis of the non-state actors, it is important to recognise the nature of contemporary international relations, which has been fostered by globalisation; the impact of these actors on international relations has been aggravated by changes in sense of time and space, thus bringing about the more severe degree of ways in which they affect international relations.

The advocates for the increased emphasis on non-state actors highlight their long existence and ability to handle transsovereign problems. Looking at their historical development, Halliday suggests the significance of non-state actors, pointing out that the existence of non-state actors predates the establishment of state. Such a proposal is contrary to the perception people have, that NGOs, MNCs, ethnic groups and so on are recent phenomena. According to Halliday, the state is a "recent creation" and before the existence of states the society had been managed by the non-state entities.[111] Thus in the world prior to the establishment of states, non-state actors had been functioning. These actors have shown to evolve through time in world politics; and they have been able to resist changes even longer than states.

Another proponent of the non-state actor, Cusimano, highlights the ability of non-state actors in handling transsovereign problem, which cannot be controlled alone by states, and unilateral relations alone could not solve it either. Participation of the non-state

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[111] Halliday, "The Romance of Non-State Actors," pp. 27.

actors is important; therefore, the coordination among state and these non-state actors in resolving the problem is important.[112]

In summary, to understand contemporary world politics, it is important to understand the nature and significance of non-state actors. Inevitably, these actors have been crucial players in the system. There is a close relationship among, state, transnational and non-state actors. It is therefore important to take into consideration such combinations.

2.2.4   Transnationalism

The concept of transnationalism came under spotlight in the 1970s through the work of Keohane and Nye in *Transnational Relations and World Politic;* however, the two authors point out that such a concept preceded their work with the proposals of several scholars, including Rosenau, Raymond, Kaiser, Menderhausen, and Jessup.[113] Josseline, on the other hand, argues that the development of transnational relations can be traced even earlier since Mitrany's work in 1940 and the work of Karl Deutsch's pluralist notion of transnational linkage.[114] The transnational movement concept during 1970s emerged out of a group of scholars interested in the "interaction between governments and transnational societies and in transnational coalitions among subunits of government."[115] With changes in global socio-economy, resulting from globalisation and changes in international politics such as the Cold War, 9/11, and the spread of the global terrorist network, the research on transnational forces received greater attention, particularly through the context of the relations between transnational forces and states in international politics.[116]

According to Keohane and Nye, transnational interaction is "the movement of tangible or intangible items across state boundaries when at least one actor is not an agent of a

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[112]Cusimano, ed., *Beyond Sovereignty: The Rise of Transsovereign Problems*, pp. 508.

[113] Keohane, *Power and Interdependence*, pp. vii.

[114] Daphne Josselin, and William Wallace, ed., *Non-State Actors in World Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 11.

[115] Keohane, *Power and Interdependence*, pp. vii.

[116] For more information, see Cusimano, ed., *Beyond Sovereignty: The Rise of Transsovereign Problems*; John Baylis and N.J. Renger, ed., *Dilemmas of World Politics: International Issues in a Changing World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Baylis, ed., *The Globalization of World Politics*; and Josselin, ed., *Non-State Actors in World Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001).

government or an intergovernment organization." [117]   To Thomas Risse-Kappen, transnational relations are defined as "regular interactions across national boundaries when at least one actor is a non-state agent or does not operate on behalf of a national government or an intergovernmental organization." [118]   Both Keohane and Nye and Risse-Kappen, in addition to emphasising cross-border interactions, focus on the content of the actor: that there must be at least one non-state actor within the process of such interaction. Fred Halliday, upon discussing transnational movements as challenges to the Middle East states, defines transnational forces as, "those which beyond the domain of the state as normally construed, influence the policies of states and their outcome." [119]

Anthony McGrew, who discusses the affect of globalisation on the state, defines transnational civil society as "a political arena in which citizens and private interests collaborate across borders to advance their mutual goals or to bring governments and the formal institutions of global governance to account for their activities." [120]   Through their edited book on the global politics of the Asia Pacific, Remy Davidson *et al*, defines transnational actor as "an exceptionally broad range of activities and organisation including labour unions, industrial groups, the media or environmental lobbyists. [121] Transnational actors also include non-state actors such as private citizens living in different states connected through private, rather than government channels. [122]

From the above definitions, we can summarise the essence of transnationalism according to the nature of actors, activities, location and effects within transnational forces. In terms of actors, the noted scholars point out that in transnationalism, the significant actors are those of non-state nature. This leads to the activities and issues at stake, that most of the agendas will cover a broader range of issues aside from politics. In terms of location, it is clear that "transnational" means cross-borders, where actors from more

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[117] Keohane, *Power and Interdependence*, pp. xii.
[118] Thomas Risse-Kappen, ed., *Bringing Transnational Relations Back In: Non-States Actors, Domestic Structures and International Institutions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 3.
[119] See Halliday, *Middle East in International Relations: The Power, Politics and Ideology*.
[120] See McGrew, "Globalization and Global Politics," pp. 25.
[121] See Remy Davidson, "Introduction: The Global Politics of Asia-Pacific," in *The Global Politics of Asia-Pacific*, ed. Remy Davidson (Oxford: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), pp. 1-16.
[122] Remy Davidson, "Transnational Actors in Asia Pacific" in *The New Global Politics of the Asia Pacific,* p. 140.

than one state are involved in the activities. Finally, the outcomes of the activities do not only affect the actors, but also the government and greater parts of the society.

a. *The Nature of the Transnational Approach*

According to Keohane and Nye, transnational approach facilitates the understanding of interstate relations; it allows one to see additional factors that affect states and environment within which states interact.[123] According to transnationalists, two agendas are main concerns of the transnational approach: the organisations within transnational interactions, and the effects of transnational relations on interstate politics.[124] Thomas Risse-Kappen takes a more narrowly defined approach, suggesting that transnational relations should be used to examine "how the inter-state world interacts with the society world of transnational relations."[125] James Rosenau shares a similar interest; he examines the interactions between the state-centric world and the multi-centric world, which includes transnational interactions, which has been promoted as individuals have obtained greater skills due largely to globalisation (greater detail on Rosenau's proposal will be discussed later in this chapter).[126] To sum, transnational approach is used to examine the nature of transnational actors and their relationship to states, as well as how states accommodate or resist these transnational actors.

With an increased interest in transnational movements, it may be suitable to provide examples of existing researches on transnational movements. The study of transnationalism started of by the work of, as noted, Keohane and Nye *et al*, in their book, *Transnational Relations and World Politics,* Risse-Kappen followed the lead by producing *Bringing Transnational Relations Back In: Non-States Actors, Domestic Structures and International Institutions*. In addition, there are other significant researches by other scholars, including Peter Bell who researches the role of the Ford Foundation on the US. Ian Vallier and David Ryall conduct research on the role of the

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[123] Keohane, *Power and Interdependence*, pp. x.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Risse-Kappen, ed., *Bringing Transnational Relations Back In: Non-States Actors, Domestic Structures and International Institutions*, pp. 8.
[126] Rosenau, *Turbulence in World Politics: A Theory of Change and Continuity*.

Roman Catholic Church. [127]   More contemporary are those exploring transnational movements include Stephen Flynn who researches Global Drug Trade, David Long whose research is on Countering Terrorism, Katerina Dalacoura whose research is on the Islamist Movement, and Eva Ostergaard-Nielsen whose research is on the Diaspora.[128] In addition, transnationalism has been discussed by Halliday, through five case studies of transnational movement in the Middle East, including the Diaspora, Islamism, political violence, nationalism and culture and media.

From the above list, it can be seen that the work on transnational movement in international politics has been broad; non-state actors used as case studies range from multinational companies to religious movements, Diasporas and illegitimate movements like drug trades. In explaining about transnational actors in global politics, Willetts categorises these actors as transnational companies, non-legitimate groups and liberation movements, non-governmental organisations, and international organisations.[129] These previous works have shown also the trend in international politics, where certain non-state actors become more visible and increase their effect on the international environment.

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[127] See Peter Bell, "The Ford Foundation as a Transnational Actor," in *Transnational Relations and World Politics*, ed. Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1972), pp. 115-128; Ian Vallier, "The Roman Catholic Church: A Transnational Actor," in *Transnational Relations in World Politics*, pp. 129-152; David Ryall, "The Catholic Church as Transnational Actor," in *Non-State Actors in World Politics*, ed. Daphne Josselin and William Wallace (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 41-58.

[128] See Stephen Flynn, "The Global Drug Trade Versus the Nation-State: Why the Thugs Are Winning," in *Beyond Sovereignty: The Rise of Transsovereign Problems*, ed. Maryann Cusimano (Belmont, CA: Wadworth, 2000), pp. 44-66; David Long, "Countering Terrorism Beyond Sovereignty," in *Beyond Sovereignty: The Rise of Transsovereign Problems*, ed. Maryann Cusimano (Belmont, CA: Wadworth, 2000), pp. 96-108; Katerina Dalacoura, "Islamist Movement as Non-State Actors and Their Relevance to International Relations," in *Non-State Actors in World Politics*, ed. and William Wallace Daphne Josselin, ed., (Basingstoke:Palgrave, 2001), pp. 235-250; Eva Ostergard-Nielsen, "Diasporas in World Politics," in *Non-State Actors in World Politics*, ed. and William Wallace Daphne Josselin (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 218-234.

[129] Yusuf, "The Role of Chularajmontri/Shaikh Al-Islam in Resolving Ethno-Religious Conflict in Southern Thailand - the Human Security Dimension." Conference paper given at the Mainstreaming Human Security: the Asian Contribution Conference, Faculty of Political Sciences, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand, October 5, 2007. http://humansecurityconf.polsci.chula.ac.th/Documents/Presentations/Imtiyaz.doc. (Last accessed 30 June 2009).

Transnational movements are worth examining because the characteristics of these movements have shown the potential to challenge states. The developing process of a transnational movement, starting from establishing itself to developing networks across the border, means that each movement consists of strong foundation, ranging from skilled individuals, good technological advancement, cultural knowledge and cross-border connections. In some areas, therefore, it is likely that these organisations can undertake the same tasks as a state does; and they are powerful enough to affect states and their policy decision, financially or politically.

In examining transnational movements, it is crucial to pay attention to the nature of the organisation, its aim, objectives and activities, as well as how it functions; this will show how they differ from the government. In addition, it is worthwhile examining the nature of these organisations with other organisation across border, the component that allow transnationalness; whether the motivation is based on cultural or ethnic relations, financial relations or strategic planning. In this research, two transnational Muslim organisations are highlighted in this research, including WAMY and TITIA, as noted in brief detail at in the previous chapter. Prior to detailed discussions in the further chapters, it is worth noting concepts of transnational actors, whose functions closely relate to the organisations used as case studies in this research.

International Muslim Networks

The concept of international Muslim networks can suitably be used to describe the nature of WAMY. International Muslam networks are transnational movements of Muslims across boundaries. Such movements cover non-state Muslim societies, foundations and charities, whose network involve Muslims in different parts of the world. Therefore, their efforts are internationally based; according to Halliday, the transnationalism of such network is unquestionable.[130] The geographical observation of most of the discussions on the Islamist movements usually start off in the Middle East, where non-state actors as well as states provide financial and ideological support for Muslim groups, both in the Middle East and the rest of the world.

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[130] Halliday, *Middle East in International Relations: The Power, Politics and Ideology*, pp. 242.

International Muslim networks cover a whole range of international interactions among Muslims across national boundaries. The actors within the networks include groups of Muslims, international Muslim NGOs, regional offices of Muslim organisations, international professional Muslim societies, and the Muslim inter-government organisations. The international Muslim networks also cover the international Islamist movement or political Islam. In the contemporary world politics, political Islam has received a lot of attention; it is therefore crucial to add a few notes to clarify the relevance of such group to the international Muslim network and to this research. The discussion about international Islamist movement known as "political Islam," "Islamist Movement," or "Islamism" usually connote militancy, violence and rebellion towards states. According to Halliday, the common claim of Islamist movements is that they "reject the division of the Muslim world into different states and peoples; the state in its modern form is an alien, western creation and all Muslims share a common identity as members of the umma or community of believers."[131] Katerina Dalacoura defines Islamism or political Islam as, "the ideology that aims to reform society and politics along religious lines given in the Koran and Islamic legal and cultural traditions."[132] The Islamist movement, according to Dalacoura, help create multiple links, from social and cultural to terrorist and criminal ones, between members of societies, thus bypassing the governments."[133]

The nature of the Islamist movement is therefore largely transnational and non-state. There are wide ranges of activities among these movements, ranging from violence to social efforts. They are, heading, however, toward the same goal, to solidify the notion of *ummah,* or Muslim society. As noted, the extreme means to achieve ummah, violence, terrorism receive much attention; while more peaceful, social-based effort to promote ummah is as important.

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[131] Ibid, pp. 240.

[132] Katarina Dalacoura, "The Islamic Movement as Non-State Actor," in *Non-State Actors in World Politics* ed. Daphne and William Wallace Josselin (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 235.

[133] Ibid.

This research recognises both ends of the means to solidify ummah, but to help neutralise the attitude toward the notion of Islamic movement, the author intends to use the term "international Muslim networks." Such term will embraces all sorts of attempts to solidify worldwide Muslim under the ummah umbrella and transcend state boundaries. Therefore, both violet and terrorist acts, and the peaceful, cultural and social linkage between Muslim worldwide will be considered.

International Private Sector Associations

The organisational nature and functions of international private sector associations can suitably be used to describe TITIA. Private sector associations here refers to associations of individuals with specialised focuses and professional orientation, including trade unions, think-tanks, academic groups, professional associations, trade associations, and industrial associations. Unlike a non-governmental organisation (NGO), whose nature is non-profit and public oriented, the private sector associations are sometimes profit-seeking and their aims are largely geared toward fulfilling members, committees and partners. However, unlike multi-national companies, whose goal is the companies' benefit, the aims of private sector associations are, as noted, for the benefit of their members; and it is by nature not organised and structured as a company. The transnational characteristics of private sector associations is that despite the fact that the organisations are local, most of them have relations with foreign counterparts and regularly interact at the international level.

Skjelsbaek's explanation helps elucidate why some private sector associations may want to become transnational. One of the reasons is the lack of resources that satisfy their members and fulfil the organisations' objectives.[134] Therefore, the associations seek cooperation from external agencies that share the same principles or similar type of benefits. In addition, specialisation and identity groupings have become one of the key motivations for association to interact across the boundaries. According to Skjelsbaek:

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[134] Skjelsbaek, "The Growth of International Nongovernmental Organization in the Twentieth Century," p. 84.

> As economic and technological development proceeds, specialisation ensures with the result that some categories of persons, groups, or industries are no longer large enough to constitute functional communities that can satisfy their member's needs. Functional communities are hardly less important to people now than earlier, and, if they cannot be organized satisfactorily on the national level, the logical procedure, particularly with relatively decreasing communication and transportation costs, is to make them transnational.[135]

The nature of non-state actors can be identified by their relationship with states, their focus, and their activities.[136] The globalised world has facilitated the way private sector associations can interact with their foreign counterparts, as well as with international organisations and other states. Shared goals and objectives have urged these associations to cooperate and initiate activities and projects. Functional cooperation of these private sectors associations has sometimes affected both positively and negatively, international relations, particularly state relations. Sometimes the initiatives from these associations have political ramifications, and help define the foreign policy of a state. The case studies of how these private sector associations affect states and vice versa will be discussed and analysed in the later part of the research.

b. *Impact of Transnationalism on States and How States Respond*

As noted, the impact of transnationalism on states can be both positive and negative. On the positive side, transnationalism increases dialogues among different parties within the international sphere. Increased people-to-people relations lead to a better cultural understanding and greater exchanges of knowledge among people and staff of different states. In addition, multiple linkages established by these transnational groups help provide network for states in different fields, thus increase states' efficiency in handling their tasks. A good example can be seen through the Indian Ocean Tsunami incident of 2005, when different transnational networks joined with states and state agencies in providing support to those affected. In addition, the transnational connections among

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[135] Ibid.
[136] See Willetts 2008, Halliday 2008, and Josselin *et al* 2001.

people, companies and associations can spill over to benefit states; this can be seen through increased revenues from tourism, GDP and GNP from the multi-national corporations (MNCs), as well as economic and social development from international associations and NGOs. Some transnational actors from one country, i.e. the United States, can be so powerful that it can affect the policy of the other states, as pointed out by Keohane and Nye. [137] In addition, the emergence of non-state actors in the transnational context opens the possibility for these actors to act as mediators or stimulate greater relations between states.

On the negative side, transnational movements can challenge state security. This can be seen through the proliferation of transnational terrorist networks, drugs and arms trade in the contemporary international politics. In addition, the transnational network of ethnic and religious fundamentalists can also threaten the sovereignty of states. As noted, some transnational movements can alter the citizen's loyalty from the traditional domain–states--to other agencies, i.e. ethnic or religious movements. As much as the transnational actors can benefit the interstate relations, it can also undermine it. There is also the issue in that transnational movements are being supported by a state or group in order to undermine other state's sovereignty.

Proponents of the transnationalism embrace transnationalism as a tool to broaden the ability to explain international phenomena. This is because the state-centric view does not provide a sufficient explanation for an increasingly complex international politics, as reflected by Skjelsbaek, who writes that the "interstate model has become too simplistic as a result of new development in the global system… The interstate model is especially unfit for projections and predictions about the future." [138] According to Halliday, transnationalism "allows discussion of the way in which a non-state and transnational perspective may enhance, or revise, conventional views of the IR and politics of the region."[139] In a similar direction, Willetts points out that the better understanding of

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[137] Keohane, *Power and Interdependence*, pp. x.
[138] Skjelsbaek, "The Growth of International Nongovernmental Organization in the Twentieth Century," pp. 85.
[139] Halliday, *Middle East in International Relations: The Power, Politics and Ideology*, pp. 230.

international relations can be obtained through analysing the relations between the governments and many other actors from each country.[140]

Critics raise the issue of complexity in analysing international politics using the transnational approach. The increase in the number of actors, resources and alliances has made transnationalism appear complicated. Such a discussion can be reflected through Scott, who suggests the problems that could occur when there is an increased transaction flows in world politics including the broader and more closely linked international problems, and that as the number of problems increases, the international system will become increasingly fragile and the costs of keeping the system operating will escalate.[141]

As noted, the key content of the transnational movement consists of non-state actors. The next section seeks to discuss the characteristics and roles of these non-state actors.

2.2.5   *Proponents of pluralism*

Proponents of pluralism usually point out the ability to capture factors and actors that are neglected or placed secondary by states as one of the virtues of the concept. Pluralism can provide sufficient analytical tools to explain changes in contemporary world politics, which the state-centric approach has the limit. It has become apparent that some non-state actors have become significant in world politics, the concept that can explain the behaviour and the influence of such actors will therefore be practical, either by its own, or combine it with other international relations theories.

Another virtue of pluralism is that it helps to reflect the role of non-state actors and additional agendas that states can achieve efficiently while avoiding the political context. Pluralism provides the tool to reflect ways in which non-political agendas can be solved through other non-state actors and that some of the international outcomes can be

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[140] Willetts, "Transnational Actors and International Organizations in Global Politics," pp. 357.

[141] Andrew M. Scott, "The Logic of International Interaction," *International Studies Quarterly* 21 (1975), as quoted in Kal J. Holsti, "A New International Politics? Diplomacy in Complex Interdependence," *International Organization* 32, no. 2 (2001).

achieved through other non-state actors, which the conventional state-centric theory fails to recognise.

2.2.6   Criticisms

Criticisms of pluralism are what realists and statists use to defend their arguments. In particular, statists point out that pluralists may have over-exaggerated the role of non-state actors. They point out the situation in the contemporary world where conflicts and threats still exists. Such facts question liberal institutionists' claims over the effective role of international institutions in reducing conflict and giving way to peace. For them the pluralist view is too optimistic.[142] Another criticism is based on the nature of the concept, which embraces non-state actors into the analysis. Critics point out that pluralists neglect the structure of the system; by increasing the number of players in the system, it is even more difficult and complicated. On contrary, in state-centric realism, the analytical structure is more manageable, thus facilitating scholars to better explain the international relations phenomenon.[143]

Another critic highlights that the pluralists avoid and exclude the question of war and peace. John Mearsheimer claims that liberal institutionalism only "made modest claims about the impact of institutions, and steer clear of war and peace issues, focusing instead on the less ambitious task of explaining economic cooperation."[144]

In sum, pluralism is viewed as providing a broad concept that covers the areas that had been neglected by statists. The concept is divided into smaller groups, each with different highlights. The proponents of pluralism point out its being suitable to modern international politics, where there emerges additional actors and agendas that the state-centric view has a limited ability to explain. The critics of pluralism, on the other hand, point out that pluralism is too optimistic and that it avoids reflecting the reality of

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[142] Viotti, *International Relations Theory*, pp. 50-51.
[143] Ibid.
[144] John Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions," *International Security* 19, no. 3 (1994).

international politics. This research aims to explore the influence of non state actors and agendas, therefore it seeks to combine state-centric with pluralist approaches.

While the state-centric view and pluralism are the two main pillars of this research, there is the need for additional concepts to provide additional explanations on the general environment in international politics. With the emergence of non-state actors, which have been empowered by the outcome of globalisation, additional concept that accommodates the increased participation of these actors should be included. The next section examines the nature of postinternationalism, which is particularly useful for the understanding of the contemporary international politics.

2.3 Postinternationalism—Combining Transnationalism, Non-State Actors, and Globalisation

2.3.1 Postinternaitonalism defined and explained

So far, globalisation, transnationalism, and non-state actors have been discussed individually. The end of 1990s and early 2000 saw the emergence of the postinternationalist concept, largely inspired by the work of James Rosenau, particularly through a series of his three books.[145] Postinternationalism highlights the challenges states face and the potential of emerging transnational and local non-state actors, which have been empowered by globalisation. It was inspired by Rosenau's view that the state should be treated "as only one of several types of collective "macro actors"—subgroups, transnational organisations, leaderless publics, and movements—and has itself become "less coherent and effective."[146]

According to Mansbach, postinternationalism consists of six features, including the skills and participation explosion, the changing nature of security, the decline of inside/outside and the consequences they have to the state, the revolutions in time and

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[145] Yale Ferguson and Richard Mansbach, "Postinternationalism and IR Theory," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 35, no. 3 (2007), pp. 532.

[146] Richard Mansbach, "Changing Understandings of Global Politics: Preinternationalism, Internationalism, and Postinternationalism," in *Pondering Postinternationalism: A Paradigm of the Twenty-First Century?*, ed. Heidi Hobbs (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), pp. 12.

space, fragmegration, and global governance.[147] These features are closely linked to one another; knowing the linkage of these features leads to a better understanding of the nature of postinternationalism.   The acquisition of new skills and knowledge of individuals have shaped the expectation they have on states; at the same time, such changes affect global security and the economy in ways that states find difficult to respond to, thus state authority is increasingly questioned. Such phenomena gives way to an increase in the roles of non-state groups; which then leads to Rosenau's explanation of the divergence between government and governance. The term 'fragmegration' is particularly unique, and was coined by Rosenau to describe the condition of the postinternational world order in which centralising and decentralising processes constantly occur.[148] Ferguson and Mansbach have interpreted Rosenau's argument by viewing the sovereign state as "increasingly porous and routinely transcended by all the major current of globalisation."[149] As for non-state actors, for postinternationalists the analysis must be in the account of "the influence and interactions of state and nonstate actors, powerful social movements and emerging civil societies, proliferating transnational and global interdependence issues associated with technological change, globalisation of capital, markets, production, and labour, as well as environmental degradation, evolving norms, and conflicting value system."[150]

Interestingly, postinternationalists accepted the essences of some IR theoretical concepts. Mansbach and Ferguson make it clear that the significance of states as claimed by realism/neorealism is acknowledged, despite their supremacy being rejected; at the same time postinternationalists agree with some constructivist and post-modernist arguments over the significance of the social construction of global politics, including the aspect of identities as "promoting interests and conditioning human behaviours."[151] Therefore, the questions raised by postinternationalists that differentiate them from realists are more

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[147] Ibid, pp. 12-20.
[148] Ibid, pp. 16.
[149] Yale Ferguson and Richard Mansbach, "Postinternationalism and IR Theory"
[150] Margaret Karns, "Postinternational Politics and the Growing Glomerations of Global Governance," in *Pondering Postinternationalism*, ed. Heidi Hobbs (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), pp. 39.
[151] Mansbach, "Postinternationalism and IR Theory," pp. 547.

concerned with governance than government, and relate more to authority than sovereignty.

In his article *the Postinternational Challenge to Foreign Policy: Signposting 'Plus Non-State' Politics*,[152] Alan Chong enlisted five postinternationalist scholars who highlight the significance of non-state actors in contemporary international politics, these include the works of Hobbs *et al* , Falk, Gills, O'Brien *et al*, and Wallace and Daphne.[153] The work of Daphne and Wallace has been noted before in the non-state actor section; it highlights the relevance between non-state actors and how their influence can be linked to the postinternationalist global order. According to Chong, postinternationalists agree that globalisation has empowered micro-units, individuals and organisations, thus giving them greater opportunity to become more involved in the areas that states find themselves less capable to cope with in a more complex international environment. Chong's article also leans toward postinternationalist aspect by pointing out that the challenges to state-centric view in globalisation context will appear in "amorphous form of cross-border and omni-direction politicisation of policymaking by political players of all shapes and competences."[154]

Most postinternationalists, including Rosenau himself, agreed that postinternationalism is not a theory, it is only a paradigm that explores the transition of global politics.[155] However, it can be seen that scholars have been pushing the postinternationalist paradigm forward by emphasising its practicality and how the concept can be applied. The postinternationalist suggestions for the theoretical framework will be discussed

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[152] Alan Chong, "The Post-International Challenge to Foreign Policy: Signposting 'Plus Non-State' Politics," *Review of International Studies* 28 (2002).

[153] For more detail see Richard Falk, *Predatory Globalization: A Critique* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1999), Barry K. Gills, ed., *Globalization and the Politics of Resistance* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), Heidi Hobbs, ed., *Pondering Postinternationalism: A Paradigm for the Twenty-First Century* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2000), Daphne Josselin, and William Wallace, ed., *Non-State Actors in World Politics* (Basingstoke:Palgrave, 2001), Anne Marie Goetz, Robert O'Brien, Jan Aart Scholte, Marc Williams, *Contesting Global Governance: Multilateral Economic Institutions and Global Social Movements* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

[154] Chong, "The Postinternational Challenge to Foreign Policy: Signposting 'Plus Non-State' Politics," pp. 784.

[155] For example of the argument, see Karns, "Postinternational Politics and the Growing Glomerations of Global Governance," pp. 39.

more in the following section; for now however, it is important to explore the critical praise of postinternationalism.

2.3.2 Postinternationalism and Globalisation

As noted, globalisation has been recognised by postinternationalists as one of the key driving forces for changes in world politics. This is because globalisation affected both macro and micro actors, state, non-state actors and collective individuals. The contemporary outcomes of international relations among these actors are rooted in globalised effects, i.e. improvement in telecommunication, connections across borders and increased flow in materials and ideas in international stage. Postinternaitonalists highlights the role of globalisation in improving individuals' skills, thus enabling them to participate more in international politics. It is therefore worthwhile noting the nature of globalisation in the discussion of postinternationalism.

According to Smith and Baylis, globalisation means "the process of increasing interconnectedness between societies such that events in one part of the world more and more have effects on peoples and societies far away."[156]

Scholte takes the question of border and state territory to highlight his definition of globalisation. He defines globalisation as "process whereby many social relations become relatively delinked from territorial geography, so that human lives are increasingly played out in the world as a single place."[157] The delinked relations, which suggested by Scholte, therefore have direct consequence to the stability of state, whose one key component is territory. To enhance his discussion, Scholte selects other scholars' explanations of globalisation, including the comment of Cox, who believes that the characteristics of globalisation should include "the internationalizing of production, the new international division of labour, new migratory movements from South to North,

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[156] John Baylis, and Steve Smith, "Introduction," in *The Globalization of World Politics*, ed. John Baylis, and Steve Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 7.

[157] Jan Aart Scholte, "The Globalization of World Politics," in *The Globalization of World Politics*, ed. John Baylis, and Steve Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 14-15.

the new competitive environment that accelerates these processes, and the internationalizing of the state…making states into agencies of the globalizing world."[158]

From the definitions above, therefore, globalisation involves the notion of transcending territories as well as the increase of people's interconnectness. State boundaries have become blurry as there has been an increase in interactions and transaction among people across the borders. The improvement of technology also makes physical contact also significant while making the electronic source more convenient and rapid alternatives. Globalisation has made people's perceptions on space and time change. Greater spaces can be covered with less time; in addition, advancement in communication and other types of technology makes travelling and physical interactions easier, on the other hand, making it less necessary thanks to the widespread nature of internet, emails and good logistic services. Communications and information spread quickly through news broadcast, television and diverse kinds of media; such changes can affect people's ideology and even change the perceptions they used to have about institutions they strongly believe in. According to Scholte, globalisation manifests itself through communication, organisations, environment, production, military and much more.[159] Apparently, the proliferation of transnational interactions and non-state actors is one obvious outcome of globalisation.

According to Scholte, differentiating between 'internationalisation' and 'globalisation' is necessary. He implies that international realm emphasises the recognition of bordered states, and the interactions among people suggests border crossing; on the other hand global sphere emphasises the transborder network.[160] Scholte also suggests that "international links (for example, trade in cocoa) require people to cross considerable distances comparatively long time intervals, while global connections (for example, satellite newscasts) are effectively distance-less and instantaneous." Keeping this distinction clear will be useful for the further effort in understanding the state-centric and pluralist worlds of world politics.

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[158] As quoted by Scholte in Ibid, pp.15.
[159] Ibid, pp.15.
[160] Ibid.

Considering the definition and nature, globalisation is important concept to the understanding of international politics. For the state-centric view, globalisation has a direct impact because the phenomenon has challenged states' sovereignty and the ability to rely on a state-centric view as a core analytical tool. As for pluralism, globalisation provides a contextual background where states, non-state actors and transnational movements interact; most of these actors can be arguably viewed as the outcome of globalisation. For constructivists, the constitutive effects between states and globalisation provide a better understanding of international politics.[161]

In summary, incorporating globalisation into international relations theory will provide a better understanding of contemporary international politics. The next section discusses the effect of globalisation on international relations.

a. Impact of Globalisation on International Relations

The impacts of globalisation on international relations have been greatly discussed among scholars in different fields. The impacts of globalisation on states have been well elaborated by Scholte, who discussed the durability of state sovereignty in the globalised world.

According to Scholte, globalisation can affect states in three major ways: First is the impact of the conflict between the nature of sovereign state and globalisation over space, more specifically, the border. Sovereign states are territorially bounded. This means that, "In order for governments to exercise total and exclusive authority over a specified territorial domain, events must occur at territorial locations, and jurisdictions must be separated by clearly demarcated territorial borders."[162] The problem is that by the nature of globalisation, with borderless characteristics, the states' ability to control is reduced, as pointed out by Scholte, "with globalisation, social relations acquire a host of supraterritorial qualities, and borders are transcended with a deluge of electronic and

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[161] Ross Marlay and Clark Neher, *Democracy and Development in Southeast Asia: The Winds of Change* (Colorado: Westview Press Inc, 1995), pp. 172.
[162] Scholte, "The Globalization of World Politics," pp. 22.

other flows, crucial preconditions for effective sovereignty no longer prevail." [163] Second is that under the impact of globalisation several developments in which states find it difficult to control has emerged. These developments include technological tools, international trade, or transnational companies, all of which have challenged states' sovereignty. [164]   Third issue is that globalisation has undermined the cultural and psychological pattern people have over sovereignty.[165] Such phenomenon also threatens state sovereignty.

Scholte's discussion can be expanded to see the outcome of these impacts. First, the borderless information and communication and the inability of states to control it can negatively affects state security. This is because states fail to monitor and control the spread of anti-state behaviours like terrorism, nationalism or secessionism. Second, the proliferation of non-state actors and transnational movements can benefit states by taking over some of the states' burdens, but these actors and movements can also threaten states' security because not all of them are legitimate or operate decent tasks i.e. mafia, international drug trafficking. Third, the loosening of cultural and psychological underpinning of sovereignty can trigger ethnic loyalty and religious fundamentalism, which can potentially overshadow national loyalty, thus threatening national security.

While the above discussions emphasise the negative impact of globalisation on states, not all are negative. Indeed, there are positive outcomes of globalisation on the state, including the increased in dialogue among states and people, greater people-to-people relations and good understanding among one another, and lastly, as Scholte points out, globalisation "may have reduced the chances of major interstate war."[166]

The nature of Thailand's relations with the GCC States is closely relevant to globalisation. An increased interconnection between the government, as well as the interconnections between Thai Muslims and Muslims in the GCC, is facilitated by

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[163] Ibid.
[164] Ibid.
[165] Ibid.
[166] Ibid.

globalisation. In addition, non-state actors, which are key players in this regard, are the partial outcome of globalisation. It is therefore very appropriate to incorporate this concept into the theoretical framework.

2.3.3 **The Significance of Individuals in Foreign Policy-Making and World Politics**

The contribution of individuals into international relations can be considered in two ways, first in terms of the contribution of individuals' skills into stimulating international interactions, and second in terms of the influence of individuals' characteristics, charismatic and personal connections in foreign policy-making, as practice in some cultural context.

a. The Role of Increased Skill Individuals in World Politics

The emphasis on individual skills in international relations has been greatly emphasised by postinternationalists. In 1997, the work of James Rosenau and W. Michael Fagen highlights the increased skills individuals have obtained, which enable them to participate in politics more actively and efficiently. [167] In his research, the authors hypothesise that the advancement in worldwide education and the expansion of communication technologies are factors that have led people to be more competent participants in world politics. [168] With greater accommodation from education and technologies, individuals have become "more analytically competent, emotionally capable and politically effective in assessing events, developing alternatives, and execute effective political actions."[169] The findings led Rosenau and Fagen to believe that improved education and telecommunication technologies, which constantly expand, have affected the relations between individuals and politics in channelling people to be more committed to democratic and free market ideology, and to be more active in collective action.[170]

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[167] James Rosenau and Michael Fagen "A New Dynamism in World Politics: Increasingly Skilful Individuals?" *International Studies Quarterly* 41, no. 4 (1997), pp. 655-86.
[168] Ibid.
[169] Ibid, pp. 655.
[170] Ibid, pp. 683.

A few years later, Rosenau's three books, *Turbulence in World Politics, Along the Domestic-Foreign Frontier, and Distant Proximities* [171], which laid foundation to postinternationalism, stimulated Rosenau to observe the increase skills and capabilities of individuals, which he called the "skill revolution."[172] Rosenau believes that such phenomena have allowed individuals to participate more in world politics. The participation comes in several forms; but in the three books, there was limit in which Rosenau was unable to devote much time on discussing in details on how and under what forms individuals affect world politics.

Not until 2008 that Rosenau published work that gives most attention to the role of individuals. Rosenau's proposed postinternationalism, as it has been noted before, devotes much attention to the contribution of individuals in world politics. With postinternationalism being established, in his latest book, *People Count! Networked Individuals in Global Politics,* published in 2008 Rosenau turned to devote himself to examine the role individuals play in contemporary world politics. He suggests that attention should be paid to individuals, which are players at the micro level, in addition to attention given to organisations and collectivise. According to Rosenau:

> …it is misleading to think of world affairs as being driven exclusively by large collectivities such as governments, corporations, universities, churches, and the like. Such macro organizations are surely central to the course of events, but so are people at the micro level. They have become important in a variety of ways, from individuals whose reputations, accomplishments, and positions enhance their public judgements to people who collectively share an organization's policies that are publicised for others to consider.[173]

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[171] See Rosenau's *Turbulence in World Politics: A Theory of Change and Continuity*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990); *Along the Domestic-Foreign Frontiers: Exploring Governance in a Turbulent World*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); *Distant Proximities: Dynamics Beyond Globalization*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

[172] James Rosenau, *People Count! Networked Individuals in Global Politics,* (Boulder: Paradigm Publisher, 2008), pp. 2.

[173] Ibid. pp. 1.

Rosenau and Fagen's argument, as well as Rosenau's latest books correspond to the political circumstances in Thailand and developing countries. There has been an improvement and, in the case of Thailand, the expansion of standard educational requirement for citizens; therefore, compared to the past, people have acquired greater ability to participate and comment on politics, both domestically and internationally. In addition, the greater availability of scholarships and funding has allowed government officials and the public to be trained, thus enabling them to acquire skills needed to work and make decisions more efficiently. The major parts of policy-making and decisions in developing countries are the outcome of greater trainings, exchanges of knowledge and expertise that have led to a more precise and target-oriented decisions.

In addition, the development in education has brought about some confidence among the population and encouraged the emergence of a new social class and ideology that can challenge government functions. David Martin Jones has suggested phenomena of such nature occurring in Asia Pacific countries, where there has been the emergence of a more educated middle class, who have participated in civil society to challenge their governments.[174] Similar phenomenon can be said about Thailand: as basic education has been enforced and made higher, individuals have been more politically, economically and socially active. Individuals in Thailand have become more responsive to news and policy-making decisions.

b. The Linkage between Cultural Context and the Role of Individuals in International Relations

In addition to the increased skills that individuals have acquired, which have enabled them to participate in world politics more efficiently, the role of individuals in international politics has much to do with identity and cultural context in which the individuals are a part. There is a close relationship between the identity and cultural context; in some cultures, individual charismatic and attached identity play an important role in defining the outcome of the interactions. Undeniably, there are prevalent examples of how the charismatic of leaders and policy makers shaped outcome of

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[174] David Martin Jones, "Democratization, Civil Society, and Illiberal Middle Class Culture in Pacific Asia," *Comparative Politics* 30, no. 2 (1998).

international relations. In the modern world, in addition, there has been an increased importance given to shared identity, which has been used as tool for negotiation and political bargaining.   Therefore, in the contemporary world, personal diplomacy, personal connections, informal meeting and personal acquaintance should be counted as valid factors that affect the outcome of international politics. It is, however, important to observe that while the increased skills individuals obtained have affected international relations all over the world, the role of personal diplomacy and personal connections in world politics only have been more dominant only in some political culture, particularly in Asia and the Middle East. Shared identity, personality and familiarity among policy makers have facilitated the political process; the example is shown in the comment made by Gerd Nonneman on GCC States' diplomatic style.

> In the case of the GCC and its members there is arguably a further factor at work, relating to the nature of these states and prevailing 'style' of diplomacy. This is the fact that they remain largely autocratic, if benevolent, regimes run by a small circle of royal figures who by and large conceive of international relations and diplomacy in a deeply personal way, and at the same time are not wont to delegate large amounts of authority to officials in important international negotiations…It also explains a preference for bilateral, personal diplomacy with leaders of corresponding seniority.[175]

It is not surprising, therefore, that conventional diplomacy has been developed alongside with personal diplomacy and acquaintance among policy makers. While Western scholars have come to accept that charismatic leaders can rally popular support for multiple national purposes, in some Asia and the Middle East, the importance of individuals goes further than charismatic to include the notion of shared religions, interest, expertise and personal acquaintance.   Therefore, the successes in some

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[175] Gerd Nonneman, "EU-GCC Relations: Dynamics, Patterns & Perspectives," paper presented at *The Global Gulf Conference*, Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter, 4-6 July 2006.

international relations in this part of the world are sometimes accounted partially for specific individuals who have driven the dynamism of the relations.

2.3.4 Criticisms of postinternationalism

Despite its potential capacity in providing explanations for international phenomenon, especially where conventional IR theories find limitations, postinternationalism has received comparatively little attention from scholars. According to Joseph Lepgold, this lack of attention is due to the fact that postinternationalism is "framed too unconditionally: the prevailing empirical conditions that must obtain for the propositions to hold are imprecisely or only implicitly laid out." [176] To be more specific, Lepgold points out two key weaknesses, including, firstly, that the links between post-internaitonalism and its relative concept, pluralism, are unclear; secondly, the postinternationalist assertions suggested by Rosenau are too unconditional.[177] As a result, Lepgold points out that postinternationalism "encourages unproductive debates with opposing schools of thought and leads neither to a progressive research program nor a cumulative body of propositions and empirical evidence."[178] To Lepgold, there is the need to refine the paradigm to be more specific and precise.[179]

Reflecting Lepgold's criticism, it is clear that what has been proposed by postinternationalists is not entirely new; instead, the concept's contribution is how it makes sense of combination of existing IR concepts. Overlaps are visible; thus Lepgold is quite right in his contention that postinternationalism lacks solid argument of its own. It is recognised that postinternationalist arguments are based on other IR concepts. However, to solidify such arguments, it is important to highlight the contributions within those existing arguments; this seems to be missing or less specified.

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[176] Joseph Lepgold, "An Intellectual Agenda for Students of Postinternational World Politics," in *Pondering Postinternationalism*, ed. Heidi Hobbs (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), pp. 156.
[177] Ibid, pp. 160.
[178] Ibid.
[179] Ibid.

Despite being on the receiving end of various criticisms, postinternationalism also has a number of virtues; these will be discussed in the next section.

2.3.5 Proponents

One of the virtues of postinternationalism is its practicality; the concept has fused together the essences of other existing concepts to make sense of international relations. The practicality of postinternationalism is most obvious as it continues to include states as vital players; thus the concept maintains the balance between state-centrism and pluralism, with recognition of how changes affect the international relations environment. While it is clear that the role of the state cannot be ignored in contemporary international politics; one of the obvious virtues of postinternationalism, according to Moreno, is that it provides a paradigm for scholars who aim to move beyond the state-as-prime actor concept, thereby enabling them to examine new agendas taking place in world politics.[180] As it incorporates the essences of several IR theoretical concepts, i.e. realism, constructivism, and post-modernism, postinternationalism can also adequately accommodate the complexities of contemporary international relations and function better in providing explanation.

In addition to practicality, another key contribution of postinternationalism is its initiative in molding together the micro and macro level of analysis.[181] Despite recognising that there have been strong connections between the micro and macro political factors in contemporary world politics, explaining the connections through theoretical concepts has been challenging; this is because there are very few IR concepts that attempt to link the two levels together. The essence of postinternationalism, which accepts both the crucial roles of state and individuals, clearly attempts to bring about the connections between these two factors.

An additional virtue of postinternationalism is its highlight on individuals. Postinternationalism explores the influence of increased skills among individuals and

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[180] Dario Moreno, "The Limits of Sovereign in a Bifurcated World," in *Pondering Postinternationalism*, ed. Heidi Hobbs (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), pp. 36.
[181] Lepgold, "An Intellectual Agenda for Students of Postinternational World Politics," pp. 156.

suggests how such phenomenon can affect changes in world politics. In contrast, other IR concepts have paid scant attention to this area.[182]

In summary, considering the concepts discussed in the previous sections, it is evident that postinternationalism can be utilised to best describe the theoretical trend of this research, which accepts the significance but also recognises the weaknesses and limitations of states in contemporary international politics; at the same time the research highlights the empowerment of non-state actors, be it as organisations or groups of individuals. The empowerment of these non-state actors have changed the nature of international relations and affected the way states regard their own role and those of non-state actors. The way states react to these non-state actors differ; in addition to being subjected to the type of states' policy and nature of non-state actors, it also depends on identity and cultural factors attached to states and non-state actors. In this regard, additional concepts, constructivism and cultural studies, are worth discussing and should be incorporated into the theoretical framework. The next section therefore discusses the impact of constructivism and cultural influence on international relations.

2.4 Constructivism

According to Alexander Wendt, constructivism is, "a structural theory of the international system which makes the following core claims: 1. states are the principal units of analysis for international political theory, 2. the key structures in the state system are intersubjective, rather than material, 3. state identities and interests are in important part constructed by these social structures rather than given exogenously to the system by human nature or domestic politics."[183] Dale Copeland also points out three tenets of constructivism, including: the constructivists' view of global politics as guided by intersubjective dimension of knowledge, emphasising the role of shared ideas in shaping and constraining state behaviour; and the constructivists' view that ideational structure has a constitutive effect on states, thus influencing the way states define their

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[182] Ibid. Pp. 157.
[183] Alexander Wendt, "Collective Identity Formation and the International State," *The American Political Science Review* 88, no. 2 (1994).

interests and identities in the process of interacting; and ideational structure and agent co-constitute and co-determine each other.[184]

It is evident that state is a key analytical unit for some constructivists. To claim that all constructivism is state-centric in nature is going too far. It is true that the state is used as the unit of analysis for most constructivists, however the difference between state-centric and constructivist views may be argued through the question of source of state behaviour. Constructivists are interested in the way that ideational factors affect states' behaviours and state systems, not the states themselves that are the sources of behaviours and outcome within international system as state-centrists claim. The difference between realism and constructivism may help elucidate such an argument; the essence of constructivism is more ideational rather than material capabilities, which are where realism have used as sources of argument for security, self-interest and conflict. Constructivists share basic concepts, which can be summarised in the description of Wendt that:

> The character of international life is determined by the beliefs and
> expectations that states have about each other, and these are constituted
> largely by social rather than material structures. This does not mean that
> material power and interests are unimportant, but rather that their
> meaning and effects depend on the social structure of the system.…[185]

Therefore, if one is to take a constructivist approach in viewing international politics, the primary agreement is that one recognises the contribution of social factors in international politics. The acceptance of material distribution within the international structure might vary in degree, as it is inherent in the divergence between constructivists who believe that international politics is constructed by ideas 'all the way down' and Alexander Wendt who believes that international politics is constructed in a large part by ideational factors and in certain part by material structure.

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[184] Dale Copeland, "The Constructivist Challenge to Structural Realism (Review)," *International Security* 25, no. 1 (2000), pp. 187-212.

[185] Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, pp. 20.

2.4.1 The Role of Constructivism in Analysing IR

In international politics, constructivists emphasise the significance of shared ideas and its affects on identities and interests in constructing international politics.[186] They examine the way norms, identity, interests, culture and ideology influence the construction of international politics. To constructivists, the interplay among ideational factors, shared ideas, identities, norms, culture, ideology and interests reveals other aspects of reality that material factors fail to capture, thus allowing them to explain international systems in ways that other schools of thoughts cannot.

Corresponding to their perception that international politics is socially constructed, constructivists view identity and interests as being constructed through the process of state interactions, rather than exogenously given.[187] To them, the significance of identities is that, in addition to helping define the nature of state interactions, they define actors' interests in the process of interactions.[188] Such a perception enables constructivists to broaden the interpretation and the understanding of international politics. This is contrary to neorealism that assumes that all units in global politics have only one meaningful identity, that of self-interest states.[189] Constructivists do not accept the notion of pre-given interests. As identities depend on different environments, interests, which are the product of identities, are also subjected to the environment and thus do not have single form.[190] In the case where there is a change in international politics, the ability to interpret and make sense of situation will be greater and more flexible. With broader and more diverse meanings, there is greater possibility of understanding and interpreting the international phenomenon.

2.4.2 Examples and Applications

The way Wendt defines constructivism and the nature of his arguments suggests that the state is at the centre of analysis. On the contrary, Copeland's explanation broadly

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[186] Adapted from Wendt's explanation on constructivism in *Ibid*.
[187] Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (1997).
[188] Ibid.
[189] T. Hopt, "The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory," *International Security* 23, no. 1 (1998).
[190] Ibid.

defines the nature of constructivism that tries to explore the role of other non-state actors in constructing international politics. Thus there is difference of focus among constructivists, particularly the degree of attention given to states and the rest of the system. In addition to researchers looking at how intersubjective knowledge and norms affect the state, other researchers have explored the impacts of norms, identities and cultures of other actors in constructing international politics. This includes the works of Marta Finnemore on the role of norms and international institutions on international politics, Katzenstein on norms, ideas and identity in international security, and Onuf on the role of rules in international politics.

2.4.3 **The Role of Culture in Foreign Policy-Making and World Politics**

According to Simon Murden, the building block of culture consists of "an awareness of common language, ethnicity, history, religion, and landscape."[191] Murden also points out that among these components; religion is the key influence on culture.[192] The study of culture in international relations, according to Murden, has received greater attention at the end of the Cold War.[193]

The concept of culture is broad, and scholars take advantage of such a fact by choosing cultural aspects that serve their purposes. Cultural concepts being used to analyse international relations, therefore, can be found to differ from one to another. For this research, the definition of culture will be quite flexible; what will be focused more is what culture consists of, which will use Murden's claim that it includes languages, ethnicity, history, religion, and landscape, which culminate to define human practices, values and ways of life.

According to Murden, it is worthwhile thinking about the influence of culture in international relations; for him, "Culture can help us understand why humans act in the way they do, and what similarities and differences exist amongst them. The world is

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[191] Simon Murden, "Culture in World Affairs," in *The Globalization of World Politics*, ed. John and Steve Smith Baylis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 456.
[192] Ibid, pp. 457.
[193] Ibid, pp. 458.

divided into distinct communities, and taxonomy of belonging and exclusion is the vital job that cultural analysis can undertake."[194]

Understanding the way globalisation affects global culture assists us to understand contemporary world politics where the impacts of multiculturalism in international societies, the role of religious revivalism, and the resistance of local citizens against the influence of changes resulted from external influences have become prevalent.

The example of culture being incorporated into foreign policy can be shown through the work of Hudson, who argues that culture has been incorporated as one of the variable for national policy, under the 1940 and 1950s' national characteristic studies. [195] Unfortunately, such projects had received strong criticisms over their methodological, theoretical and moral approaches[196] and had disappeared from the academic scene. It has been picked up again in 1997 through Hudson et al.'s *Culture and Foreign policy* (1997) in which the scholars examine the "interface between the study of culture and the study of foreign policy."[197]

> The influence of culture in policy-making can be very well reflected in Asia and the Middle East. While culture is less visible in foreign-policy making in Europe and North America, tradition and culture play a big role in bureaucratic systems in countries like Thailand and the GCC States. Traditional perception and values can sometimes be reflected in foreign policy choices. Therefore, in examining Asia and Middle East's contribution and role in international politics, culture is an important agenda that must be taken under consideration.

2.4.4 Proponents

Most proponents of constructivism share a common ground that ideational factors play as significant role, or more, as material factors in shaping international relations. These

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[194] Ibid.

[195] Valerie M. Hudson, ed., *Culture and Foreign Policy* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 1997), pp. 3.

[196] Ibid, pp. 4.

[197] Ibid, pp. 9.

proponents usually point out the changes in contemporary international relations, which need explanatory mechanisms in addition to conventional IR theories. One virtue of constructivism, according to its proponents is that it offers a more flexible, wider contextual understanding of international politics than conventional IR theorists. Such views can be summarised through John Ruggie's words that "the understanding of identity and interest will broaden the narrow theoretical confine to the field and allow constructivists to incorporate the intersubjective bases of social action and social order to the understanding of international politics."[198]

Another factor the proponents of constructivism use to promote the concept is the ability to explain the international relations phenomena in way that other concepts cannot. One of the most prevalent examples raised to support such a claim is the end of the Cold War, which they claim traditional IR theories, i.e. realism and pluralism, cannot fully explain.[199] Thus it can be seen that the use of constructivism as an examining tools is appropriate to contemporary international politics; it greatly responds to the newly emerged factors, which have begun to play crucial roles in a way that never happened before in the past, thus making conventional IR sufficiently capable of explaining international politics.

Another significance of constructivism is the suitability of the concept to contemporary international politics. Many of international phenomena that has taken place in the current world politics can be explained with ideational factors, namely ethnic conflicts, regional groupings, and emergences of some international norms. Proponents of constructivism use this concept to explain the nature of ongoing phenomena and, at the same time, the observation of how the world politics is constantly constructed allows them to be able to look into the future which they believe is constantly changing.

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[198] John Gerard Ruggie, "What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-Utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge," *International Organization* 52, no. 4 (1998).
[199] For this kind of argument, see Katzenstein, *Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, pp 2.

2.4.5 Criticisms

One of the questions posed by critics of constructivism is the issue over the practicality of the concept, which appear too abstract to them. Such questions have been taken on board by some constructivists and the concept has been adjusted to reflect a more realistic approach to international relations. Such can be seen between the difference between the mainstream constructivists and the work of Wendt, who have incorporated the neorealist concept of international relations, which do not totally abandon the influence of states and material components in international politics. Another criticism of constructivism comes from the question over the construction of argument and the unit of analysis.

Jeffrey Checkel suggests that constructivists are sometimes unable to define and limit the boundary of their argument; in addition, they lack of detailed explanation on component of social construction, which is the core of their argument. Checkel also highlights constructivists' failure to highlight the micro-unit of analysis.[200] To Checkel, many constructivists fail to explicitly define constructivism, thus making it difficult to set limit how much their constructivist view covers. In the attacking the lack of focus on micro-level analysis, Checkel suggests that constructivists seek to address the components of social construction, namely the actors and mechanisms within social construction. In addition, Checkel highlights constructivists' failure to accentuate the micro level foundation, particularly the issue of individual agency. To him, while constructivists are good at explaining macro foundations of behaviour and identity (norm and social context), they are weak in explaining how norms connect with agents on the micro level.[201]

Over all, most of the criticism constructivists have received has been concentrated on applicability. Interestingly, it can be seen that there has been constant development in methodology, and analytical mechanisms within constructivism. The past work on constructivism has been concentrated on theoretical content, while more constructivists

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[200] Jeffrey Checkel, "The Constructivist Turn in International Relations Theory" in *World Politics,* Vol. 50. No. 2 (Feb,1998), pp. 324-348.

[201] Ibid.

have applied constructivist to the real world. Wendt's work, for example, is considered to be heavily theoretical and philosophical, thus it is not surprising that questions of applicability arise. The development of constructivism is yet to continue, with constructivists constantly adjusting the concept to accommodate the reality. At the moment, the essence of the concept, particularly the focus on the ideational factors in international politics, is already useful and can be used to accommodate the understanding of current world politics.

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

With the complexity in the contemporary international politics, a single concept is not sufficient to explain it. Multiple concepts that can address different aspect of international politics are necessary; the need of multiple concepts also lie on the fact that each concept has the weaknesses which leave a vacuum for further explanation. The weaknesses and strengths in each of the concept can be summarised as follows.

The strength of the state-centric view can be reflected through the resilience of states in the contemporary world, thus the mechanisms used to explore states continue to be important. The weakness of the state-centric view is that theory is not entirely adjusted to the contemporary international politics, where it fails to capture the new international agenda and actors.

Such weakness gives way to pluralism, whose strength can be seen through the weakness of state-centric view. In contrast to the state-centric view, pluralism embraces more actors and acknowledges wider agendas in international relations, thus facilitating a greater understanding of international politics. Weakness of pluralism is the complexity the theory creates, based on great numbers of players and issues involved. The strengths and weaknesses of state-centric view and pluralism can therefore be complemented with each other.

The interest to examine the dynamism of state and non-state actors has culminated in applying postinternational concept and model; as it can be seen that this thesis has

shown the development in thought process and recognition of each IR theories, from state-centrism, to pluralism and ultimately postinternationalism, which embraces the essence of the latter two theories.

To be able to understand the holistic picture of the international politics, the combination of these two concepts must be supported by the strength of other IR theories. Constructivism helps highlight cultural, norms and the essence of identity, while an understanding of the globalisation, in addition to be significant part of postinternational argument, allows greater understanding of the environment within international relations. The contribution of culture and individuals help understand the policy-making decision. Putting all these concepts together crates a strong and appropriate analytical tool than using one sole concept. Some concepts like constructivism can appear too philosophical and difficult to apply when used alone, but when paired with strong conventional IR theories like state-centric and multi-centric, the theories complement and strengthen one another.

That transnational forces have an impact on states is certain; indeed, transnationalism is significant part of pluralist and postinternational analysis. The interesting agenda is to what extent these forces affect states and how much states allow such intervention. As noted, the proponents of the state-centric view point out the significance of states, that they have been the most important and in some way defined the environment in which non-state actors behave domestically and internationally.[202] With such a claim, taking state-centric out of international relations analysis might mean removing a big piece of the jigsaw, which will help making sense of the whole of international politics. The crucial questions, recommended by Keohane and Nye, lie not on transnational relations or the state-centric view *per se*, rather lie in the combination of both concepts, as they claim that, "It is not interesting to exclude traditional state behaviour and then study the residual only. What is interesting is the contamination of interstate relations by transnational relations."[203] Such a claim hints at the potential use of the combination between the state-centric view and transnationalism.   The prospect of using the

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[202] Krasner, "Power Politics, Institutions, and Transnational Relations," pp. 277.
[203] Keohane, *Power and Interdependence*, pp. xxiv.

combined concept has been taken further and had been adapted into the model of Two Worlds of World politics, which will be discussed in the next section.

3.1 Rosenau's Two Worlds Theory

James Rosenau's explanations and models are used as a key theoretical framework and model in this research because they are seen as the most relevant framework for this research project. Through his work in *The Turbulence in World Politics*, Rosenau explains the nature of contemporary and future world politics through looking at the existence and the overlap of the state-centric and the multi-centric worlds, along with the influence from the increase in individuals' skills. [204] In this research, Rosenau's argument on the role of individuals in international politics is not going to be focused in the theoretical model; however, it will be part of the discussion on the role of individuals and culture in foreign-policy making process.

In his work, the state-centric world is termed as the "sovereignty-bound actors", while the multi-centric world is termed as the "sovereignty-free actors." Through observing and interpreting the dynamism within each world and the dynamism resulted from the interactions between the two worlds, Rosenau points out that the interactions among actors in the state-centric world is based largely on reciprocity; on the other hand, the process of interactions among actors in the multi-centric world resembles cascades.[205] The cascading pattern of process within the multi-centric world has an effect on the state-centric world. According to Rosenau, the overlaps of the two worlds can have both antagonistic and friendly natures. Actors from one side regularly cross to the other side for different purposes, including for diplomatic negotiations, expertise, general support, resolution of disputes and so on.[206] The examples Rosenau provides are those that show the intervention of non-state actors in state-centric world, including the involvement of Jewish organisations in the U.S. in the talks between the U.S. and the PLO[207] and the cooperation between a government of one state such as China and a U.S. university.[208]

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[204] Rosenau, *Turbulence in World Politics: A Theory of Change and Continuity*.
[205] Ibid, pp. 299.
[206] Ibid, pp. 279-283.
[207] Ibid.
[208] Ibid.

There are three parameters for Rosenau's argument: the structural parameter (the bifurcation of world politics); the relational parameter (the question over authority compliance among actors); and the micro-level parameter (the role of individuals and their skills).[209] This research focuses on the three parameters, however, the model, which will be discussed in the further section devotes largely on the first structural parameter, the bifurcation of world politics. This is because the bifurcated world concept helps accentuate the relations between the state and non-state actors within Thailand's relations with the GCC States, thus leads to better understanding the nature of the relations, with the question over the potential involvement of the private sectors associations.

3.2 Proposed Theoretical Framework

Incorporating Rosenau's Two Worlds Concept into the research project to show the interactions between the government and the non-government actors requires identifying proper actors within each world. The state-centric world consists of the Thai and the GCC governments, as well as the states in the Muslim world, while the multi-centric world consists of private sector associations. The multi-centric world in this research largely consists of private sector associations and individuals. Aside from attention given to state and non-state actors, transnational concept is crucial because of the characteristic of the private sector associations in the research are transnational. Rosenau also recognises the transnational nature of non-state actors and how it can affect state-centric world.

In examining the world politics, Rosenau suggests a crucial guideline to avoid being bogged down by traditional IR concept and less motivated in exploring new sources of explanation. Rosenau called this phenomenon as being in the "conceptual jail."[210] According to Rosenau, sometimes the conceptual tools students of IR are familiar with become the obstacles for them to understand the reality in world politics; this is because students are channelled to regard concepts and phenomenon through a traditional lens. While there is a virtue in recognising IR concepts in their analysis, fixing too much on

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[209] Ibid, pp. 11.
[210] Ibid, pp. 40.

these concepts limit the students' ability to understand new phenomena for which traditional concepts cannot provide a sufficient explanation. Rosenau's guideline to avoid the conceptual jail are useful for this research in that they allow the author not to dwell in the traditional view and to be less influenced by the tendency to treat IR concepts in a more relaxed yet reality-based manner that is suitable to contemporary world politics. There are five key conceptual guidelines, including:[211]

> 1. *Suspend a tendency to attribute actors' status in terms of sovereignty and resources, proceeding instead to identify actors by first locating the authority structure out of which their action emanates and then clarify how the structures shape the consequences that flow from their exercise of authority.*

> 2. *Having traced actions and reactions to structures of authority, cease attempting to rank these structures in a hierarchical order of importance ; instead, acknowledge that importance attaches to all those who have authority to initiate and sustain actions that extend beyond the boundaries of countries.*

> 3. *Having accepted that sub-national and supranational sovereignty-free actors can be as relevant as sovereignty-bound actors, render all of them comparable on the same analytic plane by conceiving of whole systems and subsystems as the cast of characters at the macro level who, along with individuals at the micro level, act out global dramas.*

> 4. *By-pass defining interdependence in terms of overlapping needs and wants by conceiving of it as existing whenever two or more whole systems and /or subsystems have one more of the same issues on their agendas.*

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[211] Ibid, pp. 333-334.

5. Forego a preoccupation with the locus of final authority, the existence

of sovereignty, and the capacity to enforce decisions, and focus instead

on how outcomes are produced and /or controlled.

3.3.1 The Coexistence and Overlap of the State and Non-state Spheres

Rosenau begins his research project through examining the state-centric and the multi-centric world separately. He notes that each world has its own dynamism and characteristics. The state-centric world is considered to be more coherent; and the interactions among its actors are comparatively more formal and hierarchical than the multi-centric world.[212] On the other hand, the interactions among actors in the multi-centric world are comparatively more temporary, susceptible to change; but they are less constrained by power differentials, formal authority and established institutions.[213] The multi-centric world consists of different players, namely business firms, political parties, ethnic groups etc.[214] On the other hand, the state-centric world consists of states with different kinds of governments.

It is the overlap between the state-centric and the multi-centric worlds that is the focus of this research. Rosenau points out the need for the two worlds to overlap. Such overlaps can yield both positive and negative outcomes, as he said, "…despite the fact that relations between actors in the two worlds can be mired in intense conflict, they do need each other. Their goals may differ, but the structures and dynamics of postinternational politics are such that neither can sustain forward movement without some dependence on and cooperation with the other."[215] To Rosenau, states have limited ability to handle some of the contemporary agendas, and thus the support from the non-state actors is significant. The interactions between the two worlds can be difficult in some cases; one of the difficulties noted by Rosenau is the limitation states set for themselves, which sometimes make it problematic to interact with non state actors. Based on his observation, Rosenau assigns the rules underlying the conduct of actors from the two

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[212] Ibid, pp. 249.
[213] Ibid, pp. 249.
[214] Ibid, pp. 252.
[215] Ibid, pp. 296.

worlds. Such rules are significant for this research since they enlist the factors that should be observed on the conducts of state and non-state actors when they interact. The rules are separated into two folds, one for the states, and the other are for non-state players, as seen in the following:

Rosenau's Decision Rules Underlying the Conduct of Sovereignty-Bound Actors (SBAs) in the Multi-Centric world[216]

1. *SBAs yield jurisdiction, fully or partially, to transnational sovereignty-free actors when*
   a. *governments are paralyzed by prior commitments and sovereignty-free actors may be able to break the stalemate;*
   b. *the initiatives of sovereignty-free actors do not intrude upon prior commitment and may yield desirable results;*
   c. *there are advantages in a new course of action, but a public commitment to it prior to a demonstration of its merit runs the risk of public opposition;*
   d. *an issue has acquired such momentum in a particular direction that to attempt to curb the involvement of sovereignty-free actors is to risk unacceptable consequences in other policy areas.*

2. *SBAs allows domestic demands to take precedence over external requirements when*
   a. *the domestic economy stagnates;*
   b. *a major subsystem becomes agitated;*
   c. *domestic opinion coalesces around a specific perspective;*
   d. *internal strife threatens governmental effectiveness.*

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[216] James Rosenau, *Turbulence in World Politics: A Theory of Change and Continuity*, pp. 307-308

3. *SBAs respond to or seek out relations with sovereignty-free collectivities abroad when*

    a. *they seek to bring pressure on governments abroad and the collectivities are seen as having influence on them*

    b. *they are under pressures to do so from domestic groups at home;*

    c. *they perceive the foreign actors as helpful in building a policy consensus at home;*

    d. *they seek to increase their share of a foreign market.*

4. *SBAs coordinate both with other states and with sovereignty-free actors abroad when*

    a. *a sudden crises occur in the world economy, the physical environment, or the social world that bear immediately upon the welfare of private groups in several countries.*

5. *SBAs coordinate with other states as a means of moving more freely in the multi-centric world when*

    a. *their governments agree on a course to follow, but one or more are severely restrained by the opposition of domestic groups;*

    b. *transnational interactions among sovereignty-free actors begin to impinge upon the stability of two or more governments.*

6. *SBAs avoid contacts in the multi-centric world when*

    a. *their involvement would catch them up in cascades that run counter to their values and policies;*

    b. *to do so would be to set precedents for future contacts that are deemed risky.*

7. *SBAs initiate covert policies and actions when*

    a. *the desired outcome of international situations cannot be achieved under the norms of the multi-centric system;*

b. *sovereignty-free actors have goals or resources that cannot be mobilized through conventional diplomatic channels or by accepted practices in the multi-centric world.*

Source: James Rosenau, *Turbulence in World Politics: A Theory of Change and Continuity*. pp. 307-308.

Rosenau's Decision Rule Underlying the Conduct of Sovereignty-Free Actors (SFAs) in the State-centric World[217]

1. *SFAs seek to strengthen their relations with states by*
   a. *defending the legitimacy of their organizational status and the worthiness of their activities and values;*
   b. *avoiding a reputation as an ineffective or unreliable transnational actors;*
   c. *demonstrating as often as possible a capacity to act independently of the state in which their headquarters are located;*
   d. *expanding their membership as widely as possible among citizens and organizations abroad and establishing local affiliates through which those in other countries can work;*
   e. *intruding themselves into situations where their values and competence can affect the course of events;*
   f. *maintaining a multiplicity of ties to other transnational actors in their own and related fields.*

2. *SFAs seek to enhance their internal coherence by*
   a. *offering support, financial as well as moral where possible, to affiliates and counterparts abroad whenever the latter are embroiled in conflicts;*
   b. *avoiding situation that requires their membership to attach a higher priority to their transnational than their national loyalties;*
   c. *stressing their transnational ties and the benefits derived from them;*

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[217] Ibid.

    d.   *resisting efforts by governments to narrow the scope of their activities.*

   3.   *SFAs seek to strengthen their relations with the state in which they have their headquarters by*

    a.   *establishing a multiplicity of links to states and counterparts abroad, thereby increasing the costs to the host state for any effort to curb their activities;*

    b.   *publicizing the contributions their transnational activities make to the welfare of communities in the host state.*

Source: James Rosenau, *Turbulence in World Politics: A Theory of Change and Continuity*, pp. 307-308.

3.3 The Model

To better understand the interactions between the state and non-state actors, a model is being created based on Rosenau's Two Worlds of World Politics. Figure 1 is the model proposed by Rosenau on the evolution of the two worlds of world politics. The contemporary global politics can be seen in the right end of the figure, where there is the separation of the two worlds, with diverse subgroups and actors within. It is this area that this research seeks to focus. The proposed model in this research takes Rosenau's model further by accentuating the influence of globalisation, culture and norms on the interactions of the two worlds. Additional concepts are incorporated into examining actors in the model. This is to correspond with the relations between Thailand and the GCC States, where ideational notions like culture, identities, norms and personalities partially determine the outcomes of the relations; thus they must be incorporated into the model. The design of the model therefore has been done by using far end bit of Rosenau's Two Worlds Concept in figure 1, plus the additional environments being added into the model, as shown in figure 2. The outcome is the model that can be seen in figure 2. Ultimately figure 3 illustrates the development of concepts and analytical process adapted from IR concepts discussed and Rosenau's proposed model.

Figure 1: Rosenau's Evolution of the Two Worlds of Politics

FIGURE 1.1. Evolution of the Two Worlds of World Politics
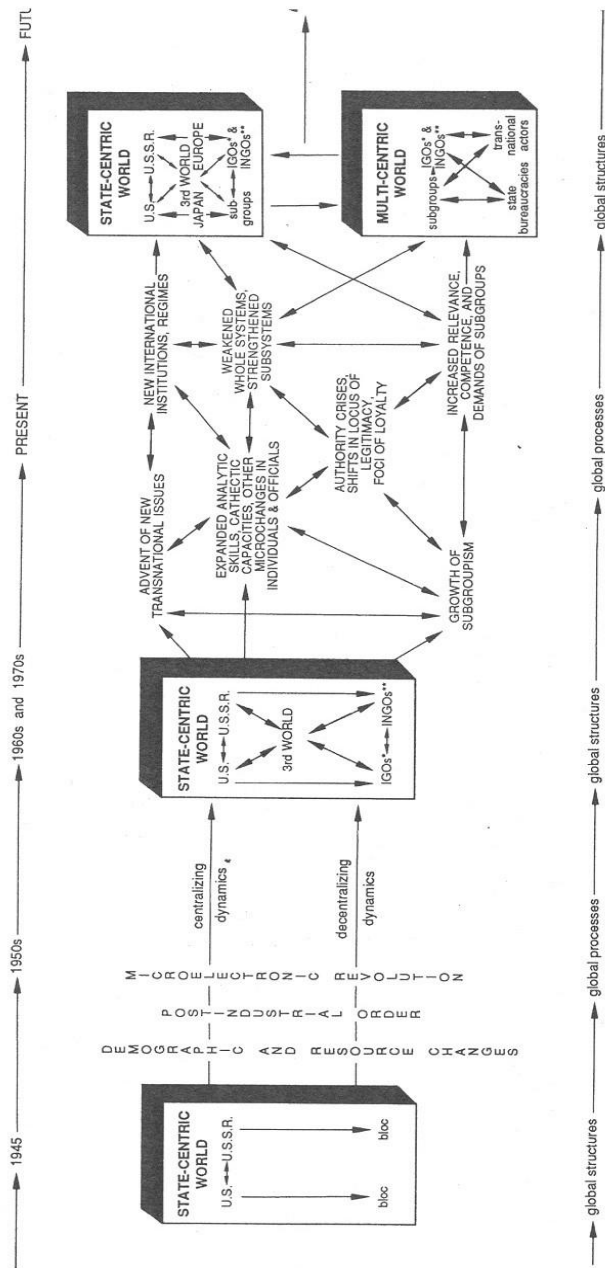
* IGOs – International Governmental Organizations
** INGOs – International Non-governmental Organizations

Source: James Rosenau (1990) in *Turbulence in World Politics*. Pp. 110.

Figure 2: Thai-Gulf relations Model, based on Rosenau's Two Worlds of World Politics, added with external environments
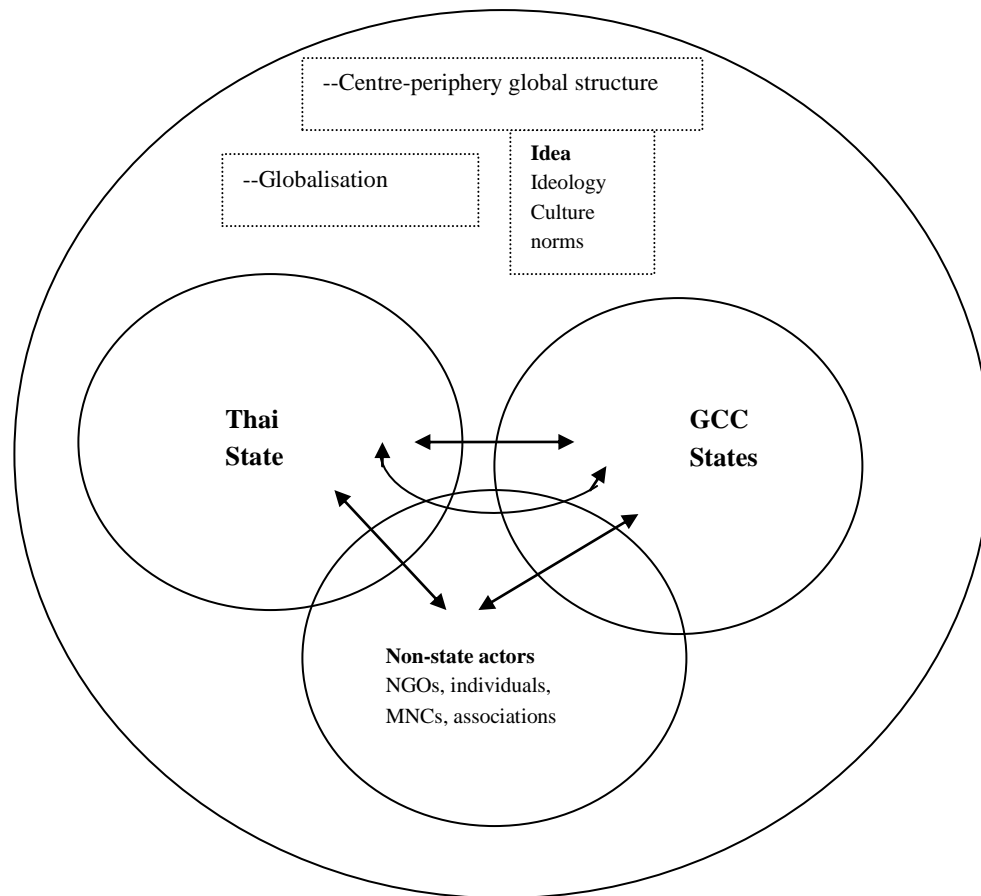
Source: Author-created model based on Rosenau's bifurcated world model. (October 2008).

The model proposed for the interactions of governments and non-government actors in Thailand's relations with the GCC States therefore can be seen as incorporating Rosenau's Two Worlds Model. Thailand and the GCC States are considered within the state realm, and are set in different circles to illustrate the interactions between the two sides. The third circle illustrates the realm of non-state actors, consisting of various types of non-state actors, including NGOs, corporations, international organizations, private sector associations, and individuals. States have different functional organs that need interactions with their external counterparts, thus emerge the state-to-state relations. Additionally, non-state actors have their own dynamism; there are constant interactions with other non-state agencies. In addition, there are constant interactions across the

actors' realm. Non-state actors can be seen as acting as channels that link the state circles together. The chance that the Thai state, the GCC States and the non-state actors will join together, as can be illustrated by the overlap of the three circles, should be increased by the increased participation of individuals and non-state actors in international politics. The networks of interactions are dynamic and exist within the globalisation context, centre-peripheral structure and influence from ideational factors.

While the model in figure 2 helps understand the coexistence of the two worlds and their overlap, the model proposed in figure 3 summarises the development in the view of international politics, which motivates the need to examine the dynamism of state and non-state actors.

Figure 3: Thailand's Relations with the GCC States

State-Centric view with contributions of individuals   Pluralist view with multiple actors and complex relations
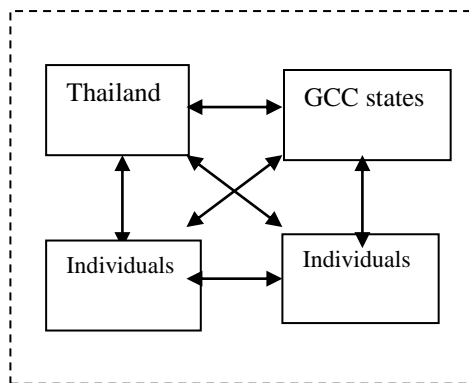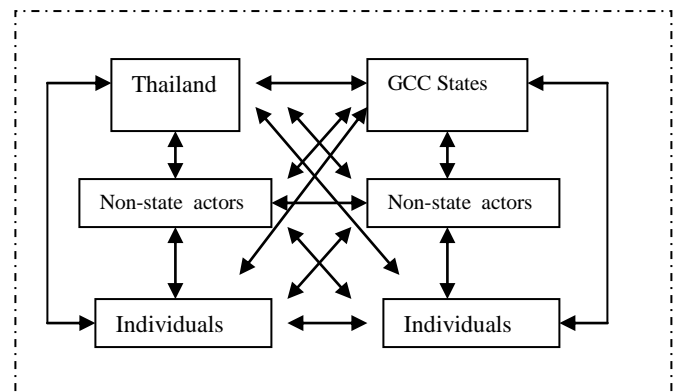
Source: Author-created diagram to compare state-centric and pluralist view of international relations.

The above diagram shows the two views of Thailand's relations with the GCC states. The first diagram shows the state-centric approach, depicting the early part of Thailand's relations with the GCC states. The second diagram illustrates a more complex system where greater numbers of non-state actors emerged, particularly in the form of private sector associations, business groups, or Muslims movements.   From a postinternational perspective, globalisation and increased skills have encouraged individuals to be more

proactive in international affairs; in addition, individuals are more confident to bypass the government in the interaction process, thus greater transnational movements occur.

In addition to highlighting the increasing significance of non-state actors and globalisation, the second diagram also highlights levels of analysis. Rosenau's postinternationalism highlights the role of individuals; it is worth noting that collective individuals should be analysed as the outcome of increased skills and political activeness. Diagram two therefore clarifies the potential question over micro-macro relations. While postinternationalism focuses on individuals as micro level, versus state as macro level, this model seeks to highlight the middle unit of analysis. Going back to figure 1, in the multi-centric world, the non-state organisations have been recognised already; however, the individuals were not presented in the model. What diagram two therefore does is simply combine all level of analysis together; thus it seeks to bring together individuals, collective individuals, and state agents into the model of interactions.

4. CONCLUSION

The main aims of this chapter were to reflect on the theoretical concepts and existing studies that are significant to the research on Thailand's relationship with the GCC States, and to show the linkages among these concepts. The significant theories being reviewed include the state-centric, pluralist and postinternational views, as well as the role of globalisation, constructivism culture and individuals. The theories have strengths and weaknesses, which ultimately complement one another. Two key theories, the state-centric and pluralist views, are being elaborated. While the state-centric views should be incorporated to understand inter-state relations, it should be complemented with pluralist views, considering that in the complicate contemporary world politics the non-state actors undeniable become significant.

While the concepts have been examined individually, it is important to recognise how they are being related in this research. The differences among the concepts mean they complement one another, thus strengthening the theoretical framework and model. As noted, state-centrism does not sufficiently provide explanatory mechanisms to non-states

actors, while pluralism does; therefore in this research, state-centrism and pluralism complement each other for the project that examines both the state and non-state actors in international relations. In addition, the change in international systems and actors, resulting from globalisation, has led to the need for additional concepts that provides explanation to empowered actors and changed environment. Postinternationalism takes into consideration such change and applies the understanding to both state and non-state actors in a way that state-centrism and pluralism cannot. The linkages among postinternationalism, state-centrism and pluralism are the focuses on the actors who have been shaped by the outcome of globalisation. While the three concepts share the focus on actors and their environments within the international system, the concepts fail to capture the ideational factors that have become significant in contemporary international relations, i.e. norms, ideas and culture. Constructivism has been discussed in the attempt to recognise the role of cultures and identity in mind. Therefore, the linkages of the first three main concepts, state-centrism, pluralism and postinternationalism, therefore, are that they focus on actors and how they are affected by the changes in the environment; they do not, however, explain how ideational factors, caused by the environment, affect the international system. Thus constructivism fills the gap and helps fulfil the task of the research project.

A model that incorporates both the state-centric and multi-centric worlds is suitable for the research project. Thus, Rosenau's Theory of Two Worlds has been useful for the construction of a new model proposed in this research. The Universe of Global Politics takes Rosenau's model further by focusing on the contemporary world politics and including additional components, constructivism, globalisation, culture and individuals into it. The model will be used to explain the case study of this research, Thailand's relationship with the GCC States, in the next chapter.

By limiting the observation to bilateral relations between Thailand and the GCC States, as well as the relationship between Thailand's non-state actors with their counterparts in the GCC States, it will be easier to capture the dynamism of the relationship between Thailand and the GCC States. Also, by inserting selected IR theoretical concepts--state-

centric, pluralist, postinternational and transnational concepts--into the observation, it will be possible to identify issues at stake of the relations and will lead to a further analysis on the role of state/non-state actors in Thailand and GCC State relations. This research, therefore, provides a contribution on three aspects: on the role of state and non-state actors in international relations separately, the dynamic interactions between state/non-state actors in international relations, and on the overall picture of Thailand's relations to the GCC States.

The next chapter provides historical and empirical background, outlining Thailand's relations with the GCC states prior 1997, and the position of the Muslims in Thailand. It is a prelude to the discussion and analysis of the state-centric sphere, including Thailand's relations with the GCC States under the Chuan and Thaksin's administrations, which will be discussed in details in the further chapter.

CHAPTER 2

THAILAND'S RELATIONS WITH THE GCC STATES: 1950-1997

1. INTRODUCTION

Although historical connections between the Thais and Arabs can be traced far back in history, particularly in terms of the history of Islam in Thailand and Southeast Asia, formal relations between Thailand and the majority of the GCC States had just been established in the late 1970s, after most of these states became independent. A glance at the background of Thailand's relations with the GCC States reveals that relationship at people level is one of the major driving mechanisms for state relations. The establishment of diplomatic relations has led to an increase in political and economic interactions between the two sides. Even when diplomatic relations had been established at the early stage, state interactions were rather modest while the people-to-people relations between the two sides were more active and significant, particularly in terms of the Islamic connection and increased labour migration to the Gulf.

The major aim of this chapter is to provide a background of Thailand's relations with the GCC States between 1960 and 1997. The nature of relations after 1997, which was the starting point of the Chuan Leekpai's administration, one of the periods being focused in this research, will be discussed in the further chapters. Using 1960 as the starting point to examine background of the relations is based on the consideration that the first formal diplomatic relations between Thailand and the GCC States was made in 1957, with Saudi Arabia, and in 1963, with Kuwait. From 1960, therefore, the government relations between Thailand and these two GCC States began to take shape and there are several factors and incidents that worth taking into consideration prior moving on to the focused timeframe. This background period had laid foundation and connection for Thailand's relations with other GCC States once they became independent in 1970s. The discussion on background in this chapter also notes historical connections between the Thais and the Arabs, as well as the historical information about Islam and Muslims in Thailand, which play crucial roles in shaping the relations between Muslims in Thailand and Muslims in the GCC States in the modern world.

The author's argument in this chapter is that at the early stage, Thailand's state relations with the GCC States was not as active as in the later period; although there were signs that showed the potential developing trend in increased level of interactions. At the early stage, governmental sub-units and their staff of both regions were hindered by lack of knowledge among each other, which leads to little incentive to explore and seek potential national interests. The major part of incentive of governmental interactions came from the need of governmental support in people-to-people relations. Though over time, more frequent interactions, which led to increased knowledge, more positive attitude, and spotted national interest, have led states to develop further network and interactions. By 1997, when the new government took over the office, Thailand's relations with the GCC States were at the eve of rapid growth.

The chapter begins with a brief overview of historical relations between Thailand and the Gulf, which can be traced back far beyond the independence of most of the GCC States. Then it moves on to provide an overview of contemporary relations, including both state-level and people-level relations. At this point, the author introduces the government system in dealing with foreign affairs, as well as the governmental units that frequently interact with the Gulf States. The next section concerns Thailand's relations with individual GCC States and significant events that affect the nature of relations, and whose ramifications spread into the relationship in the later period. The chapter ends by discussing the prevalent knowledge, perception and Thailand's understanding of her relationship with the GCC States during this period; this would provide a solid background for the understanding of further relations.

2. HISTORICAL CONTACTS BETWEEN THAIS AND ARABS

The historical account of contacts between the Thais and the Gulf Arabs is highlighted by interactions through trade and the spread of Islam in Southeast Asia. Though diplomatic relations between Thailand and the Gulf states had been established only during the later half of the 20th century, the relationship between the Thais and the Arabs[218] can be traced ways back as far as the 8th or 9th century.[219] Such contact can be

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[218] Although it was unclear of what the origins were of the Arabs who had travelled along this trade route

seen integrated in a larger contact between the Arab world and Southeast Asia, including the areas which are Malaysia and Indonesia in today's world. The evidence of such contact can be seen through ancient trade route from Western Asia to China, which includes areas around southern part of Thailand. Colonel H. Yule, who investigates the sea-route to China from Western Asia, upon examining the records of Arab geographers and voyagers, points out that one of the seas that the Arab voyagers passed through was the Andaman Sea,[220] which was on the Western side of Thailand's southern strip.

In his studies of the Malay Islamic Hikayat, Ismail Hamid describes the introduction of Islam to the Malay Archipelago; Hamid, through examining the work of G.R. Tibbetts, identifies Srivijaya as an important area where Arab traders sought harbour for their merchant ships.[221] It is known that this Srivijaya was within the Gulf of Siam area, and many towns in the eastern part of the Southern part of Thailand, around the provinces of Pattani and Yala today, were reported as being included under the Srivijaya Empire; thus it is likely that people who lived around those areas were familiar with the Arab merchants who sailed to trade. While the arrival of Islam to Southeast Asia is still controversial among scholars, most scholars agreed that Islam had arrived and inhabitants of southern Thailand had converted into the religion by around the 13th-14th centuries.[222]

Sailing through the upper part of the Gulf of Thailand, voyagers must have reached the Chao Praya delta, where the river could lead them to important trade cities in the Central Plain of Thailand. Thai historians claim that as early as the Ayuttaya period (around the 16-17th century), there were Arabs and Persians setting up business and trade with the locals along the Chao Praya river. In one area of Ayuttaya, there was an old settlement

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and reached Thailand, it is quite likely that they were from the Gulf region, as the route passed through Red Sea, and that places along the Gulf were thriving in trade, namely Basra, Oman, and Bahrain.
[219] Colonel H. Yule, "Notes on the Oldest Records of the Sea-Route to China from Western Asia," *The Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography* 4, no. 11 (1882).
[220] Ibid.
[221] Ismail Hamid, *The Malay Islamic Hikayat* (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1983), pp. 12.
[222] Raymond Scupin, "Muslim Accommodation in Thai Society," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 9, no. 2 (1998).

of Muslims which were believed to come from the Arab World and Persia.[223] While the Persians who also reached Thailand during the Ayutthaya period played an important role in politics and the royal Siamese court,[224] the Arabs were not as politically active and were only engaging in trades. In today's Thailand, there are a few Muslim families that can trace their genealogy to those Arab and Persian traders.[225]

3. MUSLIMS IN THAILAND

The historical account of Islam and Muslims in Thailand plays an important role in defining Thailand's relations with the GCC States as well as with the Muslim world. This is because the historical account of the settlements of Muslims in different parts of the country helps explain the nature of connections between these Muslims and with Muslims in the GCC States; as well, historical account also enables us to identify groupings of Muslims in Thailand, which differ in terms of ethnicity and languages. Such groupings define the demographic content of Muslims in the Muslim private sector associations in Thailand, and, as noted, a different level of interaction with Muslims in the rest of the world.

3.1 The Classification of Muslims in Thailand

The classification of Muslims in Thailand helps elucidate different groupings as well as helps to assess the level of integration of different Muslim groups to Thai society; in addition, different groups of Muslims also show different levels of connection with Muslims overseas and the solidarity of their communities. Scholars on Muslims in Thailand use diverse means to categorise Muslims in Thailand. Some categorise them according to historical and ethnic background, others categorise them according to location and the traditions they associate with, including languages spoken and the details of Islamic traditions that they follow.

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[223] His Excellency Krugrij Pramoj, "History of Muslims in Thailand" (Speech at Suan Kularb Wittayalai School, Bangkok, Thailand, 1958).

[224] Several Persians held important positions in the Siamese court during 1600s, including Abdurrazzaq Gilani and Muhammad Astarabad, who were in charge of external commerce and had gained confidence with the Thai kings, particularly King Narai (r. 1656-1688). For more information, see Subrahmanyam, Sanjay (1992). "Iranian Abroad: Intra-Asian Elite Migration and Early Modern State Formation" in *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 51, No. 2 (May, 1992).

[225] Saowanee Jitmaud, "Muslim in Dhonburi," http://arshura.awardspace.com/story/s3.html. (Last accessed 19 May 2009.)

3.1.1 Language, Ethnicity, and Location

An expert on Thai Muslims, Raymond Scupin, categorises Thai Muslims according to ethnicity and language used (Thai Muslims or Thai Islam, and Malay Muslims).[226] Anthropologist Angela Burr categorises them according to languages used (Thai-speaking and Malay-speaking Muslims).[227] Another anthropologist, Sarocha Darairajoo, incorporates geographical location, language spoken, and ethnic background in to the classification.[228] The majority of Buddhist Thais identify Muslims according to geographical location, i.e. Muslim Pattani, Muslim Songkla, Muslim Nakorn (from Nakorn Sri Thammarat), and Muslim Krung Thep (from Bangkok). More information is implied within such a description, including the language spoken, ethnicity, culture and tradition. Imtiyaz Yusuf, in addition to using ethnicity and language as sources for the classification of Muslims, emphasises the question of Muslims' level of integration into Thai society.[229] According to Yusuf, there are three groups of Muslims in Thailand. The first group is the ethnic Malay-speaking Muslims in the four southern provinces; the second group is the integrated ethnic Malays but Thai-speaking Muslims in Satun and the upper south of Thailand; the third group is the multi-ethnic integrated Thai-speaking Muslims who live mostly in the Central provinces and in the north and northeast of Thailand.[230]

3.1.2 Old and New movements

The movements of Islamic groups in Thailand can also be used to classify Muslims in Thailand. Scholars like Scupin, Darairooju and Tan-Mullins[231], discuss two distinct movements of Muslims in Thailand, the old and the new movement. The old movement, known as *kaum tau*, is the group of Muslims that are largely influenced by local tradition

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[226] Scupin, "Muslim Accommodation in Thai Society."

[227] Angela Burr, "Pig in Noah's Ark: A Muslim Origin Myth from Southern Thailand," *Folklore* 90, no. 2 (1979).

[228] Saroja Darairajoo, "No Fish in the Sea," Unpublished thesis. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Anthropology Department, 2003).

[229] Yusuf, "The Role of Chularajmontri/Shaikh Al-Islam in Resolving Ethno-Religious Conflict in Southern Thailand - the Human Security Dimension."

[230] Ibid.

[231] May Tan-Mullins, "Voices from Pattani: Fears, Suspicion, and Confusion" *Critical Asian Studies* 38, no. 1 (2006).

as well as the Sufi strain of Islam;[232] and the new movement is known as *kaum muda*, which has largely been influenced by Malay Muslims who have undertaken study in the Arab world.[233]   The new school emphasises stricter practices and adherence to a perceived purer version of Islam. Most of the local people, particularly Muslims in the villages, do not follow the new and stricter school of thought since the majority of people find the teachings and ideologies of the newer movement impractical and not fitting into their daily living.

3.1.3 Islam and Muslims in Thailand—historical account

According to Imtiyaz Yusuf, there are three channels in which Islam came to Thailand. The earliest arrival of Islam in Thailand was the Arab traders and preachers during 13 and 14th century, who settled to trade in the southern part of Thailand.[234] The second group was the Persian, Arab, and Indian traders who went to Central Thailand during Sukhothai and Ayuttaya period, the Cham Muslims who came from Cambodia, as well as the Indonesian Muslims who fled the conquest of Indonesia by the Dutch.[235] And the third group was the Indian, Bengali and Chinese Muslims that come to the Northern part of Thailand during 1870s and 1890s.[236] Some Muslim traders began to settle in Thailand and during the Ayuttaya period, the Persian traders became dominant in the Thai court.[237] Several Persian Muslims served in the Ayuttaya court, and until todays there are some families descended from these Persian traders. Since the days of old Siam, there were two separate spheres of Muslims in Thailand, one are the Malay Muslims in the South and the other are the immigrated Muslims who settled largely in the central part of the country.

As for Muslims in central Thailand, since the Ayuttaya period, there was the appointment of the Shaikh al-Islam as the head of Islamic community in Thailand and as advisor to the King in terms of Islamic affairs. The position of Shaikh al-Islam, known

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[232] Scupin, "Muslim Accommodation in Thai Society."
[233] Ibid.
[234] Yusuf, "The Role of Chularajmontri/Shaikh Al-Islam in Resolving Ethno-Religious Conflict in Southern Thailand - the Human Security Dimension."
[235] Ibid.
[236] Ibid.
[237] Ibid.

as Chularajmontri in Thai, though it had been practiced long before, was made official through the Islamic Patronage Act in 1945; the act reflects the government's intention to create the state institution that is responsible for Muslims affairs.[238] Thus officially, Chularajmontri holds the highest position in the country's Islamic committees; he provides advice on Islamic agendas throughout Thailand. The government has aimed to integrate Malay Muslims into the rest of the Muslim communities and into the Thai society itself. Yusuf argues, however, that the office of the Chularjamontri receives little respect from the Malay Muslims who prefer to seek advice from local Ulema, known as "tok guru."[239]

a. The Incorporation of the Northern Malay Provinces into Thailand

In 1906, the northern part of the Malay Peninsula, known as Pattani, consisted of seven provinces, Pattani, Yala, Sai Buri, Yaring, Nong Chik, Raman and Ra-ngae, were dissolved by the Siamese military to be united as Thailand's Monthol Pattani.[240] Such a process turned the Malay Muslims in the areas into Thai citizens; these Muslims, however, still considered themselves as Malays more than Thais. Such phenomenon suggests a circumstance when ethnicity plays a stronger role than citizenship. With the change in the country's administration, Monthol Pattani was, in 1943, transformed into three provinces, which are Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat.

b. The Thai Government and the Malay Muslims in the Deep South

The cultural and ethnic attachment of the Malay Muslims has caused some concern to the Thai government, particularly the nationalist authorities, who have tried to promote the collective identity through the "Three Pillars" consisting of the Nation, Religion and Monarchy.[241] The governments in the past recognised that the Malay Muslims had a low level of integration into Thai society compared to other Muslim groups. As noted, the Malay Muslims respect and seek support more from the local ulema (tok guru), and one of the government's concerns over Muslims seeking knowledge from the local

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[238] Ibid.
[239] Ibid.
[240] Ibid.
[241] Scupin, "Muslim Accommodation in Thai Society."

ulemas is that some of the ulemas were educated outside Thailand (i.e. Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Pakistan, Malaysia) [242] and their radical ideology and networks abroad can threaten national security.

Within the interactions between the Thai government and Malay Muslims, each side has always regarded the other with suspicious eyes; the Thai government has been cautious about potential threat of national security from the Malay Muslims, while the latter have been cautious about the government wanting to pressure them to integrate into Thai community. Some key incidents in the past also created the division between the Malay Muslims and the government. Under the government of Prime Minister Pibunsongkhram during the 1940s, the *Rattaniyom* policy, which promoted Thai-isation, [243] the Muslims in the south faced religious oppression and discrimination. Several symbols and practices that signify being Malays, including speaking the Malay dialect and wearing sarongs, were prohibited.

Even though the *rattaniyom* policy has been revoked in contemporary Thailand, Malay Muslims continue to be vigilant about the Thai government's policy. The government, on the other hand, has tried to promote more religious freedom. However, there are still the prevalent perceptions that the Malay Muslims do not benefit from the development plan and benefits that the government claims to provide.[244]

3.2 Interactions between Muslims in Thailand and Muslims in the Middle East

The relationship between Muslims in Thailand and Muslims in the Middle East has long been established. Within the relations, socioeconomic status of Muslims in Thailand largely determines the level of relationship between these Muslims and the Arab world. Most of the time, the elite, intelligent and wealthy were those who had greater potential to develop a connection with the Middle East through scholarship and the hajj. Each year, the revenue from oil allows Arab states to finance Islamic education for Southeast

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[242] Yusuf, "The Role of Chularajmontri/Shaikh Al-Islam in Resolving Ethno-Religious Conflict in Southern Thailand - the Human Security Dimension."
[243] Ibid.
[244] Wattana Sugannasil, "Islam, Radicalism, and Violence in Southern Thailand," *Critical Asian Studies* 38, no. 1 (2006).

Asian Muslims, including Muslims in southern Thailand. These scholars go to study in the Arab world and many have returned to become religious teachers. As for the hajj, in the past only the wealthy could afford to attend and usually wealthy Muslims are those living in Bangkok and in cities like Yala (Muang Yala) and Pattani (Muang Pattani). It was very difficult for local villagers to go on hajj as they already found it difficult to make ends meet; so the notion of hajj seemed to be out of question. Nowadays, however, the cost of hajj has become much lower, and the government has helped facilitate the preparation and transportation, thus more Muslims in the South have been able to go. The greater detail of the interactions between Muslims in Thailand and Muslims in the GCC States is discussed further in the next section.

3.2.1   Hajj

The hajj is an essential ritual for Muslims. Unfortunately, little has been researched about the historical development of the hajj in Thailand. Knowledge about the hajj among Muslims of Thailand can, however, be understood through the study of the hajj among Muslims of Southeast Asia.   William R. Roff, through his research about Southeast Asian Islam in the 19th century, points out that the only means for Southeast Asian Muslims to travel to Mecca was through ocean steamboats, usually from ports in Singapore.[245]   Although nothing about Muslims in Thailand had been mentioned, one can consider that Muslims in Thailand, particularly the Malay-Muslims in the South, had participated in the hajj; however, the number of Muslims from Thailand must have been very small.   The fact that these Muslims from Thailand spoke Malay, and identify themselves as ethnically Malay, it may be difficult to know that they were indeed from Thailand.

Roff's explanation is well supported by Jaran Maluleem, who points out that in order to go to the hajj, Thai Muslims had to "travel to Singapore, which took them 7 days by boat; then from Singapore, they had to travel by boat to Mecca, which took them 3-4

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[245] William R. Roff, "South-East Asian Islam in the Nineteenth Century," in *The Cambridge History of Islam*, ed. Ann Lambton P.M. Holt, Bernard Lewis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 125.

months."[246] The time it took to travel there and back and the time that people generally stayed in Mecca meant the journey could take around 3 years.[247] There was no need for a visa. In later periods, even though there were some means of transportation for Muslims to go to the hajj from Thailand, people still preferred to travel through Malaysia or Singapore. Many found that travelling from Thailand expensive and inconvenient.[248]

Raymond Scupin, in his examination of the socioeconomic impact of the hajj on Muslims in Thailand, points out that it was not until the end of World War II that there was an increase in the number of pilgrims from Thailand.[249] While the number of the pilgrims from Thailand was small, those who had gone on the hajj had returned and contributed significantly to the Muslim community of Thailand. They had a chance to learn more about Islam; some of the pilgrims even stayed longer to study.[250] Like many pilgrims from Southeast Asia, throughout their pilgrimage Thai pilgrims interacted with local people and Muslims from other parts of the world; in addition, they learned about Middle East culture. Therefore, for Thai Muslims, the hajj allowed Southeast Asian people to know more about the Gulf, which for them is the cradle of Islam. For Thailand, the hajj had led the state to recognise the need to facilitate their Muslim citizens fulfilling their religious duties. The later part of this period shows that Thailand interacted with Saudi Arabia regularly over hajj-related issues; and the interactions spilled over to other agreements and allowed the two states to learn more about each other.

In contemporary Thailand, the hajj has been formally supported by the government. The Hajj Affairs Support Act of 2524 B.E (1981) establishes guidelines and regulations to facilitate and protect Thai Muslims before and during pilgrimage. The Act lays down regulations and appoints a committee to work on hajj affairs. Now hajj affairs are under the care of the Hajj Affairs Supporting Committee, at Department of Religion in the

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[246] Interview with Professor Jaran Maluleem, Central Mosque of Thailand, 23 August 2007.
[247] Ibid.
[248] Ibid.
[249] Scupin, "The Social Significance of the Hajj for Thai Muslims."
[250] Ibid.

Ministry of Culture. The Committee is responsible for coordinating with different governments and private agencies relevant to Hajj affairs in Thailand to support Thai Muslims going on the hajj. To prevent pilgrims from being cheated, the Act recommends that pilgrims purchase services from the hajj service providers who have been granted permission from and been registered with the government. Each year, a representative from Thailand, usually a respectable Muslim, heads the country's official hajj delegation.[251] The 2nd volume of the Act, enacted in 2532 B.E. (1989), appoints the Shaikh al-Islam as the official leader of the hajj delegation each year. If he cannot go, the Central Islamic Committee of Thailand and the Shaikh al-Islam have to suggest an appropriate individual and ask for approval from the cabinet.

Due to limited space, Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Hajj sets the quota of the pilgrims in a country to 1% of number of Muslims in that country; the quota for Thailand is usually 7000 pilgrims, but in some years the Department of Religious Affairs could negotiate with Saudi Arabia to increase the number of pilgrims.[252] The pilgrims usually pay around 100,000 to 150,000 baht (around $ 2940-4410) to the registered private agency to take them to Mecca. According to Ladd Thomas, the number of Muslims participating in the hajj corresponds to economic cycles related to the rubber industry, if the rubber industry is doing well, more Muslims will take part in the hajj.[253] This is because rubber plantation is the main source of income for the Malay Muslims, in addition to fishing. The revenue from rubber plantation, which is usually larger and more secure than that of fishing, is saved and used to finance hajj. The saving for hajj is therefore subjected to the price of rubber product and the production capacity that year. The more the Malay Muslims can earn from rubber plantation, the faster and more convenient they can afford to go to hajj.

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[251] Examples of Thailand's official hajj delegation include Wan Muhammade Noor Matah, then Minister of Communication, in 1995, and Surin Pitsuwan, then Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1997.
[252] Information from the Hajj Affairs Supporting Committee, Department of Religion, Ministry of Culture, Thailand.
[253] As quoted in Scupin, "The Social Significance of the Hajj for Thai Muslims."

3.2.2   Education

Islamic studies are areas in which Muslims in Thailand interact with the Gulf Arabs. Before 1945, there were some Arabs, mostly from Saudi Arabia, coming to preach and teach Islam in Southeast Asia; and some of them taught in Thailand. The province of Pattani in southern Thailand has long been a famous source for traditional Islamic educational institute known as "pohnoh." The word comes from a Javi language, *pondok,* which once again comes from an Arabic word, *fundook,* meaning hotel.[254] Many teachers, the "tok guru," are either from Middle Eastern countries or are locals who received religious training in the Middle East, usually from Mecca or Medina in Saudi Arabia;[255] and some of them are trained in nearby countries like Malaysia and Indonesia.

For a long time, some wealthy Muslim families in Thailand usually sent their sons to study Islam in the Middle East. Some of these Middle Eastern-educated religious scholars had come back to teach Islam to Muslims in Thailand, while others had become important figures in Islamic affairs in the country. Until today, most of the recent Shaikh al-Islam, were either educated or had connected to Islamic affairs in Saudi Arabia or from al-Azhar in Egypt.[256] Seeking Islamic education in the Arab world can therefore be viewed as a means to secure a good future career for Muslims in Thailand.

There are a good number of Thai Muslim students studying in the Gulf.[257] Most of the students receive scholarships and/or funding from Gulf countries to go and study in the particular countries.[258] According to the unofficial survey conducted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand and the Office of the Shaikh al-Islam, there are about 1700 Thai Muslim students in Egypt, 200 in Saudi Arabia, 150 in Syria, 100 in Libya, 70-80 in Sudan, 50 in Yemen, 20 in Iran and one in Lebanon.[259] The number is not definite

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[254] Maluleem, *OIC and the Muslim World*, pp. 95-96.
[255] Ibid.
[256] Scupin, "Muslim Accommodation in Thai Society."
[257] There are different opinions on the exact number of these students and different sources provide different numbers and information.
[258] Information from the Department of Middle East, South Asia and Africa, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bangkok, Thailand.
[259] "Regional Perspective: Help Needed for Thai-Muslim Students," *The Nation.*, 27 January 2003.

because it is difficult to keep record since these students do not inform the government of their intention when they leave the country. Indeed, receiving scholarships to study in the Islamic World, especially Saudi Arabia or Egypt, has been an ambition of many Thai Muslim students who study in Islamic schools in Thailand and do not want to compete in an annual nationwide examination to enter universities in Thailand.[260] Many Muslim students feel that they are not proficient in the subjects tested, which include Thai and English languages, social studies and Thai history.

As Muslim students usually spend several years studying in the Gulf, they have picked up some knowledge and traditional familiarity with the region. They have had firsthand experience with local people. They are part significant groups of individuals that can provide a good overview about Thai-GCC people to people relations.

3.3 The Position of Islam and Muslims in Thailand in the Contemporary Period

3.3.1   Islam and Muslims in Thailand Today

In contemporary Thailand, Muslims account for approximately 5% of the population; it is the second most popular religion in Thailand (see tables 1 and 2 below). While the religion accounts for only 5% of the population, in the south of Thailand, particularly in the three southernmost provinces, Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat, there are dense clusters of Muslims, 85% of all population in the areas.

Table 1: Religion Ratios, Based on the 2000 Census in Thailand

Religions	Persons	Percentage
Buddhist	57324600	94.57
Islam	2815900	4.65
Christianity	438600	0.72
Hunduism	2900	0.00
Confucian	4900	0.01
Others	19900	0.03
No religion	6000	0.01

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[260] Santivithi Prombutra, "Muslim Life--Way of Life in Pondok," *Bangkok Business Online (Krungthep Thurakij)*, 20 August 2003. http://www.skyd.org/html/life-social/muslim-lifestyle.html. (Last accessed 12 June 2009).

| Don't know | 4500 | 0.01 |

Source: National Statistics Office, Thailand.

Table 2: Religion Ratios in Thailand by Region, Based on the 2000 Census

Region	BKK	Central	North	Northeast	South
Total	6320200	14101500	11367800	20759900	8067800
Buddhist	5972800 (94.5%)	13898900 (98.6%)	11106500 (97.7%)	20633600 (99.4%)	5712800 (70.8%)
Islam	274100 (4.34%)	156400 (1.1%)	2600 (0.02%)	13500 (0.07%)	2345800 (29.07%)
Christianity	64400 (1.02%)	41500 (0.29%)	21600 (0.19%)	110600 (0.53%)	6100 (0.07%)

Source: National Statistics Office, Thailand.

The density of Muslims in the south can be supported by looking at the number of mosques in the southernmost provinces in comparison to the rest of Thailand. As of 2009, the number of mosques in the four provinces in the south, Yala, Pattani, Narathiwat and Satun in total is much larger than the overall number of mosques in the rest of the country (see table 3).

Table 3: Number of Mosques Registered by Region

Bangkok	175
Central	194
Northeast	26
Upper South	755
West	118
North	43
Five southern province (Yala, Pattani, Narathiwat, Songklar, Satun)	2331

Source: Internal Security Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Interior, Royal Thai Government.

http://58.97.43.150/islam/pdf_mussayid_report?action=showFirst (Last accessed 2 July 2009).

The contemporary Thailand sees an increase in the number of establishments of Muslim organisations with different purposes, including charity, youth development, and trade. There has been more development in connections among Muslims, including Muslim newspapers and Muslim radio stations.

3.3.2   Relationship between Thai Muslims and the Thai Government

While the majority of the Thai population is Buddhist, the Thai government claims to have good relations with all religions. The constitution has guaranteed religious freedom and the King provides support to all religions despite his Buddhist affiliation. As Islam is the 2nd most popular religion in Thailand, and there is a high density of Muslims in the south, the Thai state had issued several Acts relevant to Islam to facilitate Muslim affairs, in additional to the noted Hajj act. The relevant acts are as shown in table 4.

Table 4: Legal Bodies Relevant to Muslims in Thailand

Year (B.E. /A.D.)	Legal bodies
2488/ 1945	The Islamic Patronage Act (Abrogated by*)
2489/ 1946	Royal Act on the Use of Islamic Law in Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, and Satun, concerns the right to use Islamic law concerning heritage and family affairs
2490/ 1947	Muslim Mosque Act (Abrogated by*)
2524/1981 and 2532 (volume2)	Hajj Affairs Supporting Act
2540/1997*	The Act of the Administration of Islamic Organisation
2545/2002	Islamic Bank of Thailand Act

Source: http://www.thai2arab.com and the Central Islamic Committee of Thailand.

The relationship between the government and Muslims in Thailand can be viewed in two sections, first, the support of Muslims and Islamic affairs in Thailand; second, the support of the interactions between Thai Muslims with Muslims in the rest of the Muslim world.

In terms of the support of Muslims and Islamic affairs in Thailand, aside from legal bodies that facilitate Muslim affairs, considering that there is a big cluster of Thai Muslims in the southernmost of Thailand, the government also provides a quota for Muslim youth to attend college in the form of scholarships. The government also provides support for Thai Muslims who go on the hajj. The Royal Decree on Private School of 1982 urges that the pondoks in Thailand convert into private schools that teach Islam and incorporate some secular subjects including Thai language into the curriculum.[261] According to the government, the rationale for such change was that the quality of education pondoks offer was low.[262] According to Uthai Dulyakasem, in 1971, 426 out of 487 pondoks were registered as private school teaching Islam; however, there are some pondoks that have not converted and continued to operate in the traditional style. Most of the students graduating from pondoks prefer to go study in the Middle East, considering their lack of fluency in Thai, and lack of strong secular knowledge compared to Thai-Buddhist students.

In terms of the government support for the relationship between Thai Muslims and Muslims in the rest of the world, the Thai government sometimes acts as the mediator between Muslims in Thailand and the governments in the Muslim countries. As noted, many Muslim countries, particularly those in the GCC States, have been providing financial support for Islamic Affairs and scholarship in the south of Thailand, and the government has been facilitating the contacts between the two sides. The government, however, has played very limited role as a middleman in this relationship. Generally, the relationship between the Thai Muslim and their fellow Muslims abroad is rooted in people-to-people relations and it largely bypasses the government.

The relations between the Thai government and the Muslims may have been viewed as developing in a positive direction. However, despite the view that the government had paid greater attention to Muslim affairs through legal bodies relevant to Muslims, there

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[261] Uthai Dulyakasem, "The Emergence and Escalation of Ethnic Nationalism: The Case of the Muslim Malays in Southern Siam," in *Islam and Society in Southeast Asia*, ed. Taufik Abdullah and Sharon Siddique, *Social Issues in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: General Printing Service Pte. Ltd., 1987), pp. 226.
[262] Ibid.

has been the criticism of these documents. One of the distinguished criticisms is that of the former foreign minister, Dr. Surin Pitsuwan. In his research paper focusing on the Thai government's policy aiming to promote the integration of Muslims into Thai society, Dr. Surin questions the efficiency of the legal acts and concludes that they are oriented to benefit the government more than to serve the Muslims.[263] The legal bodies indeed worked as a means to allow the government to intervene, monitor and control Muslims in Thailand. National security and the urge to unify the country are the core motivation of these legal acts, based on the traditional threat of resistance and secessionism of Muslims in the south.

In sum, while one may see that there has been the growth in the government's attention and facilitation to Muslims, one of the criticisms and question concern the real intention of the government. National security and national unification may be viewed as significant factor to take into consideration while designing the policy; however, it may not be the only factor that motivates the government to recognise the significance of Muslims in Thailand. Thus there is a certain level of recognition of Muslims' existence; but at the same time, we should keep in mind of that traditional suspicion and the concern over national security are important.

3.3.3   *Relationship between Thai Muslims and the Muslim World*

As noted, there are some contacts between the Muslims in Thailand and the Muslims in the Arab world. However, the contacts are largely limited to Muslims in cities, particularly groups of wealthy merchants, who could afford going to hajj and send their children to study abroad, and to groups of scholars who had gone to study in the Arab world. The local villagers, who account for the majority of Muslims in Thailand, are not linked with the Middle East; they follow Malay and Sufism-oriented versions of Islam and they adhere to Malayu (Malay) preaching. In addition, their aspiration to follow the perceived "authentic" version of Islam is limited. Von der Mehden's explanation

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[263] Surin Pitsuwan, *Policy for Integrating Malay Muslims in Thailand During Rattanakosin Period*, Seminar Series On Two Centuries of Rattanakosin: Changes in Thai Society (Bangkok: Thai Kadi Institute, Thammasat University and Social Research Institute, Chulalongkorn University, 1982), p. 20.

supports the claim that there is little link between the majority of Thai Muslims in the rural areas with Muslims in the Middle East, he points out that:

> Muslim minorities in the Philippines and Thailand have, for the most part, lived in regions outside the major centers of commerce and international interaction, both begin concentrated in rural areas of the far south of their respective countries. At the same time, the leadership of these minorities and those living in the capital cities did develop international interactions with fellow Muslims.[264]

Therefore, only the "leadership" has connection with Muslims outside their country, or even outside their communities; and the nature of relations between those who have contacts and their Muslim fellows is worth noting.

While it is argued that the contacts between Muslims in Thailand and in the Middle East are limited to only the elite and scholars, one cannot deny the significance of those existing contacts. According to Von der Mehden, several Muslims in Thailand had gone to study in the Middle East, and in addition to Islamic studies, they received military training and return to Thailand with radical ideology in opposition to the government. Many of the Malay-Muslim separatist groups have received funding largely from Libya and Saudi Arabia.[265]

In addition to the hajj and education in the Middle East, there are other channels of relations between Muslims in Thailand and in the Middle East. The support from governments in the Muslim states, i.e. the GCC States, has helped enabled the Thai Muslims to be able to interact more with the Arab world; these supports include Saudi Arabia's sponsorship of Thai Muslims going to hajj and scholarships from the GCC States, i.e. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Egypt, to study in the Arab world. In addition,

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[264] Von der Mehden, *Two Worlds of Islam: Interaction between Southeast Asia and the Middle East*, pp. 19.
[265] Ibid.

philanthropists from the GCC States have been providing money for the construction of mosques and Islamic schools in Thailand.

In sum, prior to 1997, Islam has been well established in Thailand. Islamic affairs and interactions between Thai Muslims and Muslims in the Arab world has been one of the most significant part of Thailand's relationship with the GCC States, where interstate relations had just been developed. The next section moves on to examine in greater detail the people-to-people relations between Thailand and the Gulf states, which is a significant aspect of Thailand-Gulf states relations before 1997.

4. THAI-GULF PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE RELATIONS

People-to-people relations between Thailand and the Gulf states covers the areas in additional to the relations among Muslims in Thailand. The relations between non-Muslims from Thailand and the Arabs in the GCC States also exist in the forms of tourism and, as noted, labour migration. Among these types of relations, tourism has been viewed as one of the most progressive areas of people-to-people relations.

4.1 Tourism

Tourism can be characterised as distinctive from other types of people-to-people relations between Thailand and the Gulf. This is because while people on the Thai side are more active in making connections with the Gulf, in the case of tourism, the Gulf Arabs are keener to visit Thailand. Among the GCC countries, the UAE, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia rate among the top GCC countries to visit Thailand. The number of tourists coming to Thailand from Gulf countries is largely subjected to knowledge and promotion the Arabs have received about the country. In the UAE, the Thai government, along with the Emirates Airline, has constantly been providing information and promoting tourism in Thailand.[266] In addition, the number of tourists from the GCC to Thailand is also subjected to travel facility, particularly transportation and custom procedures. In the case of UAE and Kuwait, which rank first and the second in terms of the number of tourists in the GCC, there are several direct flights from each country to

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[266] Information from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand, www.mfa.go.th. (Last accessed 2 July, 2009).

Thailand; and tourists from these countries receive visa exemption for trip no longer than 30 days.[267] For Saudi tourists, there is no direct flight to Bangkok; in addition, tourists are expected to secure a visa upon arrival to Thailand for a stay that is no longer than 15 days.[268]

The interest of Arab tourists, unlike tourists from other parts of the world, largely focused on leisure than cultural. The majority of Arab tourists are keen on shopping, going to the beach and natural sightseeing. Tourism is one of the ways where citizens of the two sides can make direct contact with one another; at the same time, tourism is one of the easiest ways to pick up misperceptions and negative attitude among people of the two cultures.

4.2 Labour migration

The withdrawal of the U.S. military bases during the Vietnam War in 1975, plus slight economic recession in Thailand greatly affected a large number of workers in the military bases who had lost their jobs. Figure 3 below shows that after 1975, unemployment in Thailand tremendously increased; and part of those unemployed were those who had lost jobs from the withdrawal of the military bases. Many of these workers were persuaded by their former American employers to go working in the Middle East. In 1975, the first wave of 984 workers left for Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.[269] (See figure 4, below.) In the following years there has been an increase in the number of workers in the GCC States.

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[267] Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Thailand.
[268] Ibid.
[269] Rananantha, "Thai Labour Migrants to the Middle East and Thai Economic Stability," pp. 16.

Figure 4: Total Unemployment in Thailand 1971-1980
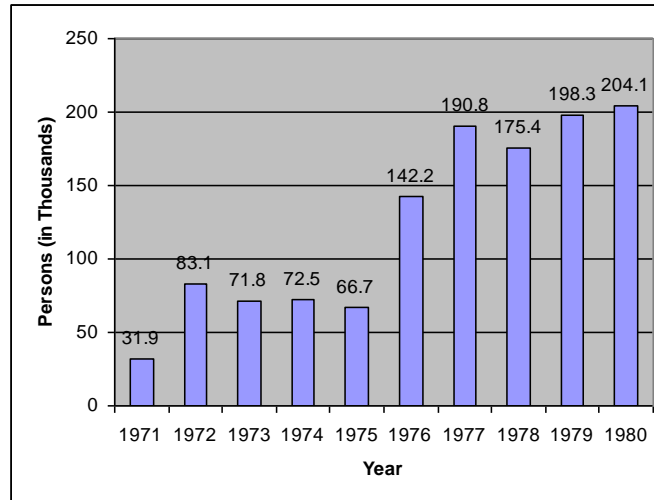
Figure 5: Number of Thai Labor Migrants to the Middle East 1975-1980
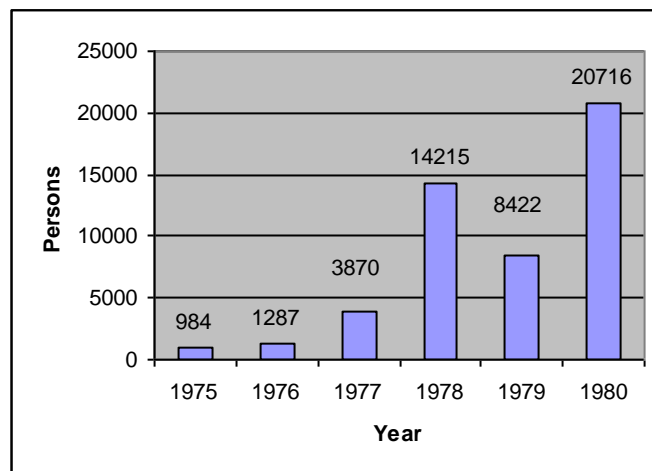
The graphs above show the relationship between unemployment rate in Thailand and the number of labour migration from Thailand to the Middle East. One can see that from 1977 onward, there has been high unemployment rate in Thailand. In the same period, a large number of people have gone to work in the Middle East; particularly, in 1970 and 1980, when unemployment was high in Thailand; the number of labour migrants to the

Middle East has also gone up. Therefore, it can be seen that perhaps there is a relationship between the unemployment situation in Thailand and the number of labour migrants to the Middle East, particularly to the Gulf States.

The need to provide protection and welfare for labour migrants urged the Thai government to develop more intimate diplomatic relations with the GCC. The offices of Labour Affairs had been established in many GCC cities, including Kuwait City and Riyadh. Indeed, it seems that one of the main reasons for the establishment of Royal Thai Embassies in the GCC countries was to take care of the Thai labour migrants in those countries. Therefore, it may be fair to claim that during the pre-1997 era, labour migration is one of the channels that impel the governments of the two sides to develop greater relations.

5.   THE ESTABLISHMENT OF GCC-THAI DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND KEY ISSUES FOR INTERACTIONS

5.1 Bilateral Context: The Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Thailand and GCC States

The overview of Thailand-GCC States relations may be characterised as indifferent at the beginning. This is because the two sides do not have economic, political and social compatibilities. Indeed, the development of trade, labour and even diplomatic relations with the majority of the GCC nations did not begin until the late 1970s to early 1980s (see index for further details). [270] The establishment of Thai embassies and the embassies of each GCC State came some time after the establishment of diplomatic relations.

The decision for Thailand to set up embassy in Saudi Arabia in 1950s came mainly from the need to guarantee the flow of Saudi oil to Thailand and from the need to take care of the welfare of Thai Muslims going to the hajj and of the large amount of labour migrants from Thailand. Aside from people-to-people relations, there was not a high level of interactions between the two sides. Thus there was the prevalent perception that the

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[270] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Thailand.

diplomatic mission in the Middle East state was not significant. When Thailand was facing an economic crisis during late 1990s, there was even a suggestion of closing some embassies in the Middle East.[271] In 1979, a newspaper article, written by a foreign minister-to-be, Surin Pitsuwan, reflects the prevalent perception that the Middle East is peripheral in the government's agenda. He points out that:

> Among the nations of ASEAN, Thailand is the farthest behind in relations to the Middle East. Our diplomatic personnel should be of the best quality. Enough of these old and inefficient bureaucrats being sent to fill our embassies and consulates in the Arab world. It is no longer a "low priority" region…What we need is the best minds the Foreign Ministry can recruit. And naturally, more embassies and consulates should be opened to promote trade and good will in the Middle Eastern capitals.[272]

Part of the reason for little interest in the GCC state during this time is due to Thailand's lack of information about this part of the world. In addition, there were very few personnel in Ministry of Foreign Affairs with expertise in the Middle East. Therefore, during this time, aside from oil purchase, which played significant role in the relations, the two sides did not interact much, nor had there been much communication aside from Islamic connections and labour issues. The relations can be seen as though there was a mutual perception of neutrality between the two sides.

5.2 Political Relations

Despite starting off with low level of political compatibility and interactions, there has been development in political relations between Thailand and the GCC States. Such developments can be reflected through looking at Thailand's foreign policy relevant to the Middle East, the prevalent perception about the region that influences foreign policy-making, as well as some incidents that resulted from foreign policy, all of which will be elaborated in the following section.

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[271] "Move to Reduce Overseas Officials," *The Nation*, 20 December 1997.

[272] Surin Pitsuwan. "Thailand Must Adjust to Change in Realities in the Middle East." *The Nation*, 15 September 1979.

5.2.1 Thai Foreign Policy Prior 1997

The development of Thailand's interest in the Middle East had a quiet start, with some intermitted spark of interest from the ministry of foreign affairs. For example, in early 1980s, under the Foreign Minister Sidhi Swetsila, Thailand started to explore potential development in international relations with other parts of the world. More high-level state visits were paid to different regions.[273] A good example is the Foreign Minister's visit to the Middle East for the first time in Thailand's history, as described by Cheow:

> In January 1985, Sidhi made inroads in the Middle East—the first time a Thai Foreign Minister visited this part of the world. Besides oil deals, the Middle East is also important for Thailand since hundred of Thai workers earn their living at construction sites in these Arab lands; for Bangkok, it is also essential to maintain good relations with these staunch anti-communist kingdoms who condemn Hanoi for occupying Cambodia and who wish to cooperate with ASEAN in economic development. Besides, they are all allies to Washington and de facto members of anti-communist alliance.[274]

Cheow summarised the new direction of Thailand's foreign policy during this period, based on Siddhi's speech. He claims that the policy was based on the three principal dimensions, which are: strengthening the country's external and internal security; strengthening its external and internal economy; and increasing its influence on international politics to strengthen Thailand's national and economic security.[275] Cheow himself describes Thailand's foreign policy during this period:

> Thailand is today embarking on a new foreign policy approach, based on
> initiative, novelty, and omnidirectional overtures; Bangkok seems to want
> to take its future into its own hands. It appears Thailand has left the era of

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[273] Ministry of Foreign Affairs Database.
[274] Eric Teo Chu Cheow, "New Omnidirectional Overtures in Thai Foreign Policy," *Asian Survey* 26, no. 7 (1986).
[275] Ibid.

"solving crises on a day-to-day basis," and is resolved to play a more global and active role in the international forum.[276]

Thus, late 1980s sees Thailand reaching out for wider diplomatic horizon. It also shows that during this period, Thailand was more responsive to the broader view of world politics, and it recognised the greater impact of the international community on its national interests.

Thailand's foreign policy toward the GCC States has always been included within Thailand's foreign policy toward the Middle East. The policy has always been heavily influenced by the United States. Surin Pitsuwan, in his newspaper article in 1979, called for Thailand's modification of foreign policy toward the Middle East; he points out that in order to counter the rise of oil prices, to maintain good will among the Third World countries and to contain the minority problem, Thailand should become less influenced by the United States and should reassess her Middle East policy. He points out that:

> …our policy has always been in line with the Americans, which is to say
> that Thailand has no Middle East policy of its own. The seemingly eternal
> Arab-Israeli conflicts have never been 'a moral question' to Thai leaders,
> now or in the past. We recognized and supported Israel because the
> Americans do. We have never examined the facts and the real issues of
> the conflicts. We have never had to deal with the Arabs directly, because
> all we ever need from them is oil.[277]

For Surin, the first step Thailand should take is to have a clearer position in the Arab-Israel conflict, in which he strongly supports Thailand to establish relationship with the PLO, the move which, to him, would win hearts and minds of the Arab states.

> We should seize this opportunity while we know that the Arabs still need
> us. When we have no trump cards left in our hands, no more political or

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[276] Ibid.
[277] Surin Pitsuwan. "Thailand Must Adjust to Change in Realities in the Middle East."

diplomatic bargaining chips no more leverage to promote or protect our interest, the Arabs will have no incentive to reciprocate our initiative.[278]

Thus before 1997, Thailand's foreign policy toward the Middle East is characterised as being influenced by the US, and it is based on indifferent attitude. Although there were some sparks of interest under different foreign ministers, Middle East as a whole had been neglected and considered as peripheral area by Thai government officials.

5.2.2   *Foreign Policy and View Relevant to the Middle East—Case of Arab-Israeli Conflict*

The Arab-Israeli crisis is one of the agenda that demonstrates a diverse view within ASEAN nations, depending largely on socioeconomic background of each ASEAN state. Malaysia and Indonesia, as Muslim nations, have been obliged to show their sympathy toward Palestine and stand for the Arab cause. In the case of Thailand, at the beginning of the conflict a large number of Thai people had sympathy for Israelis.[279] However, the 1956 war, which led to the closure of the Suez canal, affected Thailand in terms of trade as the price of imported goods increased; and starting from 1972, when the Arab countries raised the oil price, Thailand was affected economically and the country ultimately turned to recognise the PLO as a legitimate representative of the Palestinians at the same time it recognised the existence of Israel. Officially, Thailand appeared to have a neutral stand. The country's opinion on the Arab-Israeli conflict has rather been following the UN position; as seen by the explanation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the issue:

> In the United Nations, Thailand supports the Middle East Peace Process based on UNSC Resolution No. 242 (1967) and No. 338 (1973), urging Israel to withdraw its troops from all occupied territories, as well as the principle of land for peace. With respect to UNSC resolution No. 425 (1978)

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[278] Ibid.

[279] Sukhothai Thammathiraj University, Department of Political Sciences, *Thailand and International Relations* (Bangkok: Sukhothai Thammathiraj University Press, 1986), pp. 183.

calling for Israel's withdrawal from Southern Lebanon, Thailand welcomes

the withdrawal of Israeli troops out of Southern Lebanon in May of 2000.[280]

Thailand's actions supported the United Nations Security Council resolutions over the conflict. At the same time recognising both the PLO and Israel had created doubt about Thailand's stand over the issue. During mid 1970s the representative of the United Arab Republic even inquired Thailand Mission to the United Nation whether Thailand had any intention to cooperate militarily with Israel.[281] Once the representative understood that Thailand wished to have neutral position in the issue, the potential conflict between Thailand and the UAR had been resolved. [282]

The underlying reason that Thailand took the neutral stand in the conflict had a lot to do with the country's foreign policy tradition, which tends to follow major powers or benefit-oriented sides. Thailand was very cautious in policy-making related to Arab-Israeli conflict. Considering that both Israel and Arab states had been good trade partners, and both areas host a great number of Thai workers, it is important that the country appears neutral. In addition, the sentiments of the Muslim minority in Southern Thailand, who supported the Palestinians, put pressure to the government in its stand. Thus projecting a neutral image seems to be the most suitable choice.

5.2.3   *Prevalent Perception about the Middle East*

Thailand had been aware of the existence and sovereignty of the GCC States since these countries became independent in 1970s. Between late 1970s and early 1980s, diplomatic relations had been established with these GCC States. In February 1977, the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affair's magazine's *Saranrom*, which circulated among Thai diplomats and the ministry's official offered an article about the Muslim countries and their groupings, which mentioned the Gulf states and the establishment of the OIC.[283] It was very rare that the Middle East region made their way into Saranrom. During the

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[280] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand. http://www.mfa.go.th/web/61.php. (Last accessed 10 April, 2009).
[281] Ibid.
[282] Ibid.
[283] Somchai Anumanratchathon, "Muslim Country Groupings," *Saranrom*, 10 February 1977, pp. 1-12.

1970s and 80s, Thailand had limited knowledge about the GCC States because of geographical distance and differences in culture, tradition and religion, which results in little research or report done about the regions, both from the government and academic sides.   Therefore, at the state level there were relatively few interactions in wider political and diplomatic issues which might enable the two sides to learn about one another better.

The way Thailand understands its relationship with the Gulf, which resulted in its foreign policy and nature of interactions with these states, can be reflected in a speech given by Chaiwat Satha-Anand, who argued that Thailand was confused over the concept of unified nation-states. It viewed that the unified nation-state equates unified society. [284] With such view, Buddhism and traditional Thai culture is viewed as dominating the Thai society; thus, any other tradition and cultures are being frown upon or excluded. In discussing Thailand's identity, Craig Reynold points out that throughout history, Thailand has kept the Arabs and other foreigners at its arm length.[285] This is reflected in the way that Thailand conducts its foreign policy, in which Thailand prefers to interact with traditional allies who policy makers are familiar with. In the case of Thailand's relations with the GCC States, there had been little accumulated knowledge, of the region, nor had there been much enthusiasm from policy makers; thus, the comfort zone is neutral and indifferent.

5.2.4   Political Interactions between Thailand and the GCC States

In terms of interactions between Thailand and each GCC State, there had been some exchanges in visits between Thailand and the GCC States already; however, there were not many of the visits. The recorded significant visits are noted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Most of the visits were to explore potential trade and investment opportunities as well as political cooperation. The table below (table 5) shows selected high level state visits during the pre-1997 period.

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[284] Surin Pitsuwan, and Chaiwat Satha-anand, *Problem of Muslims in 4 Southern Province of Thailand--the View from Thai Muslims*, (Bangkok: Thammasat University, 1983), pp. 65.
[285] Craig J. Reynolds, ed., *National Identity and Its Defenders* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Book, 2002).

Table 5: Selected High Level State Visits between Thailand and the GCC States

Meeting	Purpose	Date	Location
Thailand's Minister of Foreign Affairs to Bahrain	Strengthened relations between Thailand and Bahrain, sought expansion in trade	1984	Bahrain
Dr.Rasheed Al-Ameeri of Kuwait Ministry of Oil and Thai Governmental representative	Asked for Thailand's support for Kuwait's sovereignty and confirmed Kuwait's interest in investment in Thailand	31 Aug-4 Sep 1984	Bangkok
Representatives from Petroleum Authority of Thailand and staffs from The Omani Ministry of Oil	Negotiated Thailand's oil purchase contract	1986	Oman
Thailand's Minister of Interior to Qatar	Strengthened bilateral relations and visited Thai workers	1987	UAE
Thailand's Minister of the Prime Minister's Office and Kuwait's Prime Minister and Crown Prince	Confirmed good relations after the end of Kuwait War	1991	Kuwait
Dr.Ali Ahmad Al-Gaghli from Kuwait's Minister of oil and Thailand's Minister of Industry	Exchanged ideas on cooperation	1993	Bangkok
Thailand's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and UAE governmental officers and businessmen	Explored possibility to expand trade, investment and tourism cooperation	1993	Dubai, UAE

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Compared to other parts of the world, however, the level of political interactions between Thailand and the GCC States is relatively low. The content of the interaction was mostly concerned with trade, labour and oil contract. As noted, lacking political and cultural compatibilities means that there are few driving forces that impelled the two

sides to politically interact. Before 1997, interaction with Saudi Arabia can only be viewed as significant. There were several channels of interactions with Saudi Arabia, including trade and Islam. During the 1980s the Saudi Development Fund provided financial support for the Lignite Electricity Plan in northern Thailand.[286]

5.3   Economic Relations

Thailand has a long history of economic interactions with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait which can be traced back to 1950s.[287] With other GCC States, economic interactions with Thailand began after their independences. Trade is one of the obvious aspects that point out the ascending nature of relations between Southeast Asian and Middle Eastern nations, and that Thailand's trade with the Middle East has been relatively active and progressive. The figure below (figure 5) shows data on trade between the Middle East and Southeast Asian nations between 1950 and 1980.

Figure 6: Southeast Asian Export to the Middle East 1950-1980 (by each Southeast Asian country)
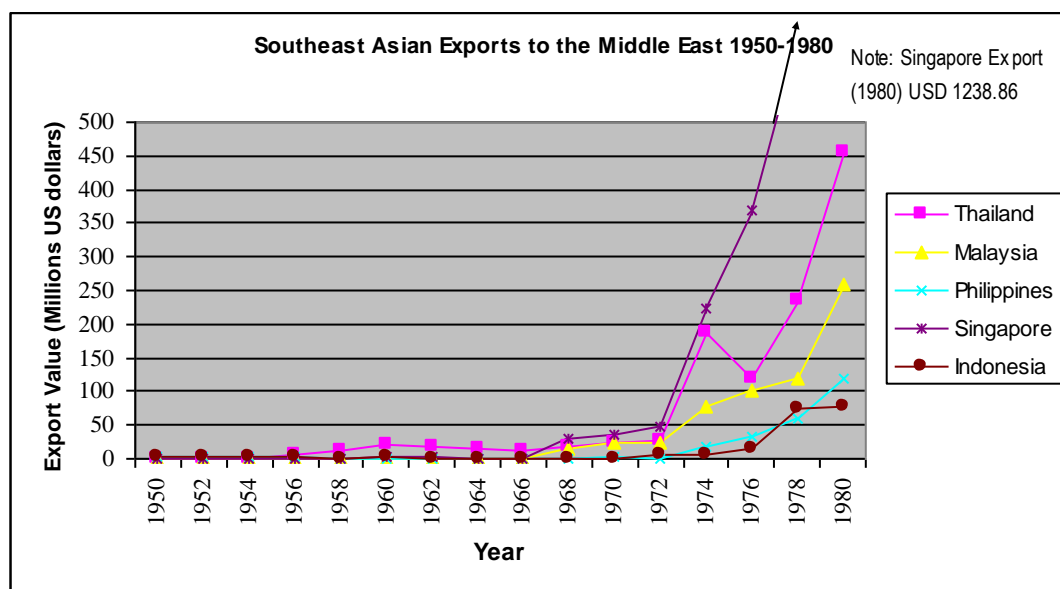
Source: International Monetary Fund (IMF), Direction of Trade Statistics (DOTS), ESDS International, (Mimas) University of Manchester.

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[286] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Royal Thai Government.
[287] Based on information obtain from International Monetary Fund (IMF), Direction of Trade Statistics (DOTS), ESDS International, (MIMAS) University of Manchester.

From the graph, export between Southeast Asian countries to the Middle East started to rise during the late 1960s and dramatically increased after 1973; an increase in exports is obvious in every country shown, but Thailand's export has been relatively higher than other states. Such demonstration supports Reich and Silverburg's claim that Southeast Asian countries became interested in the Middle East around 1973.[288] The rise in export can also be explained through the emergences of newly independent Gulf States, who needed more raw products and exports from Southeast Asia; or perhaps it is the recognition of the significance of the region under the 1973 oil crisis. Thailand, due to her being independent, had begun trading with the Middle East around mid 1950s. Through the observation of 1973 onwards, Singapore ranks the first among Southeast Asian nations in her export values with the Middle East, while Thailand and Malaysia rank second and third. This is because Singapore has for a long time been an important port of Southeast Asia and it is a convenient gateway to for re-exporting to the Middle East though Indian Ocean. Interestingly, Malaysia has been fast catching up with Thailand in terms of exporting despite the fact that it began trading a decade later than Thailand, around 1967.[289] Indonesia and Philippines, despite smaller export values compared to other countries, have started trading with the Middle East before the others. In the case of Indonesia, the early trade must be driven by Muslim merchants and historical contacts with the Middle East; and in the case of Philippines the early trade must come from the country's early independence and contacts between Middle East merchants and local Muslims.

Trade between Thailand and the GCC States had always been concentrated on Thailand's import of crude oil and GCC States' import of industrial products, food and agricultural products.[290] Labour migration is the other crucial factor of economic interactions between the two sides. While the GCC States needed to diversify their economies and to maintain their petroleum production, they demanded for foreign workers. Labour migration to the GCC States had helped lower Thailand's

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[288] Reich, *Asian States's Relations with the Middle East and North Africa: A Bibliography, 1950-1993*.
[289] International Monetary Fund (IMF), Direction of Trade Statistics (DOTS), ESDS International, (MIMAS) University of Manchester.
[290] Ministry of Commerce, Thailand. http://www2.ops3.moc.go.th/menucomen/ (Last accessed 7 June 2009).

unemployment rate, as well as enhancing the country's GDP by their remittances. Labour migration has played an important part of in stimulating in inter-governmental relations.

The economic relations between Thailand and the GCC States during this period can be considered relatively significant, compared to political relations. Economic relations can be linked with both political and people-to-people relation. It is an important factor that stimulates the relationship between Thailand and the GCC States both during that period and in the period to come.

6   SIGNIFICANT TRANSNATIONAL FACTORS THAT AFFECTED THE INTERACTIONS

6.1 Kuwait War

Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, which escalated into Kuwait War in 1991, disrupted Thailand's relations with the GCC States, particularly in terms of trade and labour relations. In terms of labour export from Thailand, in 1990, the number of Thai labour migrants dropped severely from the year earlier.[291] The severe reduction of labour migrants was also due to the ramifications of the Saudi Jewellery theft issue, which caused Saudi Arabia to ban Thai workers to enter the country which will be discussed in the next section.

6.2 Saudi Jewellery Theft

The case of Saudi jewellery theft largely demonstrates how unmonitored people-to-people relations can affect state relations. In the particular case, the relationship between Thailand and Saudi Arabia was undermined when a Thai worker stole jewellery worth about US 142 millions[292] from the palace of Prince Faisal in Saudi Arabia. The theft was followed by the murder of two Saudi diplomats and two businessmen.[293] Thai

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[291] Data from Ministry of Labour, Thailand.
[292] "Saudi Jewellery Affairs" *South China Morning Post* 25 September 1994.
[293] "Saudi Envoy Ends His Tenure: Khoja Departs with Feeling of Failure." *Bangkok Post*, 8 May 1998, news section.

jewellery dealers were investigated and later one was murdered, along with his family. The Thai authorities during that time, after investigation, had claimed to retrieve the jewellery, but once they were returned to Prince Faisal, it was found that some of them were forged. [294]   Saudi Arabia's frustration with the Thai authority's inability to investigate the murders, along with the inability to return the jewellery to Saudi Arabia led the country to call back its ambassador.[295] The relations between the two countries was reduced and until today it was not been fully normalised. Since early 1990s until now, there is only a charge d'affairs in the Saudi Embassy in Thailand. Saudi Arabia has not been granting visas for Thai workers.

Until today, the Saudi jewellery theft has not been resolved, and the relationship between Thailand and Saudi Arabia has not resumed to the same level prior to the incident. The ramification of the incident, however, lasts and affects the nature of Thailand's relations with Saudi Arabia in the further period, which will be discussed further.

The graph below (figure 7) shows that both the Kuwait crisis and the Saudi jewellery theft affected Thailand's relations with the Middle East. The most obvious impact can be seen on the drastic reduction of labour migrants to the Middle East. It is obvious that the drastic change in number of labour migrant from Thailand during this period is largely the result of Saudi Arabia's changing attitude toward Thailand. The political ramifications of the event have lasted for a long time and it will take much effort on the Thai side to improve the relations with Saudi Arabia, as will be discussed in further chapters.

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[294] "Saudi Jewellery Affairs" *South China Morning Post* 25 September 1994.
[295] "Saudi Envoy Ends His Tenure: Khoja Departs with Feeling of Failure." *Bangkok Post*, 8 May 1998, news section.

Figure 7: Thai Labour Migrants to the Middle East

Thai Labour Migrants to the Middle East 1982-2000
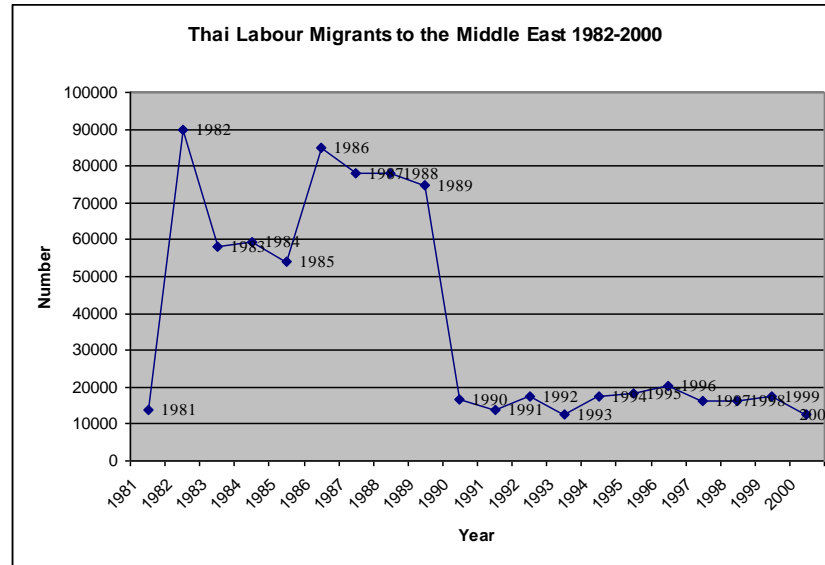
Source: Data from the Ministry of Labour of Thailand

7   CONCLUSION

This chapter provides historical background information on Thailand's relations with the
GCC States prior to 1997. It is clear that the diplomatic relations between Thailand and
most of the GCC States, with the exception of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, did not begin
until late 1970s.   Despite the lack of official state relations, the people-to-people
relations between Thailand and the GCC States were dynamic.   Even before the
independence of the small Gulf States, relations between Thailand and the Gulf region
can be explored through the context of people-to-people relations, particularly through
the Islamic connections.

It can be seen that Islam is a vital part of people-to-people relations between Thailand
and the GCC States, particularly in the case of Saudi Arabia, in which the hajj and
Islamic education have long been the core of the people relations between the two
countries. In an attempt to understand Thailand's relations with the GCC States, it is
therefore significant to explore Islamic and Muslim relations within the Middle East
region. The historical account and characteristics of Muslims in Thailand enable us to
understand the linkage between Thailand and the GCC region, which have existed prior

to official diplomatic relations; in the contemporary period, the understanding of the classification of Muslims in Thailand also allows us to understand the groupings and socialisation of Muslims in Thailand, particularly in terms of Muslim private sector associations in Thailand.

Thailand's relationship with the GCC States just before the Chuan administration began in 1997 can be considered as neutral. The survey of state relations reveals that prior to 1997, Thailand's attitude toward the Middle East and the GCC region leans toward indifference. The Middle East and the GCC States received very little attention from the Thai government, in which there was the lack of staff and expertise in the areas. Thus the result was low level of exchange in visits to the Middle East compared to exchanges in visits in other regions of the world. The Gulf war and the Saudi jewellery theft have brought a negative image of Thailand to the Gulf States; worse was the deteriorated relations between Thailand and Saudi Arabia.

As this section has set the foundation for the theoretical and empirical analysis of Thailand's relations with the GCC States, the next part of the research embarks on examining the state-to-state relations; within it are the next chapters that will demonstrate how the Thai state moved away from the point of indifference to more dynamic interactions with the GCC States.

PART 2

STATE REALM

The previous part provided the setting for the nature of Thai politics at the beginning of 1997; it can be seen that Thailand's relations with the Muslim world were traditionally driven by people to people relations and Islam. From 1997 onwards, however, it will be seen that the Thai state became more in charge of Thai-GCC State relations. As the Chuan administration took over the office that year, there was the change in perception toward the Middle East and other regions that were once perceived as peripheral. Asian economic crisis, which partially causes the urge to expand economic relations, plus increased path-crossing at international stages, had motivated Thai and Arab policy makers to interact more with each other. The period between 1997 and 2001 clearly show the trend in the development in relations between Thailand and the GCC States. Between 2001 and 2006, under Thaksin administration, Thailand's relations with the GCC States were dramatically improving, thanks to the foundation laid from the previous administration, and the expansion of international trade in the new administration. The incidents in the southern Thailand, which intensified during Thaksin administration, however, can be considered as one of the key factors that challenged the strength of relations between Thailand and the Muslim world.

Equipped with theoretical concepts discussed in the previous part, the following chapters embark on exploring the interactions between the Thai and GCC States as well as to explore the context in which the Thai and GCC States interact. This part focuses on how states became more involved in the relations and had taken the relations to another level by means of foreign policy and agreements, increased state visits, and trade promotions. The contexts in which the Thai and GCC States interact also play an important role in the nature of relations between the two sides. Globalisation, economic development, and the improvement in telecommunication have made state interactions more efficient. At the same time, globalisation and economic development have improved the well being and skills of individuals, allowing them to participate more actively in domestic and international politics. The new factors that have emerged to challenge states include

pressure from social groups, identity questions, and states declined ability to keep all channel of state relations in check.

The focus of this part is therefore a state-centric approach, with attention to the mechanism modern states use to develop relations with other states, including diplomacy, national security and interests, trade and international institutions.   The discussions focus on the characteristics of the modern states and their functions, as well as the way these states respond to the challenge that potentially undermined their sovereignty.

CHAPTER 3

THAILAND-GULF STATES RELATIONS 1997-2001

1. INTRODUCTION

Although it may be perceived as "smooth and non-problematic,"[296] the relationship between Thailand and the Gulf states prior 1997 had traditionally been viewed as peripheral by the Thai administrations. At the non-government level, however, the relationship between Thailand and the Gulf states was significant, particularly at people-to-people relations and at the links between Muslims in Thailand and in the GCC States; such relations had drawn the state to be involved, and thus the traditional state-centric relations became more relevant.[297] State-centric relations became gradually significant when Thailand started to import more oil with the GCC States as well as when there was the need to draw cooperation with these states in terms of security issues. Before 1997, therefore, the relations between Thailand and the GCC States can be viewed in two ways. At the non-state relation level, the relationship continued to be significant; though at the state-centric relations level, diplomatic relations and other conventional state relations mechanisms only began to receive attention from the administration, whose view on this region had been limited.

Since the level of interaction with the GCC States prior to 1997 was limited, the department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bangkok that was responsible for the GCC regions was small, inactive and understaffed.[298] High-ranking state visits were rare and mostly concerned oil trade. The prospect to expand trade was small. The number of experts in the field of the Middle East was few. The region of the Middle East was little known to the Thais; and the motivation to expand diplomatic relations through functional state-centric mechanisms, asides from non-state agenda was limited.

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[296] Ministry of Foreign Affairs'explanation on the nature of relationship between Thailand and all GCC states. www.mfa.go.th. (Last accessed 16 May, 2009).
[297] This can be reflected in the fact that the establishment of the Royal Thai embassies in these GCC states was to facilitate people-to-people relations, particularly to serve Thai Muslims going on the hajj and to support Thai labour migrants working in Kuwait, the UAE and Saudi Arabia.
[298] An interview with officials from Ministry of Foreign Affairs during author's internship at the Ministry in 2002.

The Asian Economic crisis in 1997 urged the newly elected administration of Chuan Leekpai to issue a national policy that geared toward resolving the economic problems and the affected areas. Foreign-policy making was also influenced by economic crisis, resulting in the expansion of diplomatic horizon with oversea states. The need to seek support from the international community and to expand trade to bolster the economy had been the key agenda of this administration.

This chapter seeks to analyse the nature of Thailand's relationship with the GCC States during the Chuan administration between 1997 and 2001. Changes from the pre-1997 period will be highlighted. The first section will provide an overview of Thailand's foreign policy under the Chuan administration and then the attention will shift to the key driving forces for Thailand's relations with the GCC States. With key driving forces identified, the next section seeks to explore the overall picture of Thai-GCC States relations, and then move to explore the bilateral relations. As one of the key changes in Thai foreign policy is to be more proactive at the international level, the last chapter explores how Thailand's relationship with selected international organisations facilitated Thailand's position in global politics as well as greater access to the relationship with the GCC States and the Muslim world.

2. THAILAND'S FOREIGN RELATIONS UNDER CHUAN

In November 1997, Chuan Leekpai delivered his policy statement to the Thai Parliament. Among several proposals, the policy statement on foreign policy suggests that the government aims to:

- *Encourage greater relations, and economic cooperation, with important trade partners. Support fair trade competition. Take part in reducing international conflicts resulted from trade and investment, as well as take part in the protection of property rights.*
- *Encourage economic, academic, cultural and tourism cooperation as well as human development with other countries, with particular emphasis on sub-regional cooperation.*

- *Take part in international stage in protecting and promoting democracy and human rights.*

- *Facilitate, protect, and promote rights and benefits of Thai citizens, workers and private businessmen abroad.* [299]

In the foreign policy proposals of the Chuan administration, two agendas are relevant to the design of foreign policy: the need to recover from the economic crisis, and the urge to become increasingly globally active. Chuan Leekpai took the office immediately after the Asian economic crisis broke out; it was crucial for the government to bring back domestic and international confidence back to the economic status of the country, as well as to increase national revenues. International trade is a significant source of income and the government aimed to bolster trade expansion to new and existing markets.

Taking an active role globally has been a strategy to deal with the consequences of the economic crisis, as well as to enhance the political stand of Thailand in global politics. With lingering consequences of the economic crisis, the international supports are important to Thailand. The IMF, in particular, stepped in to help resolve the crisis. By taking part in international stages, Thailand demonstrates to the global community its eagerness to enhanced diplomatic relations and uphold of international principles, as well as its willingness to improve its economic conditions; this facilitates bilateral relations with other countries, particularly with those whose relations had been constrained like Saudi Arabia. It also allows Thailand to present its stand, thus revealing Thailand's gesture of friendliness and supports for the call of some countries, for example the Palestinian issues. This discussion can be summarised through the then foreign minister's recount of Thailand's role in international stage during his office:

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[299] Statement Policy of the Chuan Leekpai Administration, Delivered to the Thai Parliament on 20 November 1997. http://library2.parliament.go.th/giventake/content_sp/sp53.pdf. (Last accessed 6 May, 2009).

> Before my administration, Thailand faced a problem; we lacked the stage
> and stand that we belonged. We did not have any idea of what we should
> hold on to or to promote. When I came to office, I questioned why could
> not we create our own stage to discuss the issue we cared about… we
> became membership and joined most of the organizations like OAS,
> OSCE. We became observers of OIC. With the GCC States, under my
> administration; we invited them to the UNCTAD conference. There were
> more high-level visits during this time. Then we had more friends and
> became more accepted internationally.[300]

Having an active role in the international stage has been new to Thailand; however, it
had been welcome by the international community as much as high-level officers within
the foreign ministry. In an interview with a journalist over the priority of Thailand's
mission in New York, the Thai ambassador to the UN then pointed out that:

> Sometimes they [the government] don't have priorities. But this
> government does. For the first time it is stated in the foreign policy
> statement to parliament. We say something about human rights, we say
> something about environmental policies…we have three important issues
> in the UN which the Thai government adheres to, which has never
> happened before. The work at the UN is basically to make your views,
> positions or stands known on various issues. Either you promote your
> stand or you defend your stand.[301]

Thailand under this administration had therefore demonstrated increased participation at
the international stage; and the government became much clearer about Thailand's
priorities in global politics. The nature of Thailand's status became more active in
international agendas. The next section will examine how the foreign policy statement

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[300] Interview with Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, 14 September 2007,
Bangkok, Thailand.
[301] "Is Thai Diplomacy Abreast with the Times? Interview with Thailand's Permanent Representative to
the United Nations," *Bangkok Post*, 1 December 1999.

delivered by the Chuan administration had been made relevant to Thailand's relationship with the GCC States.

2.2   The Palestinian Issue

Thailand's stand on the Palestinian issue was in favour of peaceful settlement, as it always voted in favour of the UN resolutions on the Middle East peace settlement.[302] In addition, under the Chuan administration, the country took a further step by becoming more visible in the support for the settlement. This can be seen through more frequent statements delivered in support of the process. In 1998, a Thai representative, Asda Jayanama, made a statement during the United Nations Assembly on the situation in the Middle East. Representing Thailand, Asda suggested that, "…all sides must make efforts to remove obstacles and implement all the agreements reached, as soon and as thoroughly as possible. Terrorism and acts of violence in any form or manifestation must cease."[303] Asda also reaffirmed Thailand's support for "the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and for the Middle East peace process," which are based on the UN Security Council resolutions 242, 338, and 425.[304]

It is clear that Surin Pitsuwan, then foreign minister, played an important role in channeling the country's more outgoing role on the Palestinian issue. As noted before, in 1979 Surin wrote an article suggesting that Thailand adjust its attitude on the Palestinian issue, from traditionally following the view of the United States, which leaned toward Israel, to finding its own stand by considering the historical account and the human rights agenda.[305] In addition, Muslim associations in Thailand also pressured the government to take a more active stand in the issue.

The commitment to promote the principle of human rights also encouraged Thailand's support for the peace process in the Middle East. Several of the foreign minister

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[302] "UN General Assembly Defers Action on Proposal to Enhance Status of Palestine Observer at UN," (M2 PRESSWIRE, 1997).
[303] "UN General Assembly Demands End to Israeli Settlement Activity in Occupied Lands," (M2 PRESSWIRE, 1998).
[304] Ibid.
[305] Surin Pitsuwan, "Thailand Must Adjust to Change in Realities in the Middle East," *The Nation*, 15 September 1979.

speeches reflected the importance this administration focused on human rights, which extended to imply Thailand's support for the peace process. Thailand even stepped up to call for international support for human rights; this can be seen through Surin's statement, delivered during the 2000 United Nations General Assembly:

> Thailand therefore calls upon the international community to renew its commitment to promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, in order to ensure that people's interests and welfare are indeed at the centre of our policies and programs. It is with this conviction that Thailand commits itself to playing an active and responsible role within the United Nations Commission on Human Rights….we will continue to give our full support to the efforts of the United Nations to the protection and promotion of basic human rights, freedoms and dignity.[306]

Fitting human rights promotion to the promotion of the peace process in the speech at the international stage was not the only thing the government did, it went further by pointing out that the support for the process was natural for the Thais, for the human rights concept had long been internalised within the Thai society. Therefore, the government's support naturally reflected the opinion of the Thais, as shown in this speech:

> This [human right] is a subject that has always been close to the hearts of the Thai people and the present Thai Government. While human rights may be viewed by some as a luxury of rich countries or as a "Western" value alien to Eastern Societies, I would say that human rights have been instilled in the Thai tradition and Thai society for a very long time. Thai people have always been known for their love of liberty and freedom as well as their respect for other people's rights.[307]

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[306] Statement by Dr. Surin Pitsuwan Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand at the Fifty-Fifth Session of the United Nations General Assembly New York, 19 September 2000. www.mfa.go.th. (Last accessed 10 September 2008).
[307] Statement by Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, "The Role of Human Rights in Thailand's Foreign Policy" delivered at the Seminar on "Promotion and Protection of Human Rights by Human Rights Commissions"

Therefore, the promotion of human rights, the support for the peace process had been put together and delivered through international audience, pointing out how Thailand and its people had accommodated such ideas.

To evaluate the success of Thailand's support for the peace process is to see how it helped facilitate Thailand's relations with the GCC States. It can be seen that, as noted, such move reveals Thailand's gesture of goodwill for peace and well being of people in the Middle East who were affected by the issue. The Middle East peace process had been the significant agenda in almost all high-level state visits to the GCC States, where both Thai and GCC leaders found a common ground, thus led to cordial relations. For example, during the foreign minister's tour of GCC regions in June and November 1998, the Palestinian agendas had been the topic for conversation with leaders from Qatar, UAE and Kuwait.[308] The promotion of the peace process also helped the government domestically by creating positive attitude with the domestic Muslim groups who had been pressing the government on the topic.

2.3 Look West Policy

The "Look West policy" was launched in 1997. The two main objectives of the policy are "to strengthen the existing bilateral relations with South Asia, the Middle East and Africa," and to "seek potential markets and investment opportunities in these areas of the world."[309] The policy is aimed for Thailand to "cope effectively and efficiently with the rapid changes in the international political and economic environment in accordance with the reality of the post-Cold War"[310] and to reflect upon Thailand's recognition of "promising economic potential of other regions beyond the region of Southeast Asia."[311]

Misunderstandings about the Look West policy is that it was launched during the Chuan administration, thus giving the administration faulty credit as the mover to expand

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Organised by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, on 2 October 1998. www.mfa.go.th. (Last accessed 10 September 2008).

[308] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Official Visit of the Emir of Qatar," *Buakaew*, April-June 1999.

[309] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand. www.mfa.go.th. (Last accessed 13 June 2009).

[310] Quoted from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, www.mfa.go.th. Last accessed (Last accessed 13 June 2009).
[311] Ibid.

diplomatic horizon through this policy.   Indeed, the policy had been planned and launched since the previous administration, but in the same year the Chuan administration came to the office in 2001. The underlying aim was to expand markets for Thai goods; therefore, the expansion of foreign relations is a necessary gateway. The rationale for the Chuan administration to taking on the policy is because the policy corresponds to the government's aim in becoming active in the international community, as claimed by Surin in the interview that:

> We can say that Look West policy is our effort to bring back our confidence as a nation. The more friends and support we get at the international stage, the more confidence we will have. And friendship with the Middle East states can do that. Also part of the Look West policy is to create friends, friendly blocks in the global stage. That will help enhance our confidence in the global stage.[312]

Through the interview, Surin, however was not specific of the region Look West policy focuses. Despite the Ministry suggests that the policy covered the Middle East, South Asia and Africa, the survey of international interactions between 1997 to 2001 reveals that there was comparatively low dynamism between Thailand and the GCC States within the Look West policy framework. Much of the attention within the Look West policy had been given to South Asia, particularly India. This is reflected through several projects Thailand had initiated with India, including the BISEC project, which linked Thailand with countries in South Asia, including India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Within the Foreign Ministry itself, staff are more familiar with the Look West Policy as oriented toward India more than the Gulf States[313]. On the other hand, there was neither a significant initiated plan nor an investment with the GCC States, despite an economic boom within that region.

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[312] "Expansion of Diplomatic Horizon with OIC: An Interview with Thailand Foreign Minister Dr. Surin Pitsuwan," *Daily News*, 12 November 1998.
[313] Conversation with an anonymous staff at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 24 October 2008.

In assessing the impact of the Look West policy on the Gulf States during Surin's foreign administration, many academics are sceptical about the practicality of the policy. A scholar commented that, "The Look West Policy is really a show case. It is not practical at all. It looks nice, but it is difficult to implement."[314] Other academic points out that the Look West policy did not get implemented with the Middle East because of the lack of knowledge about the Middle East and because "we [the Thais] found it is easier to interact with India, but we do not know much about Arab culture."[315] Thus limited knowledge is one of the factors that impeded and discouraged the motivation to initiate any project in the GCC States.

On the surface, the Look West policy may appear as the government's tool to expand diplomatic relations with the GCC States and the Middle East; however, the newspaper sources and the discussion with anonymous informants reveal that under the Chuan administration, the role of the Look West policy toward the GCC States, or even the Middle East as a whole, was comparatively marginal, when compared with its role in the South Asia region. Two prevalent criticisms can be given to this policy during this time period: first, that the policy lacks practicality in the Middle East, this is because there are no sufficient staff or knowledge to implement the policy in the region, second that the policy had given much more weight to South Asia.

Therefore, in looking at the relevance of the Look West policy to Thailand's relationship with the GCC States under this administration, it is fair to say that under the Chuan administration, the policy has very little impact to the GCC States. The bilateral relations that occurred were not based on the policy, but rather on other factors, which have long been the important factors for the relations. These factors will be discussed in the next section.

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[314] Interview with Professor Jaran Maluleem, Thammasat University.
[315] Interview with an anonymous scholar from Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand, 14 August 2008.

3.   KEY DRIVING FORCES—AN ASSESSMENT

3.1   Oil Consumption

Thailand's consumptions of crude oil had increased constantly. In 1991, crude oil was the 7th most important imported good in Thailand; however, in 1997 it moved to the 3rd place, and in 2000 it was the 2nd most important imported goods.[316] This demonstrates that the consumption has constantly increased. Figure 7 below shows that starting from late 1990s; the dispersion between Thailand's oil consumption, and production capacity started getting wider. Thus the demand for imported crude oil, which has always been high, became even higher.

Figure 8: Thailand's Crude Oil Production, Consumption and Net Import (1980-2005)
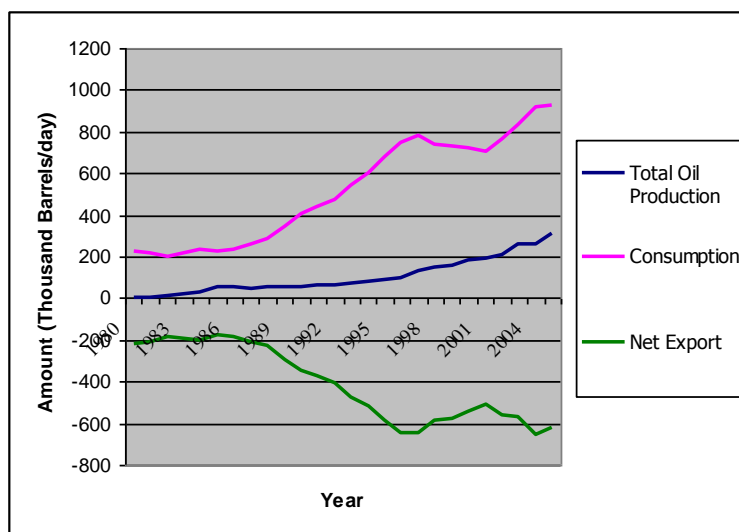
Source:.Author-created diagram based on information from the Energy Information Administration (EIA) http://tonto.eia.doe.gov/cfapps/ipdbproject/IEDIndex3.cfm?tid=5&pid=54&aid=2 (Last accessed 7 July 2009).

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[316] Ministry of Commerce of Thailand, www.moc.go.th.(Last accessed 11 June, 2009).

Figure 9: Thailand's Top Ten Sources of Imported Crude Oil 1991 (in percentage)
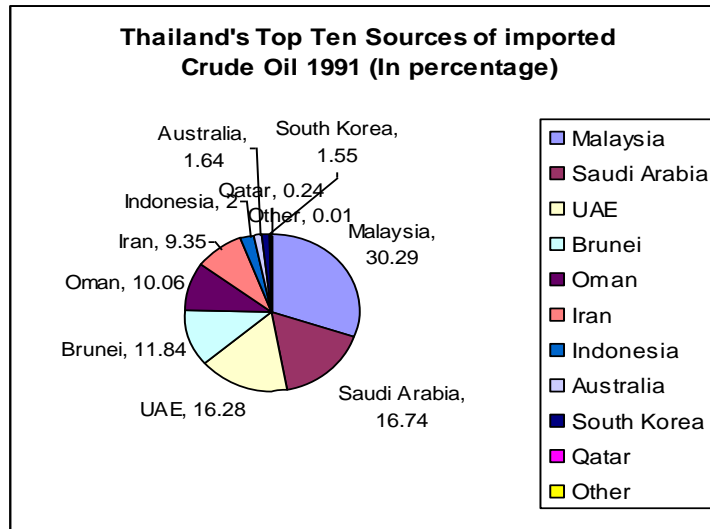
Source: Author-created diagram based on data from the Ministry of Commerce, Royal Thai Government.

http://www.moc.go.th/. (Last accessed 10 June, 2009).

Figure 10: Thailand's Top Ten Sources of Imported Crude Oil 1997 (in percentages)
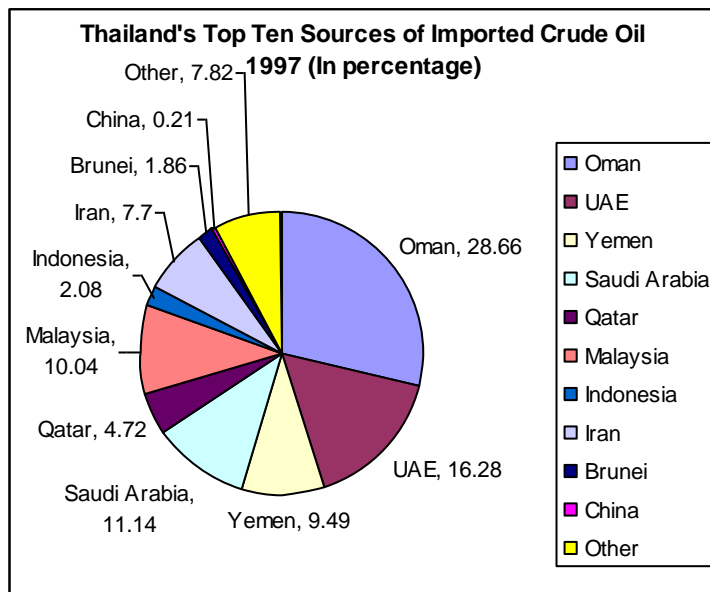
Source: Author-created diagram based on data from the Ministry of Commerce, Royal Thai Government.

http://www.moc.go.th/. (Last accessed 10 June, 2009).

Figure 11: Thailand's Top Ten Sources of Imported Crude Oil 2000
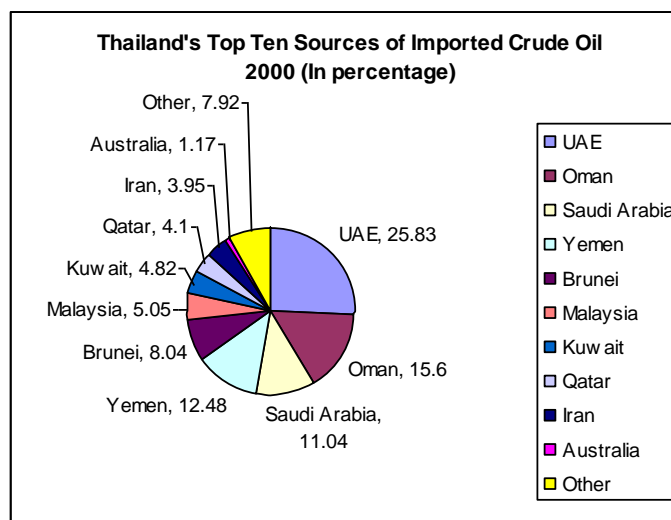
Thailand's Top Ten Sources of Imported Crude Oil 2000 (In percentage)

Other, 7.92
Australia, 1.17
Iran, 3.95
Qatar, 4.1
Kuwait, 4.82
Malaysia, 5.05
Brunei, 8.04
Yemen, 12.48
Saudi Arabia, 11.04
Oman, 15.6
UAE, 25.83

- UAE
- Oman
- Saudi Arabia
- Yemen
- Brunei
- Malaysia
- Kuwait
- Qatar
- Iran
- Australia
- Other

Source: Author-created diagram based on data from the Ministry of Commerce, Royal Thai Government.
http://www.moc.go.th/. (Last accessed 10 June, 2009).

From 1997 to 2000, there was the inclination that Thailand depends more on crude oil from the GCC States. This can be seen through the GCC States being the biggest suppliers, and that five out of the six GCC States are among top ten exporters. Between 1991 and 2000, the UAE and Saudi Arabia have maintained their ranks as key suppliers over time. In 1997, Oman was the biggest oil supplier to Thailand and in 2000, the UAE became the biggest oil supplier to Thailand, with Oman and Saudi Arabia ranked 2nd and 3rd. Other two GCC States, Qatar and Kuwait, were within top ten suppliers as well.

As noted, the three above figures suggest that there has been a striking change in sources of Thailand's imported crude oil. The striking change in the value of crude oil Thailand imported from the GCC States, a big jump from 1991 to 1997 and to 2000, suggests the level of development between Thailand and the GCC States within these years; such increase in the value of oil import implies positive development in international relations between Thailand and the GCC States. The oil deals, political relations, and international interactions between Thailand and the GCC States are therefore interlinked with one another; and the development of one supports the growth of the others.

As the key providers for crude oil, the GCC States are strategically vital to Thailand. Not only was there a need to guarantee the flow of oil from the region to Thailand, there was also the need to prevent the oil price from these countries to step up, which will affect the Thai economy. The experience of the 1970s oil crisis had always been remembered; and for the government to maintain cordial relations with these key oil producers, who are members of the OPEC, it is expected that the GCC States can agree to negotiate for an acceptable oil price.

3.2   Trade with the GCC States

Thailand's trade with the GCC States is closely related to the country's dependence on oil from the region. With the country imported more oil from the GCC States, Thailand's trade deficit with these states constantly increased.

Table 7 below shows information on import, export and trade balance between Thailand and the GCC States on selected years. The trade deficit between Thailand and the GCC States has been a regular affair; and there is no doubt that the major part of Thailand's import from the GCC States is oil. Comparing between the mid-1990s and late-1990s, it appears that there was a big increase in the trade deficit with some GCC countries. This is apparently the case of the UAE, whose balance went from $336 million positive in 1995 to $85 million negative in 1996, and ultimately negative $1187 million in 2000; almost 13 times in four years. The same can be said about Oman, whose deficit in 1995 was $660 million, 1024 in 1999 and ultimately $1198 million in 2001. The table also shows that there has been some fluctuation between Thailand's imports and exports with GCC countries every year. This can easily be seen in some small GCC States, for example Kuwait and Bahrain, where the amount of import and export changes in different year.

Table 6: Trade between Thailand and Individual GCC State 1995-2001 ($ million)

1995					1999				
Country	Import	Export	Trade Balance	Total Trade	Country	Import	Export	Trade Balance	Total Trade
Saudi	572	570	-2	1142	Saudi	659	333	-326	992
Bahrain	28	32	4	60	Bahrain	52	30	-22	82
Kuwait	33	112	79	145	Kuwait	238	70	-168	308
Qatar	90	61	-29	151	Qatar	306	17	-289	323
UAE	678	1013	335	1691	UAE	864	568	-296	1432
Oman	682	21	-661	703	Oman	1051	27	-1024	1078
Total	2083	1809	-274	3892	Total	3170	1045	-2125	4215

1996					2000				
Country	Import	Export	Trade Balance	Total Trade	Country	Import	Export	Trade Balance	Total Trade
Saudi	619	461	-158	1080	Saudi	1165	300	-865	1465
Bahrain	26	21	-5	47	Bahrain	57	29	-28	86
Kuwait	171	85	-86	256	Kuwait	378	66	-312	444
Qatar	221	15	-206	236	Qatar	285	21	-264	306
UAE	778	693	-85	1471	UAE	1776	589	-1187	2365
Oman	1051	19	-1032	1070	Oman	963	32	-931	995
Total	2866	1294	-1572	4160	Total	4624	1037	-3587	5661

1997					2001				
Country	Import	Export	Trade Balance	Total Trade	Country	Import	Export	Trade Balance	Total Trade
Saudi	861	400	-461	1261	Saudi	1337	350	-987	1687
Bahrain	31	26	-5	57	Bahrain	57	33	-24	90
Kuwait	93	76	-17	169	Kuwait	336	65	-271	401
Qatar	249	13	-236	262	Qatar	285	21	-264	306
UAE	851	578	-273	1429	UAE	1496	639	-857	2135
Oman	1345	25	-1320	1370	Oman	1239	40	-1199	1279
Total	3430	1118	-2312	4548	Total	4750	1148	-3602	5898

1998

Country	Import	Export	Trade Balance	Total Trade
Saudi	534	352	-182	886
Bahrain	32	27	-5	59
Kuwait	24	66	42	90
Qatar	218	17	-201	235
UAE	713	550	-163	1263
Oman	1093	28	-1065	1121
Total	2614	1040	-1574	3654

Source: Ministry of Commerce. www.moc.go.th. (Last accessed 10 June 2009).

What we can analyse from looking at the amount of the trade deficit, most obviously in the case of Oman and the UAE is that the trade deficit depends largely on the value and amount of oil imported; thus trade deficit with a country closely corresponds with oil imports from that country. For example, in 2000 Thailand's deficit with the UAE was the highest in its trade with the GCC States, $1187 million; by taking a look at the import of oil in the previous section, UAE was the biggest crude oil provider for Thailand in that year. The same case applies to Oman, whose deficit with Thailand was the biggest in 1997 at $1320 million. Looking back at the previous section, Oman was the biggest provider of crude oil for Thailand in that year.

The table and figure on the following page (table 7 and figure 11) demonstrate that export of key goods including automobile parts, air condition and clothes between Thailand and the GCC States had been in the same range and pattern throughout the period of 1997-2001. [317] On contrary, import, as noted, had constantly increased. Figure 11 answers the question over the proportion of import/export value; it shows that import is a dominant amount within the total trade value. From the figure, it is clear that the import value defines the total value curve. There is no doubt that the major part of import is crude oil.

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[317] Ministry of Commerce, Thailand. www.moc.go.th. (Last accessed 10 June, 2009).

Table 7: Thailand's Trade with the Aggregate GCC States 1995-2001 ($ million)

Year	Export	Import	Total Value	Deficit
1995	1809	2083	3892	-274
1996	1924	2866	4160	-942
1997	1118	3430	4548	-2312
1998	1040	2614	3654	-1574
1999	1045	3170	4215	-2125
2000	1037	4624	5661	-3587
2001	1148	4716	5864	-3568

Source: Ministry of Commerce, www.moc.go.th. (Last accessed 10 June, 2009).

Figure 12: Thailand's Trade with the GCC States 1995-2001
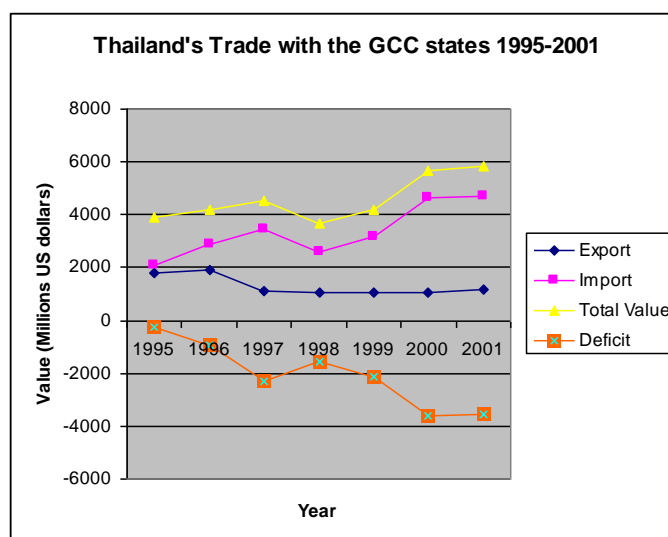
Source: Ministry of Commerce, www.moc.go.th. (Last accessed 10 June, 2009).

To narrow down the deficit, it is important for the Thai government to encourage trade, specifically export, to the GCC States. The fact that export values have not changed much within the four years of the Chuan administration demonstrates that the Look West policy which aimed to promote trade and investment in South Asia, the Middle East and Africa, was not significantly efficient in the GCC regions within this period. One of the problems, pointed out by officers in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is that people in the Middle East did not know much about Thailand and its products, and that the

governments failed to sufficiently promote knowledge about each other. For those who know more, there was a lack of confidence in the quality of halal food in Thailand. The government tried, however, to promote halal food from Thailand and to improve its standard.

In 1999, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs coordinated with other governmental and private agencies, namely Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Industry, the Board of Investment and the Shaikh al-Islam to explore the potential of Halal food business in Thailand to be exported to the Muslim world.[318] As a result of the coordination, a Thai delegation had been sent to the UAE and Qatar in May 1999 to explore the opportunities to export halal food, and to the halal food exhibition in Dubai. In addition, in the same year, Thailand was holding the International Muslim Food Exhibition in Bangkok, which was aimed to promote halal food from Thailand. To support for the expansion of halal food production in Thailand, the government considered establishing a halal food production zone in southern Thailand.[319] In addition to encourage trade, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also produced information materials about the role of Thai Muslims in economic development in Thailand to be distributed.[320] For the Thai halal food to be accepted in the Muslim world, the Thai government, perceived as a Buddhist state, needed to coordinate closely with the private sector, particularly the Muslim agencies, including the Muslim entrepreneur groups, the Shaikh al-Islam and the Central Islamic Committee of Thailand (CICOT) to obtain support and bolster confidence on the compliance of halal standard of Thai products going to be sold in the Muslim world.

3.3 Security

There are two key factors that the GCC States are relevant to Thailand's internal security. The first factor is the need to prevent further supports for the Malay-Muslim separatist activities in Thailand, which had been suspected to receive support from some Middle

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[318] Thailand Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Promotion of Halal Food Industry in Thailand," *Buakaew*, April-June 1999.
[319] Ibid.
[320] Ibid.

Eastern countries, including some GCC States. The second factor is the need for the support from the GCC States in mitigating the image and projecting the better understanding of Thailand's treatment of Muslim minority and counter separatist movements.

According to Von der Mehden, the Malay-Muslim separatist movements in Southern Thailand received financial support and training from some Middle Eastern countries, with Libya being viewed as most directly involved.[321] In addition, some organisations and individuals in Saudi Arabia had been reportedly providing financial support and shelters for the members of the movements.[322] Supports from different Muslim organisations, including from Saudi Arabia's Department of Scholarly Research and Religious Ruling, the Islamic Development Bank, and the Islamic Call of Kuwait have been provided for Muslims in southern Thailand.[323] While all these organisations have been transparent about the destination of the support, there are other sources of funding which had gone to militants. Therefore, there is a need for Thailand to cooperate with countries where these funding come from to help monitor the movement of support to the separatist movements. Most of the GCC embassies in Thailand have particularly clear and articulate about their transparency and in monitoring the movement of funding to support separatist movements in the South. In the interviews with the Saudi charge d'affaires, conducted by Maluleem et al. in 1991, the charge d'affaires pointed out that Saudi Arabia regularly provides financial support for Muslims in Thailand and that most of the provisions have been done transparently, he said:

> We [Saudi Arabian government] didn't work in the dark. We have our
> way, our style. We don't enter the house by the back door, we enter
> through the front door…And if we want to support Muslim organizations
> or to build hospitals or schools or to support other countries to build
> bridges or this kind of facilities, we go through it officially. We don't

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[321] Von der Mehden, Two Worlds of Islam: Interaction between Southeast Asia and the Middle East, pp. 55.
[322] Ibid.
[323] Ibid.

donate money to person, and we don't use them. If we give or grant the scholarship, we give it to the people through their government. And when they go to Saudi Arabia, they go to the university or schools and they come back to their country. We don't teach them some other kinds or some behaviours and we do not wash their brains or anything.[324]

The interview reflects several points: one is the need to confirm that Saudi Arabia has been a transparent supporter of Muslims in Thailand, and that the transactions of support had been recognised by the government. The other point is the need to counter prevalent misperceptions in Thailand that Saudi Arabia has been secretly sponsoring separatism and brainwashing Muslim students from Thailand who had gone to study in Saudi Arabia.

In the author's interview with the UAE ambassador in 2007, in response to the question about support to Muslims in Thailand, the ambassador emphasised the transparency of the Emirate's support to Thai Muslims that, "We give aid and support to Muslims in the south, though that goes through the government and sometimes the Crescent society, which is the Islamic charity. It is clear and transparent."[325] In addition, in an interview with a political analyst at the Qatar embassy on Qatar's support to Muslims in Thailand, the officer pointed out that:

Qatar tries to initiate good relations with Thailand in the direction of non-political dimension. One areas of Qatar's support is through private organizations, foundations for Muslims. Though sometimes the contacts have been through these organizations, the Qatari government is trying to make it as transparent and through the government as much as it can.[326]

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[324] Interview with Mr. Muhammad Saeed Khoja, Charge d'affaires, Saudi Arabia Embassy of Thailand, 30 May 1991. Conducted by Jaran Maluleem *et al.* as indexed in Maluleem, *The Pattern of Relationship between Thailand and the Muslim World.*
[325] Interview with the UAE Ambassador to Thailand, Bangkok, 27 August 2007.
[326] Interview with the political analyst at the Qatar Embassy in Thailand, 13 August 2007.

When consider together, the interview conducted by other in 1991 and the author-conduct interviews confirm similar fact that the GCC governments have continued to be cautious about transparency question over their financial support to Thai Muslims.

While the GCC governments work hard to demonstrate their transparency in the support for the Muslims in the south, these government, as well as the Thai government are not entirely able to monitor and capture all transactions. While the GCC governments are clear about directions of their support to Thai Muslims, there is no guarantee that they are aware of most supports from the private sectors and individuals that bypass the governments and go straight to their recipients in Thailand. The cooperation between the Thai and GCC governments in terms of intelligence and investigation are therefore necessary.

Other significance of the GCC States to Thailand's security agenda is their lobby for Thailand in the community of Muslim states, particularly in the case that Thailand needs to clarify itself regarding its treatment toward Muslim minority, as well as its effort to counter the separatist movement. Prior to becoming the observer of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), Thailand lacked the opportunity to stand for itself under the issue of Muslim minority; much of the responses had to go through Muslim ASEAN countries, namely Malaysia and Indonesia. There had been several attempts by the movements of southern separatists to represent Thailand in the OIC meeting.[327] The example is that in 1988, the Pattani United Liberation Organisation (PULO), whose call had been for the secession of the three southern Muslim-prominent provinces of Thailand, had asked to attend the OIC Foreign Minister Meeting in Amman, Jordan.[328] The attempt had been objected by some OIC member countries, including Malaysia, Indonesia, Egypt, and Pakistan.[329] Support from the GCC States will therefore help prevent any non-state actor attempting to represent Thailand in the Muslim world. The GCC States are viewed by Thailand as moderate Muslim states; in addition, they have been recognised as "friendly Muslim states" by the Thai government.[330] The GCC

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[327] Maluleem, *OIC and the Muslim World*, pp.113.
[328] Ibid
[329] Ibid.
[330] Interview with an officer from the OIC desk, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 8 July 2008.

States are crucial to Thailand in terms of providing support and back-up for the government in the international stage of Muslim communities, and preventing other non-state actors, particularly separatist movement to claim their rights to represent Thailand in the OIC stage.

There are linkages in all the three key factors that motivated the relations between Thailand and the GCC States. The relationship between the need of Gulf oil and trade is particularly obvious. At the same time the significance of security issues may not be as obvious, but is proved to be vital to Thailand. The next section will further discuss how these factors define the nature of Thailand's relation with the GCC States under the Chuan administration.

4. NATURE OF RELATIONS WITH THE GCC STATES

As noted, the GCC States are vital to Thailand in many ways. To evaluate the recognition of such significance, it is best to examine Thailand's policy toward the GCC region between 1997 and 2001. An interview with a Thai officer in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs elucidates the nature of Thailand's relationship with the GCC States:[331]

1. Thailand had no specific foreign policy made for the GCC States. The foreign policy used toward the GCC States is the same policy used for the rest of the Middle East, but some details are being tailored to suit with specific bilateral relations, depending on the characteristics of the relations with target countries.

2. When the ministry initiates a program or cooperation project, the targeted countries do not rest only within the GCC States; the ministry broadens the policy to cover others that are relevant to Thailand, including countries in North Africa, or the rest of the Middle East.

3. Most of the relationship between Thailand and the GCC States are done through bilateral relations.

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[331] Interview with an officer from the Middle East, South Asia and Africa Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand, Bangkok, Thailand, 22 July 2007.

4. The dominant feature of Thailand's bilateral relations with individual GCC States is, according to this officer, that the policy is tailored based on a win-win situation for both parties.

The other Persian Gulf desk officer pointed out that the relationship between Thailand and the GCC States under the Chuan administration had been strengthened; this is because of strengthened personal contacts between high ranking Thai officers and their counterparts in GCC States.[332] In addition, Surin Pitsuwan, then the foreign minister, is a Muslim and an expert in Middle Eastern politics. Surin has brought to the Thai-GCC States relations his expertise, modern Islamic ideology, and support on human rights. In 1998, Surin embarked on a tour of all GCC States, with the exception of Saudi Arabia, to strengthen the existing relations.[333] When asked why the relationship between the two regions had not been active earlier, Surin commented that:

> In my opinion, the reason that we did not actively engage with this region [the Gulf] earlier is, first, we lacked of knowledge during that time. Second reason might be the specialty of each key figure within the government. For me, Middle East and the Muslim world is my specialty. I have strong background within the region. I have connection. It is easier for me to initiate the relationship, and I feel comfortable. Another thing is that I am a Muslim, so it is easier for me to make contacts and understand their culture. So you can see that personality, a person's specialty helps a lot.[334]

Under Surin, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had undergone changes, particularly at the Department of Middle East, South Asia and Africa. There had been an increase in the recruitment of officers with knowledge of Arabic and the Middle East; more staffs have been selected to suit the tasks relevant to this region. An officer recounts that, "[in] early 1997-1998, Dr. Surin had brought to the department a lot of people with good

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[332] Interview with the Gulf Desk officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bangkok, Thailand, 22 July 2007.
[333] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of Protocol, high-level state visit record.
[334] Interview with Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, Bangkok, Thailand, August 2007.

knowledge and language skills in the Middle East."[335] The foreign minister himself embarked on the tour of the Middle East as early as 1998, visiting almost all the countries in the GCC, as will be discussed more in the further section.

The diplomatic relations between Thailand and the GCC States under the Chuan administration generally consisted of two aspects: economic and political. In terms of economic, Thailand sought the opportunity to expand markets for Thai goods in the Gulf; the Thai delegations to the Gulf States under this administration always consisted of entrepreneurs, which received governmental supported in pairing with trade counterparts. Politically, Thailand attempted to restore the relationship with Saudi Arabia and to take advantage of good relations with other small Gulf States to help mitigate the relations, though nothing had been improved much.

Reviewing the relationship between Thailand and the GCC States under the Chuan administration, while Thai officials have been optimistic about the nature of relations during the era, scholars have been more sceptical about the level of improvement; several criticisms have been proposed for the analysis of the relationship between two sides. One scholars point out that while the relationship between Thailand and the GCC States looked promising, the relationship with the Muslim world had not developed as much as it could have been. One scholar points out that in order to consider the relations between Thailand and the GCC States, it is important to consider Thailand's accommodation for Islamic Affairs and relations with the Muslim world. The scholar criticised that the government had not done enough to accommodate Muslim affairs. The example is that it rejected the proposal for the establishment of the Islamic Bank in Thailand.[336] This, according to the scholar, resulted from the lack of knowledge about Islam, particularly Islamic finance and banking, in which there were very few experts in Thailand. Several Thai Muslims therefore banked with Malaysia's Islamic banks. At the same time, not having Islamic bank in Thailand was one of the factors that drew wealthy GCC individuals to invest in Malaysia instead.[337]

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[335] Discussion with an anonymous MFA officer, 3 July 2007.
[336] Interview with Professor Jaran Maluleem, Thammasat University, Bangkok. Thailand, 18 August 2008.
[337] Ibid.

The other researcher also noted the small attention the government gives to the GCC regions compared to other region of the world. She noted the lack of staff with sufficient knowledge about the Middle East while pointing out the traditional view of the Middle East and Islam in the Ministry that, "because the staffs do not understand about the Middle East, and people in general are not interested, then nobody is bothered. Compared to attention given to Europe where everybody is excited about."[338]

The overall picture of Thailand's relations with the aggregated GCC States shows that the government had been trying to improve the existing relations with these states in many ways. The government had shown to recognise that oil, trade and security are vital driving forces for Thailand's relations with the GCC States. Efforts had been made through foreign policies relevant to the GCC States; however, in some aspects the outcomes had not resulted in a satisfactory level, particularly in terms of trade, in which export had not improved much. In addition, traditional perception that the Middle East is peripheral still exists, as well as the underestimation of the measures to accommodate Islamic affairs. By looking at the overall picture of Thailand's relations with the aggregate GCC States only provide a quick, broad glance; the next section explores Thailand's relationship with individual GCC States.

5. BILATERAL STATE RELATIONS
5.1 Thailand-Saudi Arabia

Thailand's political relations with the Saudi Arabia had been problematic since the jewellery theft and the murder of Saudi diplomats and businessmen in 1991. The strained relations made it difficult for Thailand to conduct and initiate all aspect of relations, when Saudi Arabia maintained requesting that Thailand investigate the murder. The investigation had been conducted, though the result was not satisfactory to Saudi Arabia; the Thai government then pointed out the difficulty to arrest anybody, as the case had been closed for almost a decade.[339]

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[338] Interview with a researcher from Chulalongkorn University.
[339] "Saudi Envoy Ends His Tenure: Khoja Departs with Feeling of Failure," *Bangkok Post*, 8 May 1998.

Diplomatic relations had been severely affected. Saudi Arabia refused to negotiate with Thailand unless the investigation reached satisfactory level. The high-level state visits from Thailand to Saudi Arabia were very rare. At the popular level, the Thai citizens, particularly workers, were not granted visa to work in Saudi Arabia. At the same time, the existing Thai workers in Saudi Arabia did not get their visa renewal.[340]

There was long a fear that Saudi Arabia, as the influential player in the GCC, would draw other GCC countries against Thailand. The relationship with other GCC States demonstrates, however, that the relationship between the other GCC countries and Thailand had been affected very little; this can be seen through the normal trade level, as well as the exchanges of high-level state visits between Thailand and other GCC States.

In order to mitigate the difficult relations with Saudi Arabia and to prevent the situation from deteriorating, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs implemented the Dual Track policy with Saudi Arabia. The key content of the policy is to "investigate the murder and the theft cases, along with encourage other constructive aspects of the relations, including trade, culture, religion, sports."[341] In addition, Thailand also used the institutional framework to improve the relations, for example, through ASEAN and GCC frameworks.[342] There were efforts at popular level, though inviting Saudi scholars to conferences in Thailand, as well as the use of personal connection.[343]

The outcomes of such effort resulted that since 1997, Saudi Arabia resumed to give visa to Thai businessmen that would go to trade exhibition in Riyadh and Jeddah; in 2000, existing Thai workers can get the exit re-entry visa just like workers in other countries.[344]

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[340] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bilateral Relations with Saudi Arabia. www.mfa.go.th. (Last accessed 20 May, 2009).
[341] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bilateral Relations with Saudi Arabia. www.mfa.go.th. (Last accessed 10 June, 2009).
[342] Ibid.
[343] Ibid.
[344] Ibid.

In improving the diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia, the non-political agendas had significant contribution. The Thai state had to incorporate these agendas into improving the relations. The significance of individuals and personal contacts also shows the role of culture in Asian and Arab foreign affairs; that it is significant as much as traditional diplomatic mechanisms.

5.1.1   Trade Relations

Thailand's trade relations with Saudi Arabia had been badly affected. The graph below (figure 13) illustrates the difficulty in promoting export of Thai goods to Saudi Market. As shown, export had not increased within the decade between 1991 and 2001. Indeed, from 1996 onward, the export was going downward.

Figure 13: Import-Export to Saudi Arabia 1995-2001
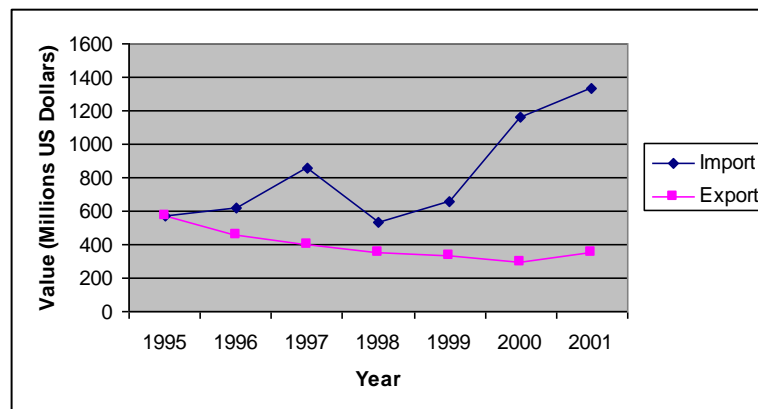
Source: Ministry of Commerce, Thailand's trade information. www.moc.go.th. (Last accessed 20 May, 2009).

The major problem is that several Thai goods had been rejected. For example, in 2000, Saudi Arabia banned canned tuna from Thailand, claiming that such product had been contaminated with GMOs (Genetically Modified Organisms).[345] In addition to banning the canned tuna, Saudi Arabia asked Thailand to guarantee the safety of Thai goods entering the country. A Thai newspaper reports that Thai exporters feel that Saudi banning Thai goods was not really the problem of the products, it was indeed rooted in

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[345] "Saudi Arabia Still Bans Thai Tuna and Asks for GMO Certificate," *Manager*, 9 May 2000.

political constrain, due to the Saudi Theft issue.[346] The Thai government tried to negotiate by sending delegation to explain and negotiate with Saudi authorities, Saudi Arabia accepted to reconsider the ban, though it did not provide any promise of when the ban would be lifted.[347]

5.1.2   Social Relations

Socio-political aspect also shows the constraint between Saudi Arabia and Thailand. In 1998, Saudi Arabia withdrew from participating in Asian Games in 1998 in which Thailand was a host.[348] The Thai government pointed out that the reasons Saudi Arabia pulled out of the games were due to Ramadan and Saudi Arabia's centenary celebration; however, the Thai media claimed that the unresolved murder of the Saudi diplomats might be one of the factors that made Saudi Arabia withdrew.[349]

One of the worst repercussions from the strained relations is sustained banning of migrant workers from Thailand to Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia has been a big hub for Thai labour migrants, therefore banning the workers means a great loss of income and employment opportunities on the Thai part. Under the Asian Financial Crisis, Thai companies lay off their employees and the unemployment rates increased. Not having Saudi Arabia as hub for Thai workers was a great loss to Thai economy. There was still the interest among the Thai workers to go to work in Saudi Arabia. The graph on the following page (figure 13) shows that despite unresolved visa issues and diplomatic relations, there were a large number of Thai workers applying to work in Saudi Arabia. According to the graph, the numbers represent only workers who applied, not those who had been granted to work. The news that Saudi Arabia had relaxed to grant exit-re-entry visas gave people hope that the country would allow Thai workers to work in Saudi Arabia again, thus resulting in the larger number of applicants, from 47 persons in 1998 to 858 persons in 1999 and it has continued to grow in numbers in the following years.

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[346] Ibid.
[347] Ibid.
[348] "Chuan Dismisses Reports That Saudis Pulled out over Security" *The Nations*, 28 November 1998.
[349] Ibid.

Figure 14: The Number of Thai workers that attempted to work in selected GCC States 1997-2001

The Number of Thai workers that applied to work in selected GCC states 1997-2001
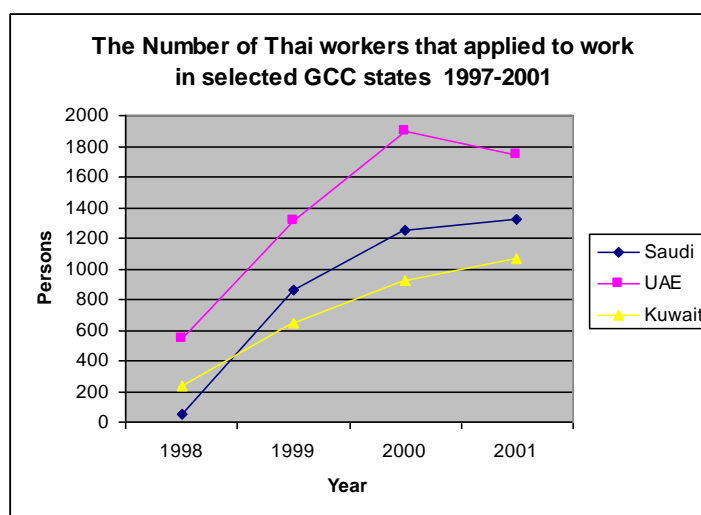
Source: Ministry of Labour, Thailand.

Even though affecting political and economic relations, the theft and murder cases barely affected Islamic affairs between Thailand and Saudi Arabia, including hajj supports for Muslims in the south. Indeed, it was the hajj and Islamic affairs that helped relax, if not neutralised, the relations between Thailand and Saudi Arabia. On leading 200-250 pilgrims to Mecca in 2000, Thailand's Foreign Minister, Surin Pitsuwan, took the opportunity to give a talk about Thai-Saudi Relations.[350]

5.1.3   *Notes on Thailand-Saudi Relations*

Between 1997 and 2001, much effort had been put into normalising relations with Saudi Arabia. The foreign ministry used both contacts through governmental and personal connections, though the result was only a slight improvement. One journalist points out that the unsolved problematic relations came from the fact that Thailand refused to give what had been asked for by Saudi Arabia; no matter how much effort was put into improving relations with Saudi Arabia, as long as the theft and the murder cases remained unresolved, then those efforts will mean little.[351] Thailand's difficult relations

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[350] "Thai Foreign Minister to Lead Pilgrims to Mecca.," *Associate Press,* 2000.
[351] Interview with Nitipoom Naowarat, the Perd Fah Song Lok (Open the Horizon) Column of Thai Rath Newspaper, Bangkok, Thailand, 2 September 2007.

with Saudi Arabia is the example of the case where government-to-government relations was not so effective in solving bilateral problem and where certain aspect, here Islamic relations, were not affected by sour bilateral relations. Indeed, during this period, Islam has proved to be among only a few channels that allow Thailand to have access to negotiation with Saudi Arabia. The case of Thailand's relations with Saudi Arabia, therefore, shows that in some circumstances, norms, values and identity can be as efficient as economic and political diplomatic tools.

5.2 Thailand-Bahrain

In November 1998, Thailand's foreign minister paid an official state visit to Bahrain. The visit resulted in the signing of an Agreement on Economic and Trade Cooperation with Bahrain in 1999 and the signing of an Agreement on the Exemption of Double Taxation in 2001. [352]

Diplomatic relations with Bahrain, however, have not been comparatively dynamic during the Chuan administration. There is no Bahrain embassy in Bangkok, neither was there the Royal Thai embassy in Bahrain.[353] Thai officials and businessmen had to contact the Embassy of Bahrain in Beijing should they need to interact.

5.2.1   Trade Relations

Compared to the rest of the GCC States, the value of Thailand's trade with Bahrain is the lowest. Between 1997 and 2001, the total trade value had not changed much. This can be seen through table 6 on page 141. Not having the Embassy of Bahrain in Thailand is partly made trade between the two sides difficult. Thailand has always run a trade deficit with Bahrain. Important Thai goods that are exported to Bahrain include cars and parts, air conditioning and parts, machinery, clothes, refrigerators and jewellery. The important goods that Thailand imports from Bahrain include material minerals, oil, cloth, iron, paper and paper goods.

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[352] Information from Department of South Asia, Middle East and Africa. www.mfa.go.th (Last accessed 5 January, 2009).
[353] The Royal Thai Embassy in Manama was opened in 2004, for more detail see the next chapter.

5.2.2   Social Relations

The social relations between Thailand and Bahrain have been quite limited.[354] However, in November 2001 Thailand signed an agreement on economic, trade and academic cooperation with Bahrain. Still, nothing much has been done to promote social and academic cooperation with Bahrain. However, many Bahrainis are familiar with Thailand as many have been to Thailand for tourism or for medical purpose. The interactions between the two regions were not new phenomenon; the contacts between the two sides have existed long before 1997, this can be seen from the availability and the frequency of flights from Bahrain to Thailand. Gulf Air, which is the national carrier of the four Gulf States--Abu Dhabi, Oman, Qatar and Bahrain--has flights to Thailand regularly since 1976.[355] Thai Airways also began to fly to Bahrain in November 1978 but the operation was suspended and was not resumed until 2002.[356] The launch of the flight between the two countries was largely motivated by the growing number of labour migration from Thailand to Bahrain, which had begun in late 1970s, as well as Muslims from Thailand travelling to the Middle East, and from Bahrain tourists and businessmen to Thailand. Compared to other small GCC States like Oman and Qatar, there have been more official visits from Thailand to Bahrain.[357]

5.2.3   Notes on Thailand-Bahrain Relations

Thailand's relationship with Bahrain can be used to argue that oil defines the nature of relationship in all aspects between Thailand and the GCC States. For Thailand's relations with the GCC States, dynamic diplomatic, trade and social relations starts off with oil trading. Bahrain is the only country in the GCC States that does not trade oil with Thailand, thus it is less known among Thai officials. The incentive to interact therefore had gone to other states. However, there has always been an effort to bolster the interactions.

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[354] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand.

[355] Gulf Air History from http://www.gulfair.com/about/history.asp. (Last accessed 20 May, 2009).

[356] Thai Airways International Public Information http://www.thaiair.com/about-thai/public information/en/international-destinations.htm. (Last accessed 20 May, 2009).

[357] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand.

5.3   Thailand-Qatar

Under the Chuan administration, the diplomatic relations with Qatar was relatively dynamic. It started off with the 1998 visit of the Thai foreign minister to Qatar. In the same year, Thailand signed the MOU with Qatar in terms of inter-foreign ministry cooperation, and in 1999 the two countries signed an Agreement on Economic and Trade Cooperation.[358]

In 1999 the emir of Qatar visited Thailand; it was considered to be the first visit ever made by a head of the Gulf States. The outcome of the visit was the proposal projects on a urea fertiliser plant in Qatar.[359] In addition, the agreement over the exemption of double taxation had been signed.[360] Prior to the leader's visit, Thailand had proposed the concept of strategic partnership to Qatar, where Thailand could become the centre for distribution of Qatar's liquefied national gas (LNG) to Asia and the Pacific.[361]

5.3.1   Trade Relations

Thailand has always run trade deficits with Qatar. While Thailand imports crude oil and petroleum products, e.g. fertiliser, Qatar imports cars, car parts, air conditions, machinery, aluminium and jewellery from Thailand. Export of Thai goods to Qatar had been difficult as Thai products were not well known among Qataris and because Thailand has had to compete with other exporters from India, China and Singapore as well as North America and Europe in Qatar market, which is comparatively small. The volume of trade was comparatively not as significant as Oman, the UAE and Saudi Arabia. The Thai Ministry of Commerce has been trying to introduce more products to the Qatar market; the products that the government viewed having potential included machinery, construction material, halal food and jewellery.

That trade relations between Thailand and Qatar has not been active can be accounted by the lack of motivations in conducting trade with Qataris from Thai businessmen's part.

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[358] Ibid.

[359] Ibid.

[360] "Official Visit of the Emir of Qatar," *Buakaew*, April-June 1999.

[361] "Thailand, Qatar Will Sign Agreement to Strengthen Relations," *The Nation*, 10 April 1999.

With difficulty in communication and transportation, it was difficult for Thai and Qatar entrepreneurs to meet and match. Despite the government's attempt to lead businessmen to Qatar, not all businessmen were able to be part of the delegations; this is because the opportunity was limit and most of the time larger enterprises are selected. Businessmen who could not find access to information and connection with Qatari trade partners therefore switched to other countries or did not consider Qatar at all. Exporting food is one obvious example, during this period Thailand has not developed the halal standard to the acceptable level to be exported to Qatar; even though some products had been approved, the products still had to compete with exporters from Muslim countries.

5.3.2   Social Relations

Comparing to other GCC countries, there was not much dynamism between social relations between Qatar and Thailand. Most of the social relations are based on Islamic Affairs, where the Qatari government and royal family donated money to Muslims in Thailand. The social relations, however, were the key factors that encouraged the interactions between Thailand and Qatar. It greatly defined the whole picture of diplomatic relations; as a political analyst at the Qatar embassy points out that, "Qatar tries to initiate good relations with Thailand in the direction of non-political dimension."[362]

The relationship between the Thai royal family and the Qatari monarch plays an important role in strengthening social relations between Thailand and Qatar. When asked over the influential factors that define the relationship between the two states, a Qatari political analyst pointed out that, "one [of the influential] factor had to do with monarchical institute; and there is more chance that the relationship will be prolonged."[363]

5.3.3   Notes on Thailand-Qatar Relations

Lacking knowledge about each other is the significant issue that hinders the relationship between Qatar and Thailand. This is particularly in terms of trade, where between 1997

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[362] Interview with political analysts, Qatar embassy, 13 August 2007.
[363] Ibid.

and 2001, each side knew very little about each other. This resulted in comparatively inactive relations.

The visit of the emir of Qatar in 1999 had brought about greater knowledge about Thailand among Qataris. While trade had not expanded much right after, but the foundation and agreements the emir and other high-level staff had done with Thailand had proved to be useful for further relations between Thailand and Qatar in the next administration.

5.4 Thailand-Kuwait

Prior to 1997, the relations between Thailand and Kuwait was under supervision of the Kuwaiti ambassador in Malaysia; however, in 1997, the Kuwaiti government assigned the first Kuwaiti ambassador for Thailand; thus making the interactions between the two countries more efficient and faster.[364] Generally, Thailand has cordial relations with Kuwait. During the Gulf War, the Thai government voted in favour of all UN resolutions on the Iraq-Kuwait agenda. In addition, Thailand had contributed troops in the UN Iraq-Kuwait Observer Mission (UNIKOM), as well as sending medical teams to help Kuwait. Kuwait has been aware of the goodwill Thailand had demonstrated in the past.[365] Thus the relationship between the two sides has been strengthened. In 1998, the Thai foreign minister also paid an official visit to the country.

Diplomatic relations between Thailand and Kuwait had been put to the test, however, in 1999. The secretary of the Foreign Minister, Ong-Art Klampaiboon, accused Bangkok-based Kuwaiti diplomats of sexually assaulting a Thai female domestic worker.[366] A press conference had been organised at the Thai Parliament for the worker. The Foreign Minister's secretary, however, had been attacked and criticised as improperly handling of the incident, which should have been handled with care and through diplomatic protocol by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[367] One newspaper reported Ong-Art's

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[364] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand.
[365] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, www.mfa.go.th. (Last accessed 9 June, 2009).
[366] "Ong-Art Insists He Was Right to Expose Envoy," *The Nation*, 28 July 1999.
[367] Ibid.

failure in "differentiating domestic politics and diplomacy" [368] and "put national interests at risk."[369] The same newspaper reported the sentiments of staff in the foreign ministry that:

> Several officials said Ong-Art's action could have put Thai-Middle East ties at risk. The ministry said officials there have worked hard to elevated diplomatic ties to the current level, citing the number of Thai nationals working in the region and the discussion over fishery projects with a number of countries…Thai officials said the connection could bear fruit as the nation expands its economic and political ties.[370]

The Kuwaiti embassy in Bangkok rejected the sex allegation against its diplomat and pointed out that Thailand had mishandled the incident by neglecting diplomatic protocol.[371] The embassy also stated that the incident could potentially have a great impact on diplomatic relations.[372] Mr. Ong-Art's action stirred up protests from Gulf States' envoys and other diplomats in Bangkok.[373] The department of protocol of ministry of foreign affairs therefore tried to resolve the situation, which finally was settled.

From the incident, two observations can be made. First, the incident reflects that the Thai public, media and government officials alike, had been aware and appreciate the interests and benefits returned from the government's effort in interacting with the GCC States. Thailand's diplomatic relations with Kuwait had long been established, second to Saudi Arabia, in 1963. The second observation is that there is a close tie among the GCC States' embassies which were rooted in shared identity, culture and geographical proximity. An incident that affects a GCC States can have implication and stir up the relations with other GCC States as well. There was the reason to be threatened as the

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[368] Sa-nguan Khumrungroj, "Ministry's Loose Cannon Silenced" *The Nation*, 9 August 1999
[369] Ibid.
[370] Ibid.
[371] "Diplomacy/Mission Lashes out--Kuwait Denies Envoy Ever Employed Maid," *Bangkok Post*, 29 July 1999.
[372] Ibid.
[373] Ibid.

relations with Saudi Arabia had not been resolved and could deteriorate. Thus it could affect the overall relations between Thailand and the whole GCC.

5.4.1   Trade Relations

There was no significant volume in trade between Thailand and Kuwait. The pattern of Thailand's imports-export to Kuwait is similar to that of Bahrain and Qatar: Thailand exported less, both in terms of value and volume, than it imported from Kuwait. The key import has been crude oil and Thailand has always run trade deficit with Kuwait. One of the difficulties in promoting Thai products in Kuwait is the insufficient knowledge the Kuwaitis have about Thailand and products available. At the same time, like in small GCC States, it was difficult for entrepreneurs and companies in both Kuwait and Thailand to meet. Lack of knowledge about each other is the key problem. Both the Thai and Kuwait governments have encouraged the knowledge of each other through trade shows in Kuwait as well as greater exchanges in visits among Thai and Kuwaiti private sectors.

The Kuwaiti market has been viewed as having good potential for Thai products because of high purchasing power and high economic growth. In 1999 there was a meeting of the Kuwait-Thailand Joint Committee, which had been established since 1987. The committee discussed over the potential to strengthen cooperation in trade, investment, finance and banking, oil industry, tourism and private sector relations. In 2000, the Thai Chamber of Commerce has led the delegation of Thai entrepreneurs to visit Kuwait to strengthen trade relations and explore trade and investment opportunities.

5.4.2   Social Relations

In terms of social relations, Thailand and Kuwait has been interacting through the fields of education, tourism and labour migration. Kuwait has been providing annual scholarship to Thai students to study in Kuwait; the fields of study provided include Islamic Law, Islamic Studies, and Arabic language.[374] As for labour migration, Kuwait has been one of the biggest hubs for Thai workers; the large amount of Thai workers in

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[374] Ministry of Foreign Affairs. www.mfa.go.th. (Last accessed 10 June, 2009).

Kuwait urged the government to open the office of labour affairs in Kuwait to provide support for the workers in Kuwait and neighbouring countries. Starting in 2001, the Kuwaiti government attempted to encourage Kuwaitis to enter the workforce and to replace foreign labour; however, the attempt has not been successful as Kuwaitis prefer civil servant careers and are less keen to do labour jobs.

In terms of tourism, despite its small size, Kuwait has been Thailand's highest potential for the tourist market. It has long been incorporated in the Tourism Authority of Thailand's Tourism Strategic plan. This is because Kuwait tourists come in large batches and stay for long periods, thus bringing good revenue to Thailand.

5.4.3   *Notes on Thailand-Kuwait Relations*

The relations between Kuwait and Thailand had not been dynamic; although one cannot deny the good attitude the two sides have had toward each other. For Kuwait, Thailand has shown good will in supporting Kuwaiti national security by assisting Kuwait during the Kuwait war as noted; for Thailand, Kuwait is considered a moderate Arab state, and can be counted as a political ally in the international stages. At the popular level, in addition to labour migration and tourism, the Thais in general have a better knowledge of Kuwait more than other small Gulf states, i.e. Oman and Bahrain. This is because the news and media coverage about Kuwait during the Kuwait war, in which the Thais had sympathy over the Kuwaitis.

Despite the visit of the foreign minister and the establishment of Thailand's agreement with Kuwait, there was no visible improvement in the relations. The motivation is needed from the government officers as well as members of the private sector to initiate and interact with their counterparts in Kuwait to establish more relations. Additional channels of relations should be added to the relations with Kuwait from the Thai side, aside from labour migration which is a small niche and volatile. More trade, tourism and educational cooperation should be encouraged as they are more stable and broader niche; thus they can do better in assuring greater development and more durable relations.

5.5   Thailand-Oman

Compared to other small GCC States, Thailand's relations with Oman was more established in one aspect, it can be seen that both Thailand and Oman decided to establish embassies in each other's countries quite early. Thailand opened an embassy in Muscat in 1987, while Oman opened its embassy in Bangkok in 1994. Thailand has always had cordial diplomatic relations with Oman. Like other small GCC States, Oman is considered a moderate Arab state. Oman, also like other GCC States, has always been supportive of Thailand's position within Asian and other international stages.

The other channel of Thailand's relations with Oman was that both countries were member of the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC), which no other GCC States were a member; the commitment and joint activities of the member countries have also spilled over to other aspect of cooperation between Thailand and Oman.

5.5.1   Trade Relations

During this period, one of the significant moves in trade relations between Thailand and Oman was the contract made between Thai and Oman authority in terms of trade. Since 1998 Thailand has imported crude oil from Oman through international oil companies.[375] In 1999, the oil purchasing contract has been agreed between government institutions; since then the oil purchase is done through the PTT Public Company Ltd. of Thailand and the Oman's Ministry of Oil and Gas. According to the contract, Oman was to sell 17,000 barrels of oil to Thailand daily.

The oil purchase has thus made Oman one of the most significant trade partners to Thailand among the GCC States. Thailand's trade with Oman has been defined, as mentioned, by oil trade. Not only that Oman has been a reliable supplier of oil, Thailand benefited from Oman's assistance in oil purchase. In 2000, Thailand conveyed its concern over the rise of oil price to Oman to discuss during the OPEC meeting, which

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[375] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand.

Oman agreed to help.[376] The result of oil trade leaves Thailand with a sizeable trade deficit. To reduce the deficit, Thailand tried to promote Thai products to Oman, but had not improved export that much. The problem remarked by diplomats is that between 1997 and 2001, there is very little knowledge between Thailand and Oman.[377] To facilitate potentially greater trade between the two sides, two significant agreements were signed: one was Thailand-Oman Agreement on Trade, signed in 1998, and the other was the Agreement on Double Tax Exemption was signed in 1999.

5.5.2   Social Relations

Thailand's social relations with Oman have been active in terms of academic cooperation. Since 1987, Thailand has been providing academic support to Omanis by funding training workshops in different fields, including public health, agriculture, communication and so on.[378] Under this administration, Omanis expressed greater interest to visit Thailand for a medical check-up. Thailand has been trying to promote medical tourism to encourage more tourists from Oman. Thai Airways has been operating flights from Bangkok to Oman since 1984 to facilitate tourism and relations at a popular level.

While Omanis have some knowledge about Thailand, the Thais do not know much about Oman. Even there was the urge to know about the country, it was difficult to seek information. The lack of information about Oman among the Thais has resulted in a lack of motivation to interact, both at the popular and government level.

5.5.3   Notes on Thailand-Oman Relations

Thailand's relationship with Oman is therefore defined largely by oil trade. New projects and cooperation emerged within this administration to facilitate trade. At the same time, the government has taken into consideration the trade deficit; in order to reduce the deficits, more exports were encouraged. Politically, Oman is at more of an advantage than other small GCC States in that it has additional channels for interaction,

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[376] "Oman Helps Sought over Oil Price Rise," *Bangkok Post*, 17 August 2000.
[377] Interview with a diplomat from MFA.
[378] Ibid.

through the organisational framework of the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC), which provide chances for government officials from the two states to interact and develop new initiatives.

Therefore, within Thailand's relations with Oman, the economic aspect has already taken off, while much can be done to improve the political and social aspects of the relations. In order to do so, it is important that the government provide and promote more information about Oman; such will create more incentive to government officials, entrepreneurs and the public to interact with Omanis. As well, in terms of social relations it is important to encourage greater cooperation in terms of social and cultural exchanges.

5.6 Thailand-UAE

Since the establishment of the UAE embassy in Thailand in 1998, the relationship between Thailand and the UAE has been more dynamic.[379] Thailand's diplomatic relations with the UAE is highlighted with exchange of visits between Thai and UAE officials, including Thai foreign minister visit in 1998 and the visit of the UAE Minister on Trade and Economic H.H. Sheikh Fahim Bin Sultan Al-Qasimi who led the UAE delegation to the 10th UNCTAD Conference in Bangkok and sought opportunity to meet with the Thai foreign minister.[380] In 2000, Thailand signed a bilateral accord with the United Arab Emirates to exempt Thai companies and workers from double taxation.[381]

5.6.1 Trade Relations

The UAE ranked the biggest supplier for crude oil for Thailand in 2001; as a result, Thailand's trade deficit with the UAE tremendously increased. Unlike Oman, however, Thailand's trade with the UAE had been better promoted. Compared to Oman, the differential value of the UAE-Thailand import-export was closer, when in the case of Oman, there is a large gap between the import-export value (see figure 14).

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[379] Interview with the UAE ambassador to Thailand, Bangkok, 27 August 2007.
[380] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand.
[381] "Surin Set to Sign Tax-Exemption Deal in the Middle East," *The Nation*, 29 February 2000.

Figure 15: Comparison between UAE and Oman's Import-Export to Thailand 1995-2001
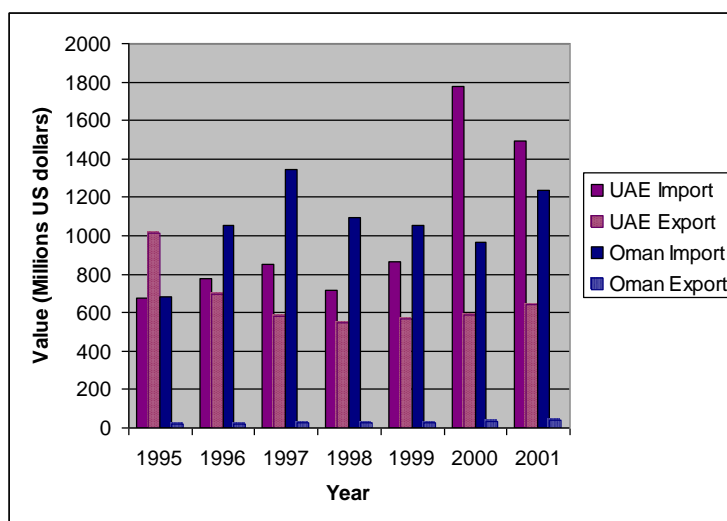
Source: Ministry of Commerce, Thailand.

In terms of investment, in 1998, a well-known Thai hotel chain, the Dusit Thani, signed a 15-year contract to manage a five-star hotel in Dubai, the Dusit Dubai. The hotel is to be the first five-star hotel in the Middle East ever managed by an Asian hotel chain.[382] In 2000 the Thailand-Middle East Distribution Center (TMDC) had been inaugurated at Jebel Ali Free Zone (Jafz), with twenty Thai firms using the Jafz warehouse. Thailand hoped that the TMDC will stimulate a two-way flow of business between Thailand and the UAE.[383] The establishment of the TMDC is one of Thailand's incentives to create an increase in the flow of trade between Thailand and the Gulf region.

5.6.2   Social Relations

While diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia had not been improved, the UAE has absorbed the large amount of Thai workers in the GCC States. Between 1997 and 2001, the number of workers who applied to work in the UAE had doubled, from 542 in 1998 to 1310 in 1999, and the number continued to rise over the period of four years.[384]

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[382] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand. www.mfa.go.th. (Last accessed 19 June, 2009).
[383] Ashok Dutta, "Thailand Proposes GCC-ASEAN Trade Alliance," *Gulf News*, 2 March 2000.
[384] Ministry of Labour, Thailand.

Tourism is an important factor that stimulates Thailand's social relations with the UAE. The United Arab Emirates ranked the first in number of tourists from the GCC States to Thailand, and second from all the tourists from the Middle East, with Israelis ranks the first. The graph below (figure 15) shows that between 1997 and 2001, the number of UAE tourists coming to Thailand continued to rank 2nd in the Middle East. Therefore, in terms of tourist promotion, the UAE has been considered as one of the key target for the Tourism authority of Thailand in promoting tourism.[385] In terms of Muslim relations, there was no remarkable contact between Muslims from the two sides.

Figure 16: Percentage of Tourists from Selected Middle Eastern Countries Coming to Thailand 1997-2001
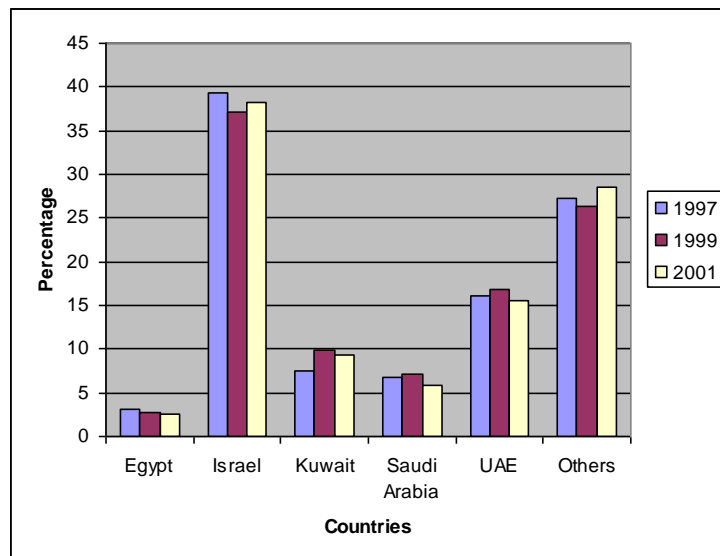
Source: Immigration Bureau, Police Department of Thailand.

5.6.3   Notes on Thailand-UAE Relations

Thailand's relations with the UAE were important in all aspects. The relationship is considerably successful political, economic and social relations seem to link together more than in the case of other GCC States. Economic wise, Thailand has done well in promoting trade, thus leading to sizeable export which helps narrow deficits. The UAE had come to replace the role of Saudi Arabia as Thailand's close diplomatic partner in

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[385] Interviewed with a staff from the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), 7 September 2007.

the GCC States. Remarkably, however, in the case of people relations, the interactions among people are through tourism and labour, not so much through Islamic Affairs like in the case of Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

5.7 Summary Assessment

The bilateral relations between Thailand and the individual GCC State differ from one country to another. Most of the time, the closeness in diplomatic relations are subjected to oil trade and trade between Thailand and individual states. Stripping out trade and oil flow, the relationship between Thailand and the GCC States are left only a few driving factors. The government dwells so much on these non-state factors to maintain the relations. The interview with diplomats from the embassies of the GCC States in Thailand reveals that most diplomats characterised their countries' relation with Thailand through trade and Islam.[386] The perception that diplomatic relations between Thailand and the GCC States started off with Islam and people-to-people relations prevails, as well as the recognition of the fact that personal contacts is significant to the relations; and the state sought to use these agendas, as much as conventional diplomatic tools to resolve and further enhance the relations.

The role of the state in improving the relations between Thailand and the GCC States in the future is subjected to the ability of the state to develop its own agenda and to integrate traditional diplomatic mechanisms with the non-state agenda like Islam as the key driving factor. The next section demonstrates that the Thai state developed a greater state-centric approach to the international community and the GCC States through inter-governmental organisations.

6. THAILAND-INTERGOVERNMENT RELATIONS

6.1 Thailand's Role in the UN and in Other International Platforms

In addition to becoming the member of the OIC, which will be discussed further, under the Chuan administration, Thailand became an active member of the UN.   The

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[386] This is clear in an interview between Maluleem et al, with Mr. Muhammad Saeed Khoja, Charge d'affaires, Saudi Arabia Embassy of Thailand, 30 May 1991. Indexed in Maluleem, *The Pattern of Relationship between Thailand and the Muslim World*.

administration stated its support for democracy and human rights in its policy statement; and it demonstrated its commitment at the international level through frequently participating and providing statement on different topics at the UN conferences. To demonstrate Thailand's commitment to global peace and regional security, in 1999 Thailand sent 1500 troops to help stabilise East Timor.[387]

In the international platform, the Chuan administration had engaged itself with as members of several inter-government organisations, including the Organisation of American States, the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC) and the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), which will be elaborated in the next section.

6.2   Thailand-OIC Relations

6.2.1   Background of the OIC

The Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) was established in 1969 at the meeting of the Muslim states in Rabat, Morocco, in response to the arson incident in Al-Quds in Jerusalem.[388]   In 1972, the organisation was formally established after the Muslim Foreign Ministerial meeting in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The content of the meeting was not only to launch the organisation officially, but also to establish other sub-organisations, including the Islamic Development Bank, the Islamic Cultural Center and the Islamic News Agency.[389] It is the biggest Muslim organisation in the world, consisting of 57 members, which are Muslim states. All the GCC States are members of the organisation; and in Southeast Asia, Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei are members. In additional to Muslim states, there are more than 20 states and organisations holding a position as observing members.[390]

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[387] Arne Kislenko, "Bending with the Wind: The Continuity and Flexibility of Thai Foreign Policy," *International Journal* 57, no. 4 (2002).

[388] The Organisation of the Islamic Conference—Background of the OIC. www.oic.oci.org. (Last accessed 2 April, 2009).

[389] Ibid.

[390] Maluleem, *OIC and the Muslim World*, pp. 108.

6.2.2   Criteria for Being Accepted in Observer Status—Case of Non-Muslim States

The Charter of the OIC clearly indicates the condition in which non-Muslim states can apply for the observer status. Article 4 point 1 of the OIC charter states that, "*Decision on granting Observer Status to a States, member of the United Nations, will be taken by the Council of Foreign Ministers by consensus only and on the basis of the agreed criteria by the Council of Foreign Ministers.*"[391] According to the article, this means that any non-Muslim states can apply for an observer status, whether they are granted the membership or not is subjected to the applicant states and its relation with permanent OIC members, who will vote for it.

Asides from the condition set by the charter, there are no solid criteria set for the acceptance by a country as an observer in the OIC. The decision of the member states in accepting a state in observer status that may largely be subjected to Article 1, point 16 of the OIC charter, which states that the objectives of the OIC shall be "*To safeguard the rights, dignity and religious and culture identity of Muslim communities and minorities in non-Member states.*"[392] The member states usually evaluate the suitability of the applicant states by considering whether the state had provided appropriate treatment for their Muslim minorities.[393]

As of 1997, only two non-Muslim states had been granted observer status, one is Bosnia Herzegovina (1994); the other is the Central African Republic (1996).[394] In addition, some non-state Muslim communities had been granted the status, including the Turkish Cypriot State (1979), and the Moro National Liberation Front (1977).[395] Thailand was the third country, after Bosnia Herzegovina and Central African Republic to have been granted the status. For non-Muslim states, it is not easy to become an observer member of the OIC. Some non-Muslim states have tried but failed; for example, Philippines had

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[391] The OIC. www.oic.oci.org. (Last accessed 2 April, 2009).
[392] The Organisation of Islamic Conference, www.oic.oci.org. (Last accessed 2 April, 2009).
[393] Maluleem, *OIC and the Muslim World*, pp.108.
[394] The Organisation of Islamic Conference, www.oic.oci.org. (Last accessed 2 April, 2009).
[395] Ibid.

been applying for such position, but so far had not been granted the status.[396] The case of the Philippines may have created fear among Thai policy makers. Instead of the state being granted membership, the membership of the OIC in part of Philippines went to the Moro National Liberation Front, which had created threat for the Philippines state. In the case of Thailand, it was feared that the non-state organisation, i.e. the Pattani United Liberation Organisation (PULO), may try to win the status over the government. It was a relief to governmental officials and scholars alike that the Thai state was granted the position.

6.2.3   Obtaining the Observer Status—the Case of Thailand

The initiative in applying as an observer in the OIC took shape in 1997. Much credit should be given to then foreign minister Surin Pitsuwan as well as the staff at the foreign ministry. In order to receive sufficient amount of votes for the OIC membership, Thailand had asked for support by sending letter to ambassadors of OIC countries in Thailand and by asking Royal Thai Embassies in the OIC countries to seek support from their host states.[397] According to an official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia and Indonesia, as well as the GCC States, have helped lobby other OIC states to vote in favour of Thailand.

According to Maluleem, there are at least five reasons why Thailand obtained the observer status; each of the reason demonstrates Thailand's respect and reasonable treatment of Muslims, including:[398]

1. The government supports Thai Muslims to preach and perpetuate Islamic beliefs.
2. The Thai king honours the Sheikul Islam, and trusted him to manage Islamic affairs.
3. The king also provides financial support for Islamic Affairs, for example, support for the translation of the Quran into Thai.

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[396] Maluleem, *OIC and the Muslim World*, pp.108.
[397] Thailand Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "FM Surin Attends the 26th Session of OIC," *Buakaew*, July-Sept 1999.
[398] Maluleem, *OIC and the Muslim World*, pp. 110.

4. Each year, the king appoints representatives or he himself attends the celebration to commemorate the birth of Prophet Mohammad.

5. The government provides financial support for mosque constructions and renovations.

In 1998, Thailand had been accepted into the OIC in an observer status; and in 1999, Dr. Surin led the Thai delegation to attend the 26th session of the OIC Foreign Ministers conference in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, this was the first time Thailand attended the OIC meeting.[399]

6.2.4   Pros and Cons of Thailand's Observer Status with the OIC

The only criticism and fear some Thai scholars and officials have about Thailand becoming a member of the OIC is in terms of the involvement of the OIC in Thailand's domestic politics, particularly with regard to the Southern issue.[400] Jaran Maluleem responds to this criticism by acknowledging that such scenario can take place, though it is very unlikely. The OIC will naturally intervene in the case that Muslim minorities had been mistreated by the host countries; as long as Thailand maintained to solve the southern problem peacefully, as long as the government demonstrates a good understanding of Muslim citizens, the intervention should not happen.[401]

On the positive side, the membership with the OIC benefited Thailand in political, economic and social aspects. Politically, observer status allows Thailand to have its own stage in the OIC meeting. Prior to becoming the member of the OIC, in order to propose its idea or bring some relevant agenda to the OIC meeting, Thailand had to pass the matter through OIC members in ASEAN, which are, Malaysia and Indonesia.[402] That the agenda will be brought to the meeting was therefore subjected to national interest and potential impacts to those states on the agenda. It was also subjected to Thailand's relationship with Indonesia and Malaysia. Another political benefit is that Thailand can

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[399] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "FM Surin Attends the 26th Session of OIC."
[400] Maluleem, *OIC and the Muslim World*, pp. 112.
[401] Ibid, pp. 112.
[402] Interview with OIC Desk officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand, 30 August 2007.

prevent other non-state, illegitimate groups, such as the Pattani United Liberation Organisation (PULO) which had been appealing for OIC membership to represent Thailand in the OIC meeting without the government's consent.[403] In addition, through the OIC, Thailand will be able to strengthen diplomatic relations with the OIC member countries, particularly with the perceived friendly Islamic Block, which include most of the GCC States [404]

At the international level, an officer from the minister of foreign affairs points out that the winning of Thai candidate in the WTO director general election to be director general in 1999, Dr. Supachai Panichpakdi, was partially resulted from strengthening relationship with the OIC states.[405] As OIC member countries are also a large part within the WTO, lobbying for the Thai candidate through the OIC framework was helpful. This can be explained through the result of the election which shows that Supachai gained strong support in Asia and the Middle East.[406]

Economically, membership with the OIC supports export of Thai goods to the Muslim world. Through the OIC, Thailand gained greater access to the markets in the Muslim world. In addition, it was easier for Thailand to seek acceptance of halal food from Thailand with the Muslim countries.

Socially, the relationship with the OIC states allows greater interactions between Muslims in Thailand and Muslims abroad. As of 2001, the OIC had been supporting Muslims in Thailand through its specialised organ, the Islamic Development Bank (IDB). The IDB had been providing scholarship for Thai-Muslim students as well as financial support for the construction of the Islamic schools in Thailand.[407]

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[403] Maluleem, *OIC and the Muslim World*, p. 112.

[404] Interview with the OIC desk officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 30 August 2007

[405] Interviewed with an officer from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, August 2007.

[406] "Hard Work by Thais Pays Off for Supachai," *The Nation*, 25 August 1999.

[407] Maluleem, *OIC and the Muslim World*, pp. 126.

6.3   Summary Assessment--Inter-Government Relations and Thailand

Survival is the key purpose for Thailand to strengthen its link with the inter-government organisations. Between 1997 and 2001, the need for survival was based largely on consequence of the economic crisis in 1997. Seeking new economic allies and becoming active members of international organisations provided Thailand with support for its economic solution; it was not pure luck that regional powers like Japan and China offered some financial support to the country for crisis relief. This helps Thailand be able to respond to economic crises, as well as bring back confidence to the Thais. Upholding the universal values is a mechanism that goes along with the international institution. The challenge is how to combine the perceived Western concept with traditional Thai value, which the government had done quite properly through claiming that human rights has existed in Buddhism long before. The need to expand the market of Thai goods urged Thailand to develop relations with the OIC, which is the biggest international organisation of Muslim countries; close relations with the OIC can help Thailand in the expansion of trade to the Muslim world.

For most of the countries, changes in the late 1990s also urged them to band together to face the challenges of the post-Cold War era. Each of the groupings has its own dynamism. By grouping together and seeking support or voting in favour of other states, there is more chance for states to survive together than doing all for their own purposes. This explains why states like Thailand or the GCC States seek friends or allies outside of their grouping, particularly with countries that share some common agendas.

Secondary from survival, inter-government relations allow Thailand to have access to greater bilateral relations. For example, membership with the OIC facilitates the relations between Thailand and the GCC States and the rest of the Muslim world. It reflects the effort of the Thai state to establish the state-centric channel in its relations with the GCC States in spite of relying on non-state agendas like Islam and people-to-people relations.

7. CONCLUSION

The Chuan administration's policy was characterised by gearing to promote the country's greater contribution to the international community. Upholding the universal principle as well as greater participation in international stage, and membership of international organisations are the means the states used to expand trade, as well as relationship with other countries. While the traditional sphere of Thailand's relations with the GCC States are defined by the non-state agenda i.e. Islam and people-to-people relations, under the Chuan administration, the increased significance of oil, security and trade had influenced the urge to strengthen the governmental relations. At the same time, since individual GCC States differ in their ability to supply oil and in issues related to security significance to Thailand, the intimacy differs.

While oil, trade, and security had increased its significance as forces for the state to conduct its diplomacy, the significance of traditional driving forces, Islam and people-to-people relations--had not vanished. The foreign ministry continued to place people relations and Islam as significant factors. Cultural influences, i.e. personal connections and shared values, also define the nature of relations. States still rely on these traditional mechanisms in strengthening and resolving conflicts and improve relations, which contemporary state-centric mechanism alone are sometimes unable to establish or link with the conflicting country, like in the case of Saudi Arabia.

Since Islam and people-to-people relations are considered significant to the relationship between Thailand and the GCC States, the Thai state therefore had had no control over such agenda. Seeking other means to approach the GCC States in the areas that are state-centric in nature, and that the state has control over was crucial. Working through state mechanisms as active member of the global community and international organisations helps the state to have greater access to the GCC States through the organisational framework. The Thai state benefited from such doing and also gained control and legitimacy over the channel that it had developed in the interaction with the GCC States and the Muslim world.

Therefore, between 1997 and 2001, it can be said that the Thai state was at another phase in terms of relationship with the GCC States from the previous era. There are greater interests in the region than before. This is because of the key factors identified in the earlier section. There are, however, some limits. The state finds it difficult to apply conventional diplomatic tools into relations. This is because state relations were based on Islam and people-to-people relations. As of 1997, aside from trade, Islam and people-to-people relations had still been the key agenda for diplomatic relations and at the same time they had been used as a diplomatic tool to resolve conflicts and difficult relations that Thailand had with states like Saudi Arabia..

For Thailand to develop greater relations with the international community and also with the GCC States, membership and more active roles at the international stage are helpful. This supports the claim that states seek inter-governmental organisations to strengthen its position. At the same time, states gain more access to bilateral relations from being part of the inter-governmental relations. In the case of Thailand, when the state finds itself depending too much on the non-state agenda, i.e. people-to-people relations and Islam, the state finds ways to exert more legitimate means to access greater levels of relations through a more legitimate and state-centric agenda, i.e. through inter-governmental relations and trade.

CHAPTER 4

THAILAND-GULF STATES RELATIONS—2001-2006

1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter suggests that the Asian Economic crisis in 1997 had urged changes to Thai foreign affairs, including the changes in nature of state relations with the GCC States which became a little more dynamic and positive. Several key driving forces lead to the urge for the development of greater relations with these states; this includes the GCC's role as the biggest oil suppliers to Thailand, and their role as potential important trade partners with Thailand.

In addition to increased state-to-state interactions with the GCC States, a lot of foundations had been laid in the Middle East section of the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs during the Chuan administration. More staff had been recruited, while traditional views that the Middle East was a peripheral area had been altered. However, not all the aspects of the relations had been successful; for one, the strained relationship with Saudi Arabia had not been resolved. In addition, the Look West policy, which aimed to incorporate the Middle East as one of the core areas to focus, had not been successful in sufficiently emphasising the region, while more attention had been given to South Asia, as noted in the previous chapter. With regards to the people-to-people relations, it is clear that traditional sphere of relations between the two sides, Islamic and labour relations, played an important role in defining the nature of the entire relationship. And the Thai state had benefited from the people relations in helping to solve difficult state-centric agendas with the GCC States.

The national election in 2001 had brought changes to Thailand. The Thai Rak Thai party of Thaksin Chinawatra won a landslide victory in the national election. The administration brought with them changed outlook on state policy. Much of the policy reflected Thaksin's expertise and previous experience. One obvious change was the administration's emphasis on trade. In addition, having been foreign minister before, Thaksin was keen on adopting a foreign policy that suited both his previous experience

and his expertise in trade. Thus came out a foreign policy that placed trade promotion on the top of the list.

The following chapter seeks to analyse the nature of Thailand's relationship with the GCC States during the Thaksin administration between 2001 and 2006. While the second term of Thaksin's administration ended in mid-2006 by a coup d'etat, this research continues to take into account the entire of 2006. This is because the legacy of Thaksin's administration lingered, including the administration's handling of the southern issue; and the interim government continued to pursue and handle some foreign policy agendas that had been left undone, including Thailand's relations with the GCC States. Changes from the Chuan administration will be highlighted, as well as several international and domestic incidents that had implications for Thailand's relations with the GCC States, the Muslim world and the global community. The first section provides an overview of Thai foreign policy under the Thaksin administration. Then the key driving forces for Thailand's relations with the GCC States will be highlighted.   The next section provides the overview of the nature of relationship between the two sides which leads to a more specific analysis of relations between Thailand and individual GCC state. The last section explores the relationship between Thailand and the inter-governmental organisations; much emphasis will be given to the organisation relevant to Thailand and the Muslim world, particularly the OIC.

2. THAILAND'S FOREIGN RELATIONS UNDER THAKSIN
2.1 Thaksin Administration's Policy Statement on Foreign policy
On 26 February 2001, Thaksin Chinawatra delivered the policy statement of his administration to the parliament. On foreign policy, the Thaksin administration aimed to:

- *Implement foreign policy that promotes economic strategy alongside with other aspects of diplomatic practices in order to restore and establish international relations as well as to seek all kinds of cooperation*
- *Maintain security, development and peace-building within the framework of the UN and other relevant international organisations.*

- *Increase Thailand's role in international community by expanding the relations and cooperation from ASEAN region to East Asia, South Asia and other regions. In addition, act as a middleman to mediate cooperation for peace building and conflict resolution in the region.*

- *Promote, maintain, and protect the rights and interests of the country, including that of the Thai private sectors, workers and people abroad.*

- *Restore, strengthen, and cooperate in the development between Thailand and neighbouring countries and in Asia by maintaining or establishing the cooperation and development in all aspects, both in bilateral and multilateral.* [408]

Glancing at the policy statement, there are several changes in foreign policy agendas from the previous administration. The most obvious change is that the economic agenda has been placed at the forefront of foreign policy. Incorporating economic realms into foreign policy and diplomatic practice was not new, it had been done before during the administration of Prime Minister Chatchai Chunhawan, where he intended to reduce conflict with Thailand's neighbouring countries and to promote trade with them; the policy had been known as "transforming the conflicting zone into trading zone." The circumstance in which Thaksin came into power differed from Chatchai's era. Under Thaksin, Thailand still suffered from the 1997 economic crisis and the previous government was partly able to solve the problem and improve economic conditions. Placing the economic agenda at the top of foreign policy was aimed to enable Thailand to pay off the debt and bolster economic growth. Such incorporation corresponds with Thaksin's expertise in business and trade; and there is no doubt that much of this policy statement has been influenced by Thaksin's view.

Closely relevant to incorporating the economic agenda into foreign policy is the urge to restore and strengthen the relationship abroad. This is linked to Thailand's economic strategy, which considers the opportunity cost incurred to Thailand from unresolved conflict and indifferent relations.

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[408] Statement Policy of the Thaksin Chinnawatra Administration, Delivered to the Thai Parliament on 26 February 2001. http://library2.parliament.go.th/giventake/content_sp/sp54.pdf. (Last accessed 6 May, 2009).

The agenda that was not continued from the previous government was the promotion of human rights and democracy, which the previous administration strongly highlighted. One of the media and opposition parties' criticisms of the government was that the new administration totally ignored traditional foreign policy and diplomatic practices, as well, the new administration discontinued some valuable initiatives and projects the previous governments had set up.[409] When the new administration took the office, there was a moment of confusion when some of the old policies had been rejected and the implementation of the new policy was on its way, and the outcome of the new policy took t some time to achieve.

In 2003, the government embarked on a newly designed "Forward Engagement Policy." The policy concept and motivation had been explained by Thaksin in his speech at the Institute of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

> We need to formulate a foreign policy that looks ahead and forward to the future while mindful of the past. We need a foreign policy that responds effectively to the rapid changes while strengthening the basic foundations. We need a foreign policy that is pro-active and forward-looking. We need a foreign policy that seeks innovative opportunities while safeguarding national interests. We need a foreign policy that strengthens our existing international cooperation while further expanding to encompass new dimensions of cooperation with new partners. We need a foreign policy that accommodates differences while turning diversity into the new partnership for peace, stability, and prosperity for the nation, the region and the world at large. This is what we call "Forward Engagement" policy.[410]

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[409] Kavi Chongkittavorn, "Regional Perspective: New Foreign Policy: 'Backward Engagement'?," *The Nation*, 19 February 2001.

[410] Thaksin Chinnawatra, "Forward Engagement: The New Era of Thailand's Foreign Policy," an Inaugural Lecture delivered at the Saranrom Institute of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, December 2003.

According to Surakiat Satianrathai, then foreign minister, there are four focal points within the Forward Engagement Policy, that the policy must "accommodate changes and new challenges, hold on firmly to principles, though must be flexible enough to apply; place people at the core of the foreign policy and; be self-sufficient and be able to engage in strategic partnership to share mutual interest."[411]

The Forward Engagement Policy was intended to accommodate global politics, particularly to the post-9/11 incident as well as Thailand's relations with neighbouring countries. The policy provided a foreshadow of several significant foreign interaction, and behaviours of the Thai state, including sending troop to Iraq, rejecting foreign aid, and taking initiative in organising the Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD). Thaksin's role in tailoring foreign policy and implementing it was apparent.

The administration's decision to promote greater involvement in international affairs can be seen through the government's announcement to send its foreign minister, Dr. Surakiat Sathirathai, to run for the seat of UN secretary general. The announcement was made in 2004, three years ahead of the seat vacancy in 2007.[412] The aim to win the seat affected the nature of Thailand's relations with diplomatic partners around the world. There was a need to seek the vote for Surakiat, thus the Thai embassies had been instructed to call for support from their host countries; the policy decision also had to be more cautious and take into consideration the effect it would have on the UN secretary general votes.

In sum, there were several differences between the foreign policy under Thaksin's administration and that of the preceding administrations. Forces that define the nature of foreign policy under Thaksin come both from domestic and international factors. Domestically, the urge to improve the Thai economy remained; the additional factor is the southern unrest. These factors are coupled with domestic politics among different

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[411] Surakiat Sathianrathai, "Thailand's Foreign Policy Agenda," statement delivered at Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand in 2003.

[412] Khien Theeravit, *Thailand's Foreign Policy and Proactive Diplomacy : A Critique* (Thai World Affairs Center, Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University, 2004
http://www.thaiworld.org/en/thailand_monitor/answer.php?question_id=54. (Last accessed 25 May, 2009).

political parties in Thailand, as well as Thaksin's attempt to rally for popular support for the next election. Internationally, September 11 and the War on Terror greatly influence the government's relations, not only with the US, but also with other regions, including Thailand's relationship with the Muslim world. The next section seeks to explore the economic agenda that was incorporated into Thailand's foreign policy.

2.2 Trade Expansion

One of the significant challenges to the government after the economic crisis is stimulating economic growth. Through highly concentrated economic policy after 2002, Thailand's GDP growth had constantly increased as shown in figure 17.

Figure 17: Thailand's GDP Growth in Selected Years between 1995 and 2005
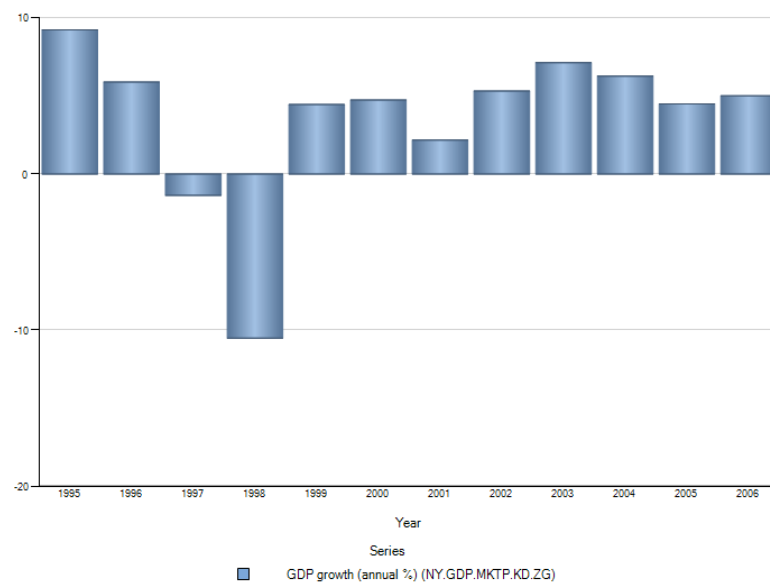
Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators (WDI) December 2008, ESDS International, (Mimas) University of Manchester.

In order to achieve economic growth, the promotion of Thai goods abroad was crucial. The government placed an emphasis on creating commercial bases for Thailand abroad, as well as laying the foundation for development of the strategic partnership, particularly in terms of trade between Thailand and the world. Such a move is reflected in Thaksin's

speech at Thailand's annual ambassador and consul general meeting in Bangkok in 2003 that:

> Thai foreign policy under my administration has no room for "begging," We only have room for strategic partner; we don't beg anybody. We are not rich, but we don't beg. We will stand on our own. That is absolute. Take our Thai dignity to focus on strategy, think together, work together…I want to leave it as homework for you. You have to sell Thailand, both products and image. You have to believe in Thailand and have to supports its product and images.[413]

As discussed, economic agenda had been incorporated into foreign policy, and vice versa. Ambassadors and diplomats had been encouraged to promote Thai products. The government supported road shows and trade exhibitions overseas. There was a restructure of embassies and some changes in responsibilities of diplomatic staffs to accommodate the economic agenda. The establishment of the Free Trade Area (FTA) had been promoted by this administration. It is aimed to expand trade and investment, particularly export from Thailand to an overseas market. The FTA project was under the responsibility of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Commerce. In 2005, the joint committee and plan for the FTA agreements took shape between Thailand and China, India, Japan, the US, Australia and Bahrain. Although in some of the countries, the projects had been abandoned; this detail will be discussed in the further section.

Figure 18 reflects the outcome of the economic promotion. From 2001, total trade increased constantly; with both import and export increased and closely matched each other. The data then shows that the government had been doing well in promoting trade.

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[413] Ibid.

Figure 18: Thailand's Trade between 1994 and 2005
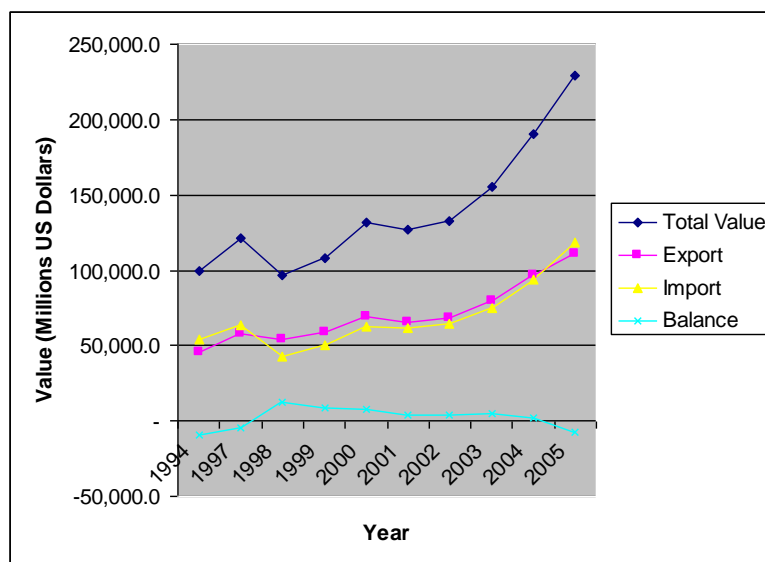
Source: Ministry of Commerce, Thailand.

In sum, as the economic agenda has been incorporated into the realm of foreign policy making and diplomacy, there is the evidence of economic growth and increase in trade value. On the other hand, the traditional practice of Thai diplomacy had been changed to a more global-conscious, CEO style, and economic-oriented nature. Traditional diplomatic mechanisms, which Thailand used to understand and to interact with other states, was only one of the tools under Thaksin's administration where trade was apparently one of the most influential factors within the foreign policy decisions and initiatives.

2.3 2003 Iraq War

When the US declared the ultimatum with Iraq, Thailand claimed a neutral stand over the conflict.[414] In August 2003, however, Thailand sent troops to Karbala to provide humanitarian assistance to the Iraqi people.[415] When asked to explain the motivation of such an act, and despite the deaths of two soldiers, Thaksin tried to justify the government's contribution of troops.[416] In November 2003, he pointed out that the Thai

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[414] Kavi Chongkittavorn, "Thai Troops for Iraq: Muslims Warn of Dangers," *The Nation*, 24 August 2003.
[415] Ibid.
[416] "Thailand's Thaksin under Pressure over Iraq Troop Commitment," *AFX European Focus*, 22 April 2004.

troops were to provide humanitarian only, not to combat. In April 2004, the senate voted for Thailand to continue keeping 451 troops in Iraq.[417] Perhaps one of the key motivations for Thailand to send troops to Iraq was to strengthen Thailand's relationship with the U.S.

Despite the attempt to demonstrate friendship with the U.S. at the international level, dispatching Thai troops to Iraq created discontent among Thai Muslims, who started protesting the U.S. invasion of Iraq since the beginning of the war. Mass gatherings and the boycotting of U.S. goods were being organised in the Muslim-majority provinces.[418] In Bangkok, Thai-Muslims gathered in front of the U.S. embassy to denounce the U.S. military campaign.[419] In the south, the protestors went as far as the plan to recruit fighters to help the campaign on the Iraqi side.[420]

The protest of Thai-Muslims against the U.S. war in Iraq showed their connection and the link they have with Muslims in the Middle East and the rest of the Muslim world, as well as the awareness of Muslim identity. It also showed that Thai-Muslims are conscious of the international Muslim community. Media and telecommunication technology had a role in strengthening Muslim solidarity across national boundaries. While the Thai government dispatched troops to Iraq, the Thai-Muslims continued to denounce the US campaign in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as Thailand's support to the US. There is a clear conflict between the state and domestic factions. In this case, the international system is dominating state's behaviour; and the relationship with the US, Thailand's traditional ally was deemed important. At the same time, some of the state's move contradicted with the feeling of the Muslims.

In sum, the development of Thailand's position on the U.S. campaign in Iraq shows the administration's priority; the state made decision based on their perceived best interest. Strengthening relationship with the U.S. is proved to secure Thailand's national interest;

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[417] Ibid.
[418] "Southern Muslims Begin Boycott of Us Goods," *Thai Press Reports*, 28 January 2003.
[419] "Iraq Crisis: Thousands Join Peace March," *The Nation*, 16 February 2003.
[420] "Southern Muslim Groups to Recruit Fighters to Help Iraq," *The Nation*, 28 March 2003.

while the government recognised a negative response from Muslim protesters in Thailand and also the majority of the rest of the Muslim world. The government risked putting itself in the position against the members of the OIC, in which Thailand was an observing member. The Iraq war in 2003 also shows that Thai-Muslims are aware of the international Muslim community, and that loyalty to the state had been undermined by their loyalty to the other identity, to Muslim identity. When combined with the observed lack of attention to the human rights principle, which will be discussed in the next section, the government's relations with the Muslim minority in Thailand had been even more distant; such led to the breakdown of the relations in the later period of the administration.

2.4   The Human Rights Issue

Even though under Thaksin administration, Thailand established the Ministry of Human Security, and participated in the UN Human Rights Commission, [421] the government suffered criticisms over its deteriorating human rights record after the government's war on drugs, the tightened media control, and ultimately the way it handled unrest in the southern provinces.

 In 2005, the Human Rights Watch published the report on Thailand's War on Drugs, which pointed out that the campaign had claimed about 2275 lives,[422] several of which the government claimed were drug dealers.[423] According to Human Rights Watch, the campaign was not as successful in eradicating the narcotic drugs; indeed, it inflicted fears among people who were suspected of drug involvement.

Equally bad was Thailand's freedom of the press record. According to the survey of the Freedom House, the independent human rights think-tank, the freedom of the press of Thailand between 2002 and 2006 had gone from free to partly free.[424] Freedom House's explanation over Thailand's change in status was that Thaksin's administration had put a

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[421] Thaksin Chinnawatra, "Forward Engagement: The New Era of Thailand's Foreign Policy"

[422] Human Rights Watch, http://www.hrw.org/en/asia. (Last accessed 2 July, 2009).

[423] Ibid.

[424] Freedom House http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=350&ana_page=102&year=2006. (Last accessed 2 July, 2009).

great deal of political pressure against the press.   News that was perceived as destabilising or endangering the government would be banned; some journalists had been charged for criticising the government's policies or reporting corruption and human rights abuse.[425] This, however, should not be considered jointly with the traditional preservation of the government's right to restrict the media to present news that could jeopardise national security, the royal family or Buddhism.

Thailand's human rights record appeared to be deteriorating even more with the way that the government handled violence in the southernmost provinces.   Thailand had been asked to clarify the nature of the incident as well as the manners in which they had been dealt.   There are two key incidents: the crash between the Muslim youths and the Thai officials at the Krue Se mosque in Pattani province and the tragedy of the Muslim demonstrators at the local police station in Tak Bai district of Narathiwat Province, which will be discussed further.[426]

The two cases had consequences for Thailand, both domestically and internationally. Domestically, they created confusion and frustration on domestic sectors; this includes the media, Thai Muslims and local NGOs.   Internationally, human rights had been the principles that the preceding government strongly promoted; the abrupt change in policy and level of human rights indicator created confusion over the government's intentions, especially when the government claimed to support human rights by the existence of the Ministry of Human Security and participated in the UN Human Rights Commission.

2.5 Summing Up

In sum, the foreign policy under Thaksin administration can be viewed as heavily state-centric, with the state monopolising decisions, and making decisions based on perceived maximum state interest.   Economic emphasis had been placed as a priority; on the contrary, however, the government failed to follow up, if not worsened the universal

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[425] Ibid.

[426] Yusuf, "The Role of Chularajmontri/Shaikh Al-Islam in Resolving Ethno-Religious Conflict in Southern Thailand - the Human Security Dimension."

principles like human rights. The government's handling of several issues had jeopardised the country's human rights records. At the same time, the country's decision to send troops to Iraq had demonstrated the superpower's influence and perceived national interest. Thailand's foreign policy toward the Middle East under Thaksin could be seen as taking two directions: one was to support the war in Iraq, which goes against the majority of states in the Muslim world, the other way was to promote and restore the relationship with several countries in the region. As noted, the motivation in sending troops was clear; the motivation in promoting and restore the relationships with the Muslim states, particularly in the GCC States, will be discussed in the following section.

3. KEY DRIVING FORCES

3.1 Oil

Guaranteeing the flow of oil continued to be the key driving force for Thailand's relationship with the GCC States. From the previous administration, Thailand's key oil suppliers had not changed. Table 8 shows the ratio of crude supplied to Thailand from key suppliers. Oman and the UAE continued to be the top two suppliers to Thailand, while Saudi Arabia always ranked in the top five. Other GCC States like Kuwait and Qatar were also significant suppliers. Over five years' time, the role of the GCC States as crucial oil suppliers to Thailand continued to be significant to Thailand.

Table 8: Thailand's Top Ten Crude Oil Import Sources between 1997 and 2005

No.	1997	%	2000	%	2003	%	2005	%
1	Oman	28.66	UAE	25.83	UAE	26.66	UAE	32.02
2	UAE	16.28	Oman	15.6	Oman	19.28	Saudi	19.23
3	Saudi	11.14	Yemen	12.48	Saudi	18.60	Oman	14.15
4	Malaysia	10.04	Saudi	11.04	Yemen	13.43	Malaysia	11.72
5	Yemen	9.49	Brunei	8.04	Qatar	5.31	Yemen	5.41
6	Iran	7.70	Malaysia	5.05	Malaysia	5.12	Qatar	3.72
7	Qatar	4.72	Kuwait	4.82	Brunei	4.48	Australia	3.04
8	Australia	2.30	Qatar	4.1	Indonesia	2.72	Indonesia	2.13

9	Indonesia	2.08	Iraq	3.95	Australia	1.07	Vietnam	1.64
10	Brunei	1.86	Iran	3.85	Algeria	0.93	Iraq	1.36
	Other	5.73	Other	5.24	Other	2.40	Other	5.58

Source: Ministry of Commerce, Thailand, www.moc.go.th. (Last accessed ..9 June, 2009).

It seems fair to claim that while the different administrations have different foreign policy outlooks, a special place within foreign policy is reserved to maintain positive relationship with the crude oil suppliers. Industrial growth in Thailand requires crude oil and domestic consumption continues to grow; thus, oil is vital to the Thai economy.[427] In a way, the oil trade has been an important stimulant to Thailand's trade with the GCC States; this is due to the need to offset the deficits incurred by Thailand due to purchasing oil from these countries. For Thailand, oil is a type of good that has very low elasticity; for instance, oil from Oman is much preferred from anywhere else because the quality fits with the refineries in Thailand.[428]

In sum, the oil import continues to define Thailand's total import from the GCC States. There is the need on the Thai part to maintain relationships with the GCC States to guarantee the flow of oil. And in order to reduce the large deficit incurred from oil purchases, there is the need for Thailand to promote trade with the GCC region, which will be discussed in the next section.

3.2 Trade with the GCC States

Thailand's trade with the GCC States between 2001 and 2005 maintained the same pattern as the preceding administration; import still defines the nature of total trade, as more than half of Thailand's total trade value is import (80% in 2001 and 82 % in 2004), of which was mostly oil.[429] Figure 19 shows the pattern as discussed. The only difference is the gradual improvement of export, which had increased slightly since 2001 onward; however this increase in export did not catch up with tremendous increase in import (see figure 19). Figure 20, however, points out that while export did not catch up

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[427] Energy Information Administration (EIA) (Last accessed 7 July 2009).
[428] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand.
[429] Ministry of Commerce, Thailand.

with constant increase in import, export has begun to increase with almost all the GCC States, obviously with Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Oman.

The Look West policy, which had been criticised as leaning so much toward South Asia in the previous administration, had been used to promote the relationship with the Middle East and the GCC regions. More frequently the Look West policy had been applied to fit into the agenda of the relationship between Thailand and the Middle East; it had been incorporated into the agenda of the meetings between the government and private sectors.[430]

Figure 19: Trade between Thailand and the GCC States 2000-2005
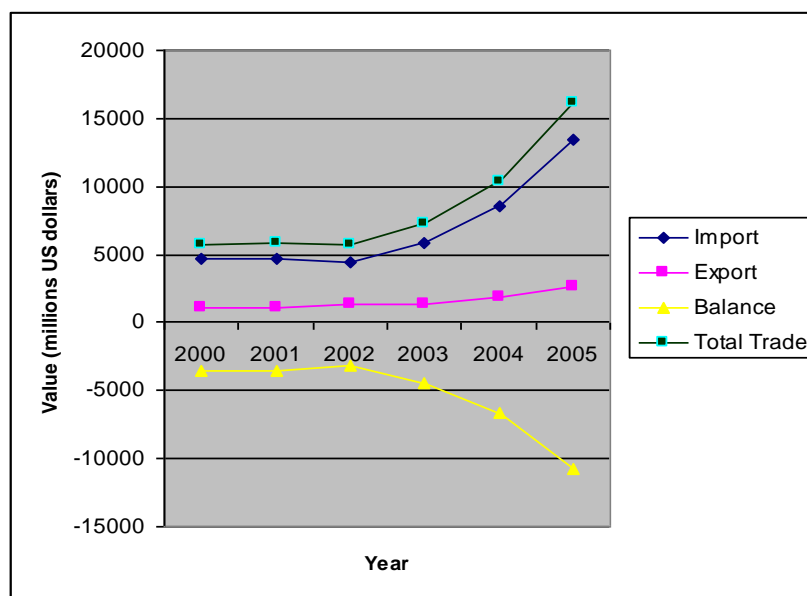
Source: Ministry of Commerce www.moc.go.th. (Last accessed 10 June, 2009).

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[430] The key agenda of the Look West policy had been discussed and incorporated into different meetings between the Thai government and the private sectors, including the meeting between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Muslim entrepreneurs, the plan for establish closer relations with African countries in 2002, which the author attended while interning at the Ministry in 2002.

Figure 20: Thailand's Export to each GCC State 1997-2005

Thailand's Export to Each GCC states 1997-2005
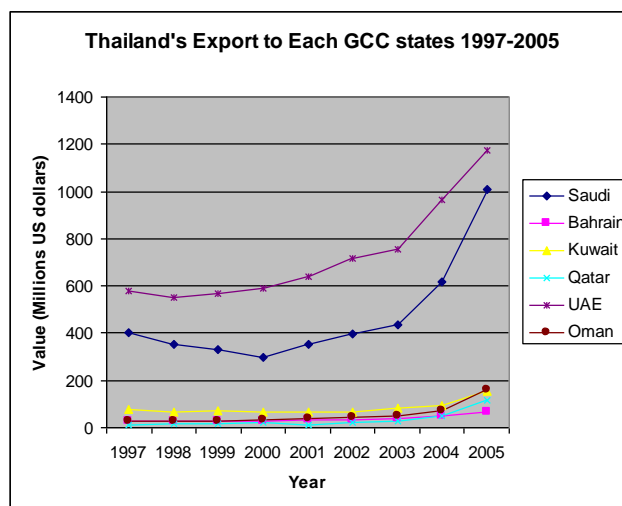
Source: Ministry of Commerce, Thailand. www.moc.go.th. (Last accessed 10 June, 2009).

As of 2005, Thailand ran trade deficits with all the GCC States, even with Bahrain, in which the value of the oil trade was very small (see table 9). The large deficits are with the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Oman. It is not surprising, therefore, that there was the continued urge to bolster trade with this region to make up for the deficits.

Table 9: Thailand's Trade with the GCC States between 2005 and 2007

| Countries | 2005 | | | | 2007 | | | |
	Import	Export	Balance	Total trade	Import	Export	Balance	Total trade
Saudi	4047	1008	-3039	5055	4575	1381	-3194	5956
Bahrain	118	66	-52	184	4473	3354	-1119	7827
Kuwait	310	153	-157	463	160	231	71	391
Qatar	837	113	-724	950	2027	217	-1810	2244
UAE	5700	1175	-4525	6875	6836	2110	-4726	8946
Oman	2420	158	-2262	2578	2594	289	-2305	2883
Total	13432	2673	-10759	16105	20665	7582	-13083	28247

Source: Ministry of Commerce, Thailand.

In sum, the pattern of Thailand's trade with the GCC States had not changed from the previous administration. The difference is that under Thaksin, trade had been placed as significant core of foreign policy; the outcome is that GDP growth increased as well as trade value with the GCC States. Since Thailand runs trade deficits with all the GCC States, the challenge for the government was promoting Thai products in the GCC market, as well as support Thai businessmen to do business in the GCC States.

3.3   International and Regional Grouping

With Thaksin's administration making a commitment to be internationally active, the government attempted to strengthen relations at international and regional levels. The most visible is at the regional level when the administration aimed to push Thailand to be one of the regional leaders through the establishment of the Asian Cooperation Dialogue. Support for the establishment and the participation of the ACD reflected strength in the relations Thailand had with countries within the region, notably countries in the GCC States most of which became the ACD active members, as will be discussed in the next section.

3.3.1   The Thai FM's Candidacy for UN Secretary General

While the GCC States had been good political allies with Thailand on the international stage, Thailand's decision to send its foreign minister as a candidate for UN secretary general was another test for Thailand's relations with the GCC States. The Thai embassies in the GCC States were instructed to lobby for the votes, which most of the GCC States are keen to support. Regional grouping and linkages play an important role in the GCC States' decision. Most of the Arab countries supported candidates from Asia; however, there were candidates from other Asian countries, therefore since 2004, lobbying for the Thai candidate was one of the agendas Thailand put forward in the discussion and negotiation tables when interacting with the GCC States. Therefore, starting from 2005, the Thai foreign minister visited the GCC States several times to lobby for the votes.

3.3.2   The Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD)

The GCC States were responsive to Thailand's initiated international platform, the Asian Cooperation Dialogue.   All GCC States are member of the ACD (see table 10). In addition, several of the GCC States volunteered to take a lead on the cooperation projects (see table 11).

Table 10: ACD Membership of the GCC States and Year of Membership

ACD member	Year of membership
Qatar	2002
Bahrain	2002
Oman	2003
Kuwait	2003
UAE	2004
Saudi Arabia	2005

Source: Asian Cooperation Dialogue www.acddialogue.com. (Last accessed 12 June, 2009).

Table 11: Selected Examples of the ACD's Areas of Cooperation in which Some GCC States are Involved

Areas of cooperation	Prime and Co-prime movers
Energy	Bahrain, China, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Qatar, the Philippines
Road Safety	Oman
Environmental Education	Japan, Qatar

Source: www.acddialogue.com. (Last accessed 12 June, 2009).

It is clear that several GCC States were supportive of Thailand's initiatives. Two small GCC States, Qatar and Bahrain, are the founding members of the ACD and both had been active in taking up projects. Qatar also volunteered to host the 5th ACD meeting in 2006.

On other international stages, the GCC States were also supportive of Thailand. In the case of the OIC, several GCC States, namely Qatar and Bahrain, offered to mitigate the

tone of the rest of the Muslim world had over the Thai government's handling of southern violence.[431] The GCC States have always been the significant key voters for Thailand in the UN. In addition, some GCC States have been active in mitigating the constrained relations between Thailand and Saudi Arabia.

Over all, Thailand's relationship with the GCC States is sometimes driven by the institutional framework. Thailand benefits from the participation of the GCC States in its international initiatives. As well, the vote received from these GCC States and the potential votes Thailand may receive from the Muslim states, with help from the GCC States, would support Thailand's potential candidacy in international organisations, including the vote for UN secretary general, a post that Thailand's former foreign minister, Dr. Surakiati Satianrathai, ran for.

3.4 THE GOVERNMENT AND THE MEDIA

The Role of Media and Technology—Thailand's Launching of the Thai2Arab Web site

Globalisation plays an important role in defining the nature of international relations and also the means states use to interact. The advancement in media and telecommunication has been recognised by governments, as well as local and international organisations. With the government being criticised of its tight control of the press, as it was put into the "partly free" zone; as well as with the problem in the southernmost, taking absolute control over the media and stopping misleading critics was difficult for the Thai government.   There has been the transformation in the government's approach to countering the media: from harsh and strict control to a more diplomatic-oriented approach.

In 2005 the government invited journalists from the Middle East to visit the country; the journalists met with high level diplomats, visited different parts of Thailand. It was the government's hope that the journalists would present positive images about Thailand back home. Other attempt was when the government considered having the Qatar-based

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[431] Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

al-Jazeera to present the news about Thailand, particularly the news about the Muslim-majority south, with the hope that al-Jazeera will reflect a more positive outlook about the situation and the way that the government handled it.[432]

In September 2006, the Thai government, led by the ministry of foreign affairs, launched a Web site that specially devotes to Thailand's relationship with the Muslim world, the Thai2Arab (www.thai2arab.com). According to the ministry of foreign affairs, the aim of the Web site was to "strengthen the relations and mutual understanding between Thailand and the Muslim world.[433]" It is also the hope that the Web site would be "the windows of information for a wider Arab and Muslim public."[434] During the launching ceremony, then-foreign minister Dr. Kantathi Suphamongkhon remarked that the Web site represents a significant milestone in Thai-Middle Eastern relations. Kantathi claimed that it shows "Thailand's commitment to strengthen its ties with the Middle East and Muslim countries.[435]" During the launching ceremony, Arab diplomatic corps in Thailand, as well as Arab press from the Middle East had been invited.

Much of the information contained in the Web site largely concerns Thailand's relationship with Muslims; however, the Web site provides general information on Thai political, economic and social situation. One section is allocated specifically to information about Muslim in Thailand, touching upon the subjects of the role of Muslims in Thailand, history of Islam in Thailand, activities of the monarchy for Islamic affairs, the social and political equality, and the role of the executive and legislative branches of government in Islamic Affairs. Observing the Web site where only English and Arabic are used, it was quite clear that the target audience of this Web site is not Muslims in Thailand but rather the Arabs interested in doing business or tourism in Thailand. Trying to understand Thailand from different perspective is useful. Thus the media plays an important role in confirming a correct understanding about the country

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[432] Thanavon Pamaranon, "Inviting Al-Jazeera May Be Taking PR Too Far," *The Nation*, 16 July 2005.
[433] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, News Archives.
[434] Ibid.
[435] Remarks by H.E. Dr. Kantithi Suphamongkhon, Minister of Foreign Affairs at the Launch of the Thai2Arab Web site, Friday 8 September 2006.

and its Muslim citizens. As well, the Web site allowed the possibility for detail in investment and trade between Thailand and the Arab world.

Interestingly, the Thai2arab Web site was launched in 2006, when the relationship between Thailand and the Muslim world was tense due to violence in the south. A Thai diplomat pointed out that the Web site was one of the government's measures to improve the country's image over its treatment of Muslim minority. Upon conversation with staff at the ministry of foreign affairs over whether the motivation to launch the Web site was related to the need to improve the image of Thailand with the OIC and the Muslim world, the most responses was that the Web site was not directly targeted to solve the problem with the OIC or to improve the country's image.[436] Creating a positive image and good understanding between Thailand and the Muslim world was the only benefit from the Web site. The key motivation was indeed to promote Thailand in the Middle East to enhance trade, tourism and cooperation.

What can be demonstrated here is that modern technology and advanced telecommunication has been applied by states as a tool to strengthen its legitimacy, as well as maintaining a positive image and bilateral relations with other states. The power of the media and telecommunication under the globalised world is viewed as threatening the legitimacy and state power and public opinion can create strong impact on states, leading to the loss of confidence domestically and negative perception at the international level. States will try to reduce the chance of having their legitimacy being undermined by public and media opinion. In the case of Thailand, the media and telecommunication technologies had been used by the state to provide information on Muslims in Thailand and the relations with the Middle East. While states can barely control the spread of information and the media, one of the means to counter, when controlling it is not effective, is to create its own communication channel to spread its own information. This is to solve the image problem and clarify its treatment of Muslims. The Thai2arab Web site is pro-governmental in nature. It brings out a

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[436] Interview with an officer from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand, 3 August 2007.

positive image of Thailand, thus boosting confidence and positive environment for tourism, trade and investment.

4. THE NATURE OF RELATIONS

As noted, it was the Chuan administration that laid the foundation for the interactions between Thailand and the GCC States and the rest of the Muslim world. By the time Thaksin took over the office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had recruited sufficient staff with good knowledge of the Middle East. Thus it was less difficult for the Ministry to implement economically oriented foreign policy to the GCC and the Middle East region. [437] In terms of trade expansion, the department of South Asia, the Middle East and Africa had been more active in exploring the region of the Middle East and Islamic world.   Several countries had been placed under the government's pilot survey, including Iran, Maldives, and the Gulf region.[438] Private sector had been included into the planning and state visits. Targeting Middle East tourists and medical tourism projects with the GCC region had been emphasised more under Thaksin administration.

On the GCC side, all the states follow the GCC policy framework toward Thailand; thus the GCC States adhere to the collective action.[439] Meetings with the Thai government were usually done with all the GCC States collectively attended.[440] There are some differences in small details in terms of relations, but the core policy is the same.[441] This explains the failure of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Bahrain.   While both Thailand and Bahrain wanted the agreement to be successful, the deal had been objected by other GCC members, who claimed that the Free Trade agreement should be done between Thailand and the GCC States collectively. Therefore, the FTA with Bahrain had been halted, but with the plan for potential development of new FTA with the GCC

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[437] Observation during the 2 months' internship at the Department of South Asia, the Middle East and Africa, July-August 2003.

[438] There had been several meetings between government agencies and private sectors on plans to expand trade to the Muslim world. In addition, private sector associations had invited government officials to their seminar, including "Thailand's Trade in the Muslim World," "Opportunities for Thai Products in the Muslim World."

[439] Interview with the UAE ambassador in Thailand, 27 August 2007.

[440] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand.

[441] Interview with the UAE ambassador in Thailand. 27 August 2007.

States as a whole. It is significant, therefore, to note the nature of GCC policy tradition, which prefers collective action in making major international agreements.

In terms of security, unlike the previous administration, security concerns did not limit only to the threat from militants in the south, but also cover international terrorist network like Jemaah Islamiah (JI), and al-Qaeda. With the US war on terror, and the commitment most countries made on supporting it, Thailand worked closely with the GCC States in order to monitor the movement of terrorist groups, which had been reported as operating in some GCC States and using Thailand as transit and operation site.[442]

Relations between the GCC monarchies and Thai monarchy is well highlighted through the participation of GCC heads of states to the 60th year celebration of the King Bhumiphol's ascending to the throne in 2006. All the GCC monarchs, with the exception of Saudi Arabia, attended the event. Information about each of the GCC monarchs who visited Thailand during the occasion, as well as GCC country information was included in Thai daily newspaper. Thai people came to learn more about the GCC States through this occasion.

To compare with the previous administration, an official from the Ministry of foreign affairs observed that the nature of Thailand's relations with the GCC States can be characterised as followed:

1. Like the previous administration, there was no specific foreign policy made for the GCC States. The foreign policy used for the GCC States was Thailand's foreign policy toward the Middle East. However, there are some bilateral agreements Thailand had made with several GCC States under this administration. (For details on the agreements, see individual country's discussion)

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[442] "Thailand Admits Terrorist Leader Hambali Entered Kingdom," *Agence France Presse*, 12 December 2002.

2. Most of the relationship and agreements, i.e. on taxation, aviation, with the GCC States are still done through bilateral relations.

3. Some GCC States have been supporting Thailand in restoring and enhancing relations with other GCC States. While the GCC as an organisation had no legitimacy in influencing bilateral relations, informally, states that have close relationship with Thailand had been acting as a proxy for Thailand in strengthening the relations, i.e. Bahrain helped Thailand in improving relations with Saudi Arabia.

While personal connection and expertise in the Middle East of the former foreign minister had been advantageous to Thailand's relations with the GCC States, under Thaksin, lack of expertise and connection in the GCC States had been compensated with management and business skills. The relationship with the GCC States, as well as other states in the Muslim world had been supported by the government through trade promotions. This can be seen through the establishment of the Islamic Bank in Thailand, the project that had been turned down before in the previous administration. The government encouraged investment from the Gulf regions. According to Professor Jaran Maluleem from Thammasat University in Thailand, Thaksin was able to make rapid decision and run the risk; such helped hasten bureaucratic nature of Thai policy making and decision. [443]

The southern unrest, which urged Thailand to clarify its approach to handling the issue, had stimulated the need to strengthen relationship with the GCC States. Within the OIC, some GCC States were supportive and helpful in mediating the constraints and misunderstanding incurred from the southern unrests.

In terms of people-to-people relations, there was an increase in the number of Middle East visitors to Thailand. The incident on September 11 and the U.S. War on terror had shifted the interest of the Arab tourists from America and Europe to Asia, because of lower cost and friendlier atmosphere. Within the Middle East tourists, the percentage of

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[443] Interview with Professor Jaran Maluleem, Thammasat University, 2 September 2008.

the GCC tourists is very high; this factor will be discussed in the following section. Figure 20 shows the number of Middle East visitors coming to Thailand between 1997 and 2004. There had been constant increase in the tourists, with the exception of 2003, with the outbreak of SARS in Asia.

Figure 21: Number of Tourists from Middle East coming to Thailand 1997-2005
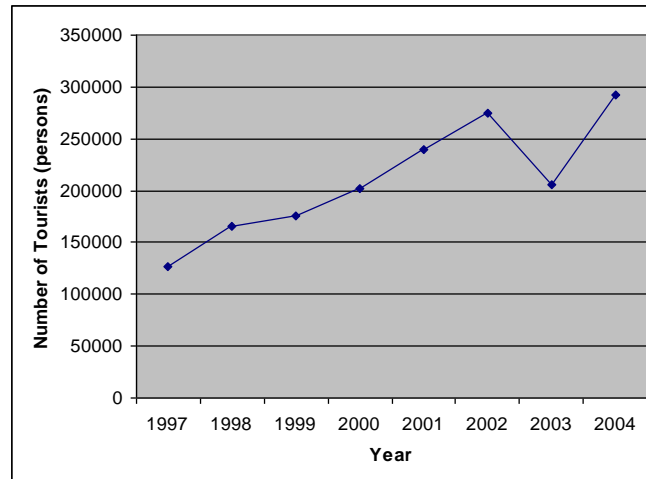
Source: Tourism Authority of Thailand.

The relationship between Thailand and the GCC States can also be seen as consisting of good will. This can be seen through the pledge received during the Indian Ocean Tsunami incident in 2004, which will be elaborated in the next section.

4.1 GCC States' Support During the Tsunami

The disastrous outcome of the Tsunami that hit several Indian-Ocean-Rim states in December 2004 demonstrated the relations between Thailand and the GCC States. Even though having been criticised by the media that the sum they provided to the affected areas was meagre,[444] the GCC States had pledged a good amount of money to Thailand. Some of the GCC States were among the first wave of countries that pledge aid (see table 12 below).

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[444] Reme Ahmad, "Seeking Schumachers of the Muslim World," *The Straits Times*, 8 January 2005.

Table 12: The Pledge that some Affected Countries Received from the GCC States in 2004-2005 ($)*

Countries/amount	Thailand	Indonesia	Somalia	Sri Lanka
Kuwait	n/a**	n/a	n/a	n/a
UAE	120,000	16,540,315	6,100	5,908,146
Qatar	293,731	699,585	n/a	239,873
Bahrain	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Oman	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Saudi Arabia	983,200	9,625,467	600,000	2,607,353
Total	**1,396,931**	**26,865,367**	**606,100**	**8,755,372**

*This only includes the pledge given through government-to government direction. It does not include the amount of pledge given through international organisations like the International Crescent Cross and UN affiliated organisations.

**Kuwait did send some assistance and financial support to Thailand through the Kuwait Red crescent society.

Source: The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, through Reliefweb. www.reliefweb.int/fts . (Last accessed 14 December, 2008).

Table 12 shows the pledges of the GCC States to selected affected states. That Indonesia received the highest pledge is understandably due to Islamic relations; in the case of Sri Lanka, the substantial pledge is understandably due to the scale of damages in the country. In the case of Thailand, the pledge came from Saudi Arabia, Qatar and UAE, all of which show cordial relations these GCC States have toward Thailand. With Saudi Arabia ranks the first in the amount given. This shows that despite constrained political relations, Saudi Arabia had been generous to Thailand and the constraint had very little effect on relief support and people-to-people relations. This was appreciated in Thailand, as can be seen through the discussion in the Thai media. The President of the Thai Islamic Trade and Industrial Association pointed out that despite significant pledge help and support from the GCC States during the tsunami, Thai policy makers still consider relationship with those states peripheral. The government still had not designed foreign policy that accommodates the development in relationship with this region:

> Thai people like to forget. We design our foreign policy without recognising priority and not identifying good friends. Think back to the Tsunami period, the Arabs gave substantial amount of money. We always give credit to Americans and Europeans, but we forget to realise that the Arabs had been helping us a lot too.[445]

In sum, while more attention was given to the Middle East and GCC regions in the previous administration, the Thaksin administration continued the established relations with the region, although the nature of attention leaned toward trade. That the interaction with the GCC States is based on an imbalanced combination, with the most governmental attention given to trade but less to political and social relations, reflects traditional perception that the GCC and the Middle East is peripheral politically and socially to the majority of the Thais, and that indifference can well be assigned to the overall nature of the relations. In terms of bilateral relations, however, the relationship between Thailand and individual GCC States differed in degree of intimacy; this will be discussed in the next section.

5. BILATERAL STATE RELATIONS

5.1 Thailand-Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is one of the countries which Thaksin aimed to restore relations. In the previous administration, the relationship had not improved because of the unprogressive investigation of the murder of the Saudi Diplomats and Jewelry theft. In 2001, the government set up a committee, chaired by the Justice Minister to re-investigate the crimes. The investigation in 2002 progressed slowly, with little improvement in political and diplomatic relations.[446] A little improvement is shown through the permission granted to the Thai foreign minister Surakiat to meet with H.R.H Prince Abdullah Ibn Abdul Aziz Al Saud, the first Deputy Minister and Commander of National Armed Forces of Saudi Arabia in 2004.[447] The visit marked the first time in 14

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[445] Interview with the director of TITIA.
[446] Shahid Ali Khan, "Need to Further Boost Saudi-Thai Ties," *SAUDI GAZETTE*, 15 December 2002.
[447] Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

years that Saudi Arabia received a ministerial-level delegation from Thailand.[448] In addition, as noted, Saudi Arabia has shown good will in pledging to tsunami victims in 2004, which Saudi Arabia pledge the highest amount. (See table 12). Not until 2005 that Saudi Arabia expressed satisfaction over the outcome of the investigation, and considered restore the relations. In the same year, Saudi Arabia agreed to join the Asian Cooperation Dialogue, which makes all the GCC States member of the ACD.

While there was some improvement in diplomatic relations between the two sides, there was no formal change in the level of diplomatic relations. It is worth noting that there was no representative from Saudi Arabia attended the 60th celebration on the throne of King Bhumiphol Adulyadej in 2006. With the exception of Saudi Arabia, all the Gulf heads of state, along with heads of state from Middle East around the world attended.

While the diplomatic relations between the two states had not markedly improved, trade relations had, and Islamic relations remained intact. A diplomat from the Thai embassy in Riyadh pointed out that, "We wish that one day progress will be made in bettering the political relations between the two countries. I have to admit that despite stable relationship at the political level, our ties at religious, trade and economic spheres are growing steadily"[449]

5.1.1   Trade Relations

Starting from 2001, commercial tie with Saudi Arabia began to improve even though diplomatic relations had not settled back to normal level. [450] Such reflects the ability of the government to pursue efficient international trade policy with Saudi Arabia, in that it could de-link trade from political affairs. Figure 21 shows that exports from Thailand to Saudi Arabia had been gradually improved, starting in 2001 and continue to move upward in 2005; at the same time, import increased rapidly.

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[448] Ibid.
[449] Khan, "Need to Further Boost Saudi-Thai Ties."
[450] M. Ghazanfar Ali Khan, "Saudi-Thai Ties Thaw after Murder Case Reopening," *ARAB NEWS*, 4 July 2001.

Figure 22: Thailand's Trade with Saudi Arabia 1997-2005
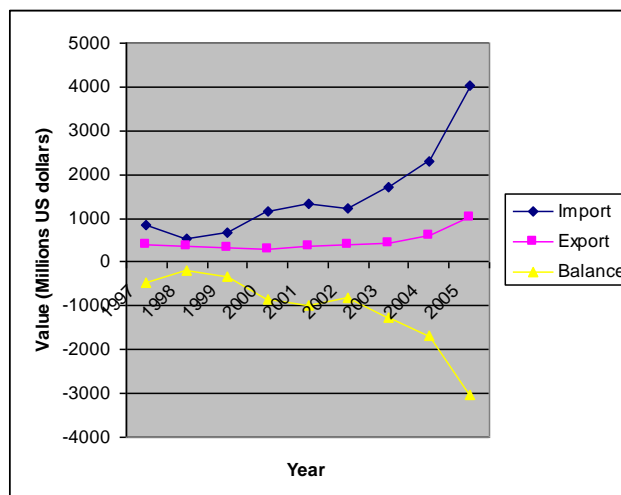
Source: Ministry of Commerce, Thailand.

Trade relations had not been improved only in the government sector, but also in the private sector. In 2005, the Saudi chamber of commerce signed a memorandum of understanding with the Federation of Thai Industry for the cooperation between the chambers of commerce and industry. The MOU is to strengthen relations between private sectors of the two states. [451]

5.1.2   Social Relations

Islamic relations continued to be intact despite the constrained political and diplomatic relations. The dynamism of the religious relations between Thailand and Saudi Arabia can be measured through Saudi supports for Muslims in Thailand. Saudi Arabia still provided reasonable quota for pilgrims from Thailand, within which King Fahd continued to sponsor some pilgrims each year. The Saudi government also continued to provide scholarship for Thai Muslims going to study in Saudi Arabia.[452] Religious tie continue to prove its strength and its separation from political realm.

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[451] "Saudi-Thai Ties Getting Stronger," *Saudi Press Agency*, 27 May 2005.
[452] Khan, "Saudi-Thai Ties Thaw after Murder Case Reopening."

5.1.3 *Notes on Thailand's Relationship with Saudi Arabia*

The development of an effort in investigation of the theft and murder of Saudi diplomats under Thaksin's administration had begun with enthusiasm, though at the end of 2006, there was no absolute conclusion of the investigation. Thailand's diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia continued to improve very little. On the other hand, the improvement in trade relations and the unaffected Islamic relations had proved the separation among political, trade and religious realms.

5.2 Thailand and Bahrain

Despite not having embassy in Thailand, Bahrain's relations with Thailand had seen constant growth. Bahrain had been considered as one of Thailand's closest partners in the Middle East region.[453] Under Thaksin's administration, Bahrain was considered as an important gateway to the rest of the GCC States.[454] Since the opening of Royal Thai embassy in Manama in February 2004, the relationship between Thailand and Bahrain has become more dynamic. There have been several exchanges in visits among government officials and private sectors. Although Bahrain still has no embassy in Thailand, there has been plan to establish the embassy in Bangkok, which had been approved in 2006. As of 2005, the Bahrain embassy in Beijing still provides support for the interactions between Thailand and Bahrain.

Bahrain is considered as part of the "friendly Islamic block" by ministry of foreign affairs staffs.[455] Not only that Bahrain supported Thailand's application for observer status in the OIC, Bahrain also supported and helped mitigate Thailand's image in the Muslim World over its handling of the Southern violence in 2004 in the OIC and among

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[453] Interview with an official from Ministry of Foreign Affairs. August 2007.

[454] Edward Tang, "Bangkok Eyes Rich Mid-East Markets—Thai Businessmen to Tap the Trade and Tourism Potential of the Middle East as Demand from the US and ASEAN Declines," *The Straits Times*, 13 June 2002.

[455] Interview with an official from Middle Eastern Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand, 27 July 2007.

international Muslim community. [456]   Thailand also sought Bahrain's support in improving relations with Saudi Arabia.[457]

Diplomatic relations between Thailand and Bahrain were enhanced by support from the emir of Bahrain, who frequently visited Thailand and used Thai medical facilities. The emir and the Bahrain government had played an active role in supporting Thailand's celebration of King's Bhumiphol's 60th year ascending to the throne, in 2006. Prior to the celebration, Bahrain volunteered to coordinate and offered a private plane for Minister of Foreign Affairs to fly to invite Gulf royal families.[458] Such relations support demonstrate the characteristics of Asian and Middle East politics, where personal connections and distinguish individuals can influence the nature of international relations.

5.2.1   Trade and Economic Relations

Under Thaksin's administration, there had been much development in terms of relations with Bahrain.   Much more interactions had been done between the two sides, particularly in terms of trade.   In 2001, the visit of Bahrain's prime minister strengthened Thailand's relationship with Bahrain, particularly in terms of trade.   The visit concluded with agreements on trade promotion, avoiding double taxation and anti-income tax evasion agreement. [459]   One year after, in 2002, Thailand proposed the signing of agreement on economic cooperation with Bahrain, making the two countries become close economic partners.[460] In September 2004, Thailand and Bahrain signed the Memorandum of Understanding to establish Thai Business Center in Bahrain to promote and strengthen trade and investment relations.[461]

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[456] "Foreign Minister Says Muslim Countries Understand Situation in Tak Bai," *Thai Press Reports* 29 October 2004.

[457] "Bahrain PM Pays Official Visit to Thailand," *Thai Press Reports*, 22 May 2002.

[458] Interview with an official from Ministry of Foreign Affiars, Thailand, 27 July 2007.

[459] "Bahrain PM Concludes Working Visit to Thailand with Economic Pacts," *Agence France Presse*, 3 November 2001.

[460] Kislenko, "Bending with the Wind: The Continuity and Flexibility of Thai Foreign Policy."

[461] "Agreement on Signing Thai Business Centre in Bahrain Signed," *MENA Business Reports*, 26 September 2004.

In 2004, the foreign minister had paid an official visit to Bahrain and the UAE. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Bahrain aimed to use the expertise of the Thai Petroleum company, PTT, to conduct a petroleum survey in Bahrain.[462] The meeting with Bahrain was also aimed to discuss about prospect to promote Thailand's construction and Thai goods.

5.2.2   Social Relations

One way to measure the level of people-to-people relations is to measure the amount of interactions being made. Observing the frequency of direct flight between the two states can indirectly measure the level of interactions among people. In 2002, it is apparent that there was an increase in people relations. This is because the Thai national carrier, Thai Airways International, began flying from Bangkok to Manama in November, making it easier for people from two sides. Manama was the 4th city in the Gulf where Thai airways flies, in addition to Dubai, Kuwait City and Muscat.[463] It can be seen that such cities were where Thailand had developed greater relations during that period. With direct flight, Thailand aimed to attract more tourists from Bahrain.

Despite improvement in people relation, as of 2005, the social relations between Bahrain and Thailand were not active compared to social relations between Thailand and other GCC States. The lack of knowledge among Bahrainis about Thailand and vice versa is the underlying explanation. It was difficult for people of both sides to interact with one another. Lacking embassy in Bahrain and Bangkok had made it difficult to seek information and access. The establishment of embassy and the Thai business center would help promote tourism and stimulate people-to-people relations in Bahrain.

5.2.3   Notes on Thailand's Relationship with Bahrain

While political relations through monarchical and high ranks officials were dynamic, trade and people-to-people relations with Bahrain were comparatively less so. However, there were visually efforts from both states to develop facilities that will bolster relations,

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[462] "Thai Foreign Minister Visits Bahrain and UAE," *Thai Press Reports*, 16 February 2004.
[463] Richard Moore, "Thai Embassy to Be Opened; Trade Centre on Way as Airline Plans Direct Bahrain-Bangkok Flights," *Gulf Daily News*, 3 October 2002.

both in terms of trade and people-to-people relations. This includes the establishment of embassy in Bahrain, the launching of direct flight between Bangkok and Bahrain. Such move will in the future allow greater interactions, which create greater knowledge about one another.

5.3 Thailand and Qatar

In 2002, Thailand agreed to cooperate with Qatar in preparing for the Asian Games in Doha in 2006. Thailand's contribution to such event includes allowing Qatari Asian Games Committee to hold meeting in Thailand as well as becoming partnerships with many projects in preparation of the Games.[464] Later in the same year, Thailand won the contract to be the designer of the sport village and other facilities for athlete in Doha Asian Games 2006. Qatar also demonstrated good will for bilateral relations with Thailand by pledging financial assistance for the victims of tsunami in 2004 (see table 12).

5.3.1 Trade Relations

Thailand's trade with Qatar maintains the same pattern with the previous administration. Thailand imported from Qatar more. As noted, between 2000 and 2005 Qatar had been in the top ten sources for Thailand's crude oil import. Figure 22 shows the import and export value between Thailand and Qatar. While import constantly increases every year, export from Thailand to Qatar only began to increase in 2001. The export value in 2005 had doubled that of 2004. As small GCC States, Qatar and Bahrain's trade with Thailand had always been low compared to other states; and Thailand's export to Qatar had always been in the same range as that of Bahrain. However, in 2005, export to Qatar doubled that of Bahrain (see figure 23).

In sum, there has been an improvement in trade relations with Qatar. According to political and economic analysts at the Qatar embassy, there has been an increase in interactions between Qatar and Thai businessmen. At the same time, Qataris have

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[464] "Qatar Seeks Thai Assistance in the Preparation of the Next Asian Games," *Thai Press Report*, October 7 2002.

obtained more knowledge about Thailand through tourism and news. Therefore, Thai products have been more welcome in the Qatari market.[465]

Figure 23 : Thailand's Trade with Qatar 1997-2005
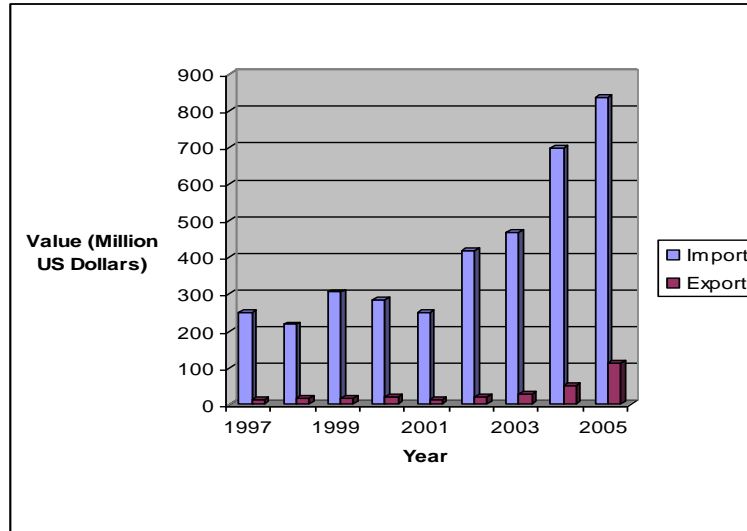
Source: Ministry of Commerce, Thailand.

Figure 24: Thailand's Trade with Qatar and Bahrain, a Comparison 1997-2005
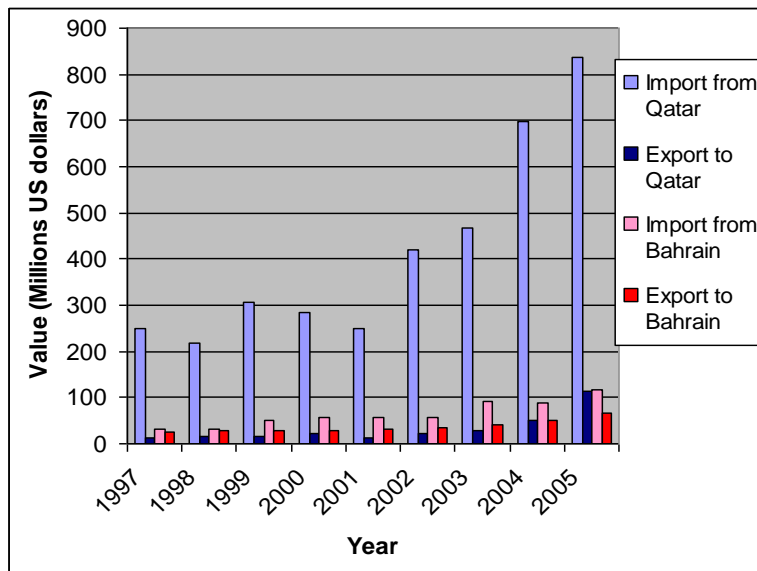
Source: Ministry of Commerce, Thailand.

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[465] Interview with political and economic analysts at the Qatar Embassy, Bangkok, Thailand, 15 August 2007.

5.3.2   Social Relations

Social relations between Thailand and Qatar continued to be comparatively inactive. However, the relationship between Muslims had been dynamic. In 2006, the Sultan of Qatar provided financial support for the construction of school buildings and student dormitory in Islamic college in Southern Thailand, where, Qatar's minister of Endowment and Islamic Affairs attended the inaugural ceremony in Thailand.[466] In addition, the Qatar-based Al-jazeera had been the most known Arab media in Thailand.

5.3.3   Notes on Thailand's Relationship with Qatar

Political relationship with Qatar was shown to improve, as well as trade relations. However, compared to other GCC States, the amount of trade is still comparatively low. In terms of social relations, Islamic relations were dominant. However, as a whole, there is a potential improvement in the people-to-people relations as a whole.

5.4   Thailand-Kuwait

5.4.1   Diplomatic Relations

The Thai government continued to maintain the existing relationship with Kuwait, although there was no remarkable improvement in relationship between the two sides. There had been exchanges in state visits of key officers from both sides, including the visits of the deputy minister for Ministry of Labour in 2003, a visit from political advisor and Thai private sector groups in 2004, and lastly in 2005, through his GCC States tour, the deputy prime minister, Dr. Surakiat Sathianthai visited Kuwait to ask support for his running for UN Secretary post.[467] From the Kuwait side, there has been informal visit of Kuwaiti policy maker; in 2003 Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the deputy prime minister and minister of Foreign affairs of Kuwait paid personal visit to Thailand.[468]

When tsunami hit Thailand in December 2004, Kuwait had demonstrated a good will by providing financial assistance through the Kuwait Red Crescent society for the Tsunami

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[466] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand.
[467] Ibid.
[468] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand.

victims. Kuwaiti diplomatic delegation also visited the tsunami sites and to provide moral support for the victims.[469]

5.4.2   Trade Relations

Thailand's trade with Kuwait had not been significant compared to other GCC States like the UAE, and Oman. However, Thailand's export to Kuwait has been increased in steady rate (see figure 25). In order to boost trade between Thailand and Kuwait, an Agreement for the Avoidance of Double Taxation, which had been signed since 1998 had been amended in 2003. In addition, the government had tried to explore the opportunity to export halal food to Kuwait. In 2004, a governmental delegation had led groups of Thai entrepreneur to Kuwait to explore the halal food market.

Figure 25: Thailand's Trade with Kuwait 2001-2007
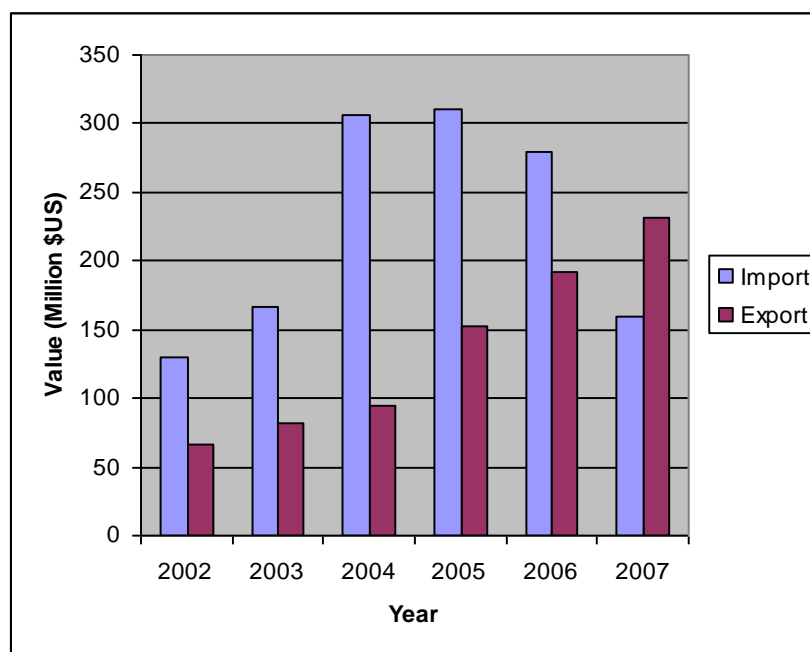
Source: Ministry of Commerce, Thailand.

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[469] Kuwait Red Crescent Society, "Tsunami Support for Thailand," 2002.

Figure 26: Thailand's Export to Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain 2001-2007
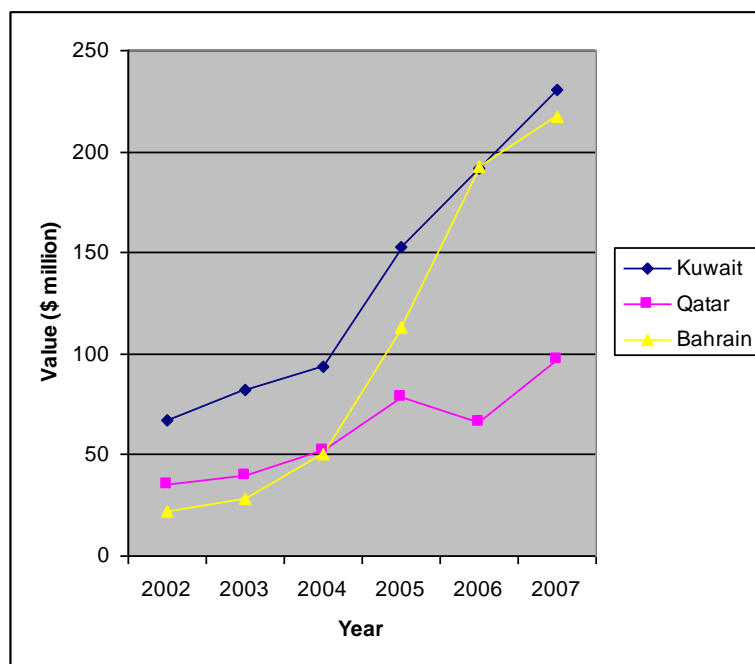
Source: Ministry of Commerce, Thailand.

5.4.3   Social Relations

Kuwait had been included as a targeted country for the promotion of the Tourism Authority of Thailand.[470] Figure 26 demonstrates that the number of tourists in Kuwait has constantly increased from 1997. While tourists from Saudi Arabia decreased and remained low, Kuwait tourists became the second to the UAE as the biggest GCC tourists visiting Thailand.

Since 2001, medical care and spas have been used to promote Thai tourism in Kuwait.[471] In particular, Thailand encouraged Kuwaitis to seek medical care in Thailand, whose medical facilities are close to standards in the West but cheaper. To support tourism even more, Thai Airways began flying to Kuwait in April 2002.[472]

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[470] Interview with a Tourism of Thailand staff, July 2007.

[471] Chatrudee Theparat, "Thai Trade Mission to Focus on Health Care, Energy," *Bangkok Post*, 18 November 2004.

[472] "Thai Airways Launches Three Weekly Flights to Kuwait," *Middle East Business Digest,* 4 April 2002.

Figure 27: Number of Kuwaiti Tourists Visiting Thailand 1997-2005
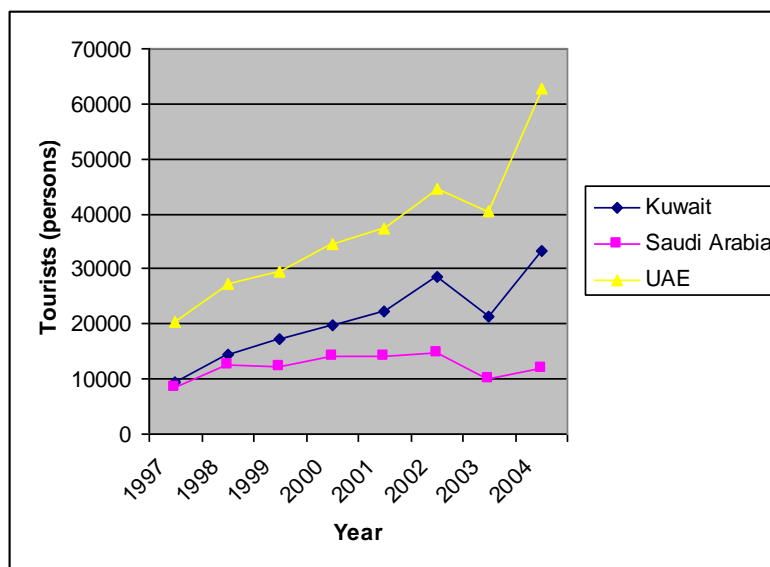
Source: Tourism Authority of Thailand.

In terms of education, in 2002, Kuwait agreed to fund 100 million baht project to promote southern Thailand as Southeast Asian Center for Muslim education and culture.[473] A member of the Kuwaiti royal family attended a seminar on Muslim studies in southern Thailand.[474] In addition, the Kuwaiti government also provides scholarship for Muslim students to study in Kuwait.

5.4.4   *Notes on Thailand's Relationship with Kuwait*

In sum, Thailand's relationship with Kuwait is highlighted with people-to-people relation, where there were activities and constant contacts. Trade and political relations had not been remarkably dynamic, compared to other GCC States where several agreements and establishment of agencies stimulate relations.

5.5   Thailand and Oman

Thailand's relationship with Oman improved from the previous administration. Compared to the previous administration, there was an increase in the number of exchanges in visits of high-ranking officials from both sides, namely from the ministry

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[473] "Kuwait to Fund Muslim Centre in South," *The Nation*, 19 September 2002.
[474] Ibid.

of energy and the ministry of education, and ministry of agriculture.[475] Averagely, there were at least 2 visits of high rank officials from Thailand to Oman, largely officials from Ministry of Energy and Labour.[476] In 2004, there were three official visits within only one year; this reflects higher interest in the country from before, where under the Chuan administration between 1997 and 2001, there were only two key visits within four years. Prime Minister Thaksin visited Oman in 2005 and paid courtesy call to Sultan Qaboos bin Said; in addition, the prime minister discussed Oman's deputy prime minister over the possibility to expand cooperation in trade, investment, energy as well as exchange in know-how and academic cooperation.

5.5.1   Trade Relations

Thailand had always run large trade deficit with Oman, as noted, because of oil purchase. At the same time, Thai products had not been popular in Oman, causing low level of export. However, beginning from 2001, Thailand's export to Oman began to grow in an impressive rate; doubled in value between 2004 and 2005 (see figure 27). At the same time the oil trade, which has always played a crucial rule in Thailand's trade relations with Oman, continued to expand in investment; in 2002, Thailand's PTT Company Limited obtained the concession rights from Ministry of Oil and Gas in Oman to petroleum in Block 44 in Oman.[477] In 2003, the PTT Exploration and Production Public Company (PTTEP) was established in Muscat; the company employs both Thai and Omani workers. Four years after, in 2006, the PTTEP Company Limited also obtained another concession from the Oman government in exploring petroleum in Block 58. Block 44, which covers 1165 Sqkm can produce $30 million cubic feet, and has liquid gas of 2000 barrels/day.[478]

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[475] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of South Asia, Middle East and Africa.
[476] Ibid.
[477] Information from the document on the PTTEP Oman project.
http://www.pttep.com/en/newsDetail.aspx?ContentID=27. (Last accessed 25 June, 2009).
[478] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand.

Figure 28: Thailand's Export to Oman 1997-2005
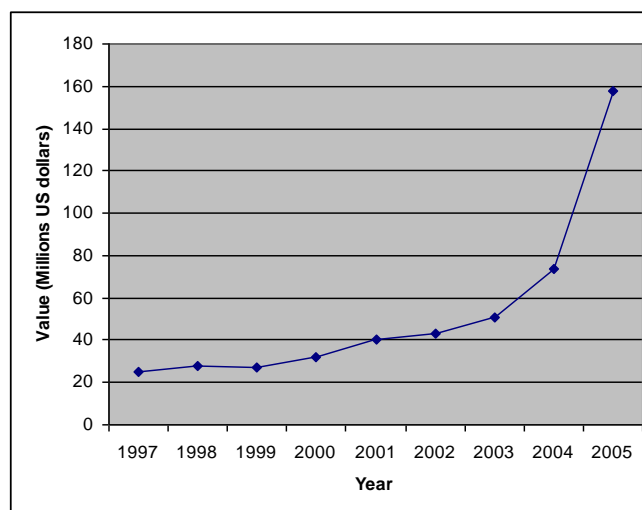
Source: Ministry of Commerce, Thailand.

There has been an increased interest in Thai products, particularly agricultural products. In 2002, the Ministry of Commerce and Ministry of Agriculture of Thailand organised Thailand's Agricultural Product Fair in Oman; the fair attracted a large number of Omanis.[479] From the fair, there was hope on the Thai part that there will be good future for Thai products. Agricultural products, namely flowers and plants from Thailand were popular in Thailand; and a large amount of Thai orchids had been ordered to decorate palaces and hotels in Oman.[480]

5.5.2   Social Relations

Personal ties played an important role in defining Thailand's relationship with Oman. The interview with diplomat from ministry of foreign affairs indicates that the sultan of Oman visited Thailand on his personal trip several times.[481] In addition, there was exchange of agricultural experts and students project between Oman and Thailand.[482] Compared to the past, where Omanis had very little knowledge about Thailand and its products, there has been greater knowledge among Omanis about Thailand, thanks to the

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[479] "Banpot Wants to Focus on Middle East Market, Flowers from Thailand Bloom in Oman Palace," *Thai Rath* 26 September 2002
[480] Ibid.
[481] Interview with a staff from Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, 16 August 2007
[482] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand.

greater promotion about tourism and medical facilities available in Thailand. The figure below (figure 28) shows that the number of tourists from Oman substantially increased in late 1990s; particularly from 1997 to 1998, the number of Omani tourists visiting Thailand almost 63% increased.

Figure 29: The Number of Omani Tourists to Thailand in Selected Years
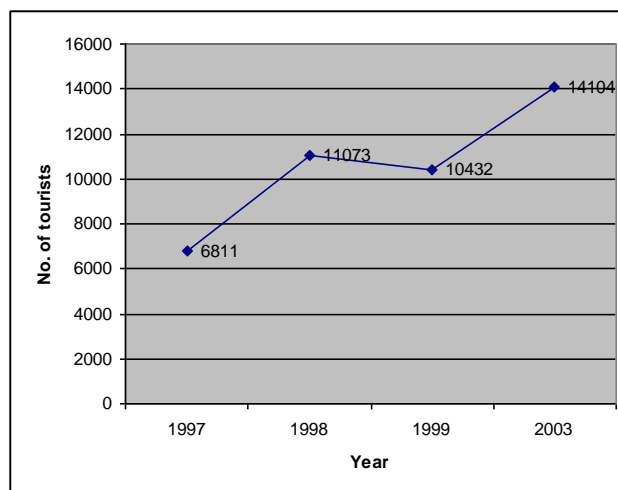
Source: Tourism Authority of Thailand

Among the Omanis, Thailand has become famous medical hub of Asia; there are three Thai hospitals have established referral centers in Muscat, including Bumrungrad Hospital, Bangkok Hospital, and Piyavej Hospital. [483] In 2005, Thailand and Oman signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Tourism Cooperation; the MOU reflects the urge to promote tourism between the two countries. [484]

5.5.3   *Notes on Thailand's Relationship with Oman*

There has been an increase in dynamism in Thailand's relations with Oman. Trade and social relations shows that different governmental agencies have played an important role in bolstering inter-agency rapport, and ultimately result in increased in trade and social relation.

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[483] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand.
[484] Ibid.

5.6   Thailand-UAE

Diplomatic relations between Thailand and the UAE were enhanced through trade relations, which had been discussed through high-ranking official visits.   This corresponded to the nature of foreign policy that aims to promote trade in new markets. Political relations had been developed along trade relations; there has been closer links between the UAE officials and Thailand. There had been the exchanges in visits among governmental agencies that worked closely, namely minister of labour, minister of commerce, minister of energy, minister of public health. In addition, the UAE had shown the good will to support Thailand when tsunami hit.

5.6.1   Trade Relations

The relationship between Thailand and the United Arab Emirates had constantly been developed. The UAE ranks the first in the Middle East as trade partner with Thailand.[485] In 2005, 33% of the oil Thailand imports comes from the UAE, making it rank the first as the crude oil suppliers. Compared to 2004, Thailand increased its import of oil from the UAE by 54.4 %.[486] The UAE also allowed Thailand to export halal chicken, which was the beginning of the development of halal food export from Thailand to the Middle East. To the UAE customers, Thai products and service are of good quality and are usually cheaper when compared to products from Western countries.[487]

The UAE has been one of Thailand's targeted trade promotion centres in the Middle East. In Dubai, the Thai Trade Promotion Office, under the administration of the Ministry of Commerce, oversees and provides support to Thailand's trade relations with the Middle Eastern countries. In 2003, the Thai Trade Promotion Office suggested that the government pay special attention to the GCC market due to its high purchasing power. Much of the road show and Thai trade fairs were held in the UAE, particularly in Dubai. Thus the UAE is one of the most important countries in terms of trade and economic relations with Thailand.

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[485] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand.
[486] Ibid.
[487] "Thai Foreign Minister Visits Bahrain and UAE."

5.6.2   Social Relations

Tourism still highlights people to people relations between Thailand and the UAE. For the UAE ambassador to Thailand, tourism greatly promotes Thailand and creates positive attitude among the Emiratis toward the country:

> Thailand could offer some shopping centers, family style traveling, seaside, serviced apartment and hotel. The important thing is also that there is the availability of halal food, and mosques. Other thing is that they find Thailand a safe and secure country. In terms of visa, the Emiratis got the exemption of visa to enter Thailand, making it easier to come to visit than going to the West. Other thing is that you have to understand that Arabs travel with family, which means a big group; it is cheaper, easier to enter Thailand than going to the West. Now there are a lot of airlines that fly to Thailand, for the UAE, there are Emirates and Ethihad.[488]

Between 2004 and 2006, many Thai private hospitals established its referral centers in the UAE, thus facilitating and promoting more medical tourists from the UAE. Thai hospitals are well known for the treatment of heart disease and cancer.[489] Since the mid-2000s the UAE government began to send patients to Bamrungrad Hospitals in Thailand instead of sending them to Europe, which is costlier.[490]

5.6.3   Notes on Thailand's Relationship with the UAE

The relations between Thailand and the UAE had been moving towards a more dynamic nature in all aspects. Trade and tourism has been the major forces that stimulate relations. Islamic affairs had not been remarkably significant in the relations between the two sides. The cooperation between governmental sub-units also helped define the nature of the intergovernmental relations between the two sides.

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[488] Ibid.
[489] Interview with the UAE ambassador, Bangkok, Thailand, 27 August 2007.
[490] Ibid.

6. THAILAND-INTERGOVERNMENT RELATIONS

6.1 The Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) and Asian states

The Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) was initiated by Thailand to draw cooperation from Asian countries. There are 30 member countries in the ACD, 3 countries in East Asia, 5 in Central Asia, 9 in Southeast Asia, 5 in South Asia, and 7 in the Middle East.[491] Within 7 ACD members in the Middle East, 6 were all the GCC member countries. The aim of the ACD was to provide an informal stage for Asian stage to discuss plans and projects, and to create different clusters for cooperation projects. Different members volunteer to be leaders in 19 different cooperative projects, namely tourism, energy, IT development, agriculture, road safety, natural disaster, E-Education and human resource development. [492]

While Thaksin viewed that the ACD would demonstrate Thailand's attempt to solidify relationship among Asian nations together, the ACD had received some criticisms. One of the critics suggests negative feedbacks from Asian nations. One criticism is over the overlapping function of the ACD, when compared with other existing regional forum, namely the Asian Region Forum.[493] Whether effective or not, the ACD reflects ways in which states seek to group together to strengthen their position, through cooperation and projects. In the case of Thailand, the ACD also demonstrates the urge to become one of the region's active members. To strengthen relations and gain support from regional powers, Thailand had to demonstrate its success in drawing regional powers like China and Japan to join; as well as the friendly Arab blocks like the GCC States to join the forum. The participation in such international platforms demonstrates two key factors: mutual benefit from joint projects and cooperation, and the need to strengthen bilateral relations by agreeing to participate in the forum.

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[491] Information from www.acddialogue.com (Last accessed 12 June, 2009).
[492] Ibid.
[493] Patumporn Watcharasatien, "Who Gets What from ACD," *Matichon* 13 June 2002.

6.2   Relations with the OIC

Under Thaksin's administration between 2001 and 2005, the violence in the southern part of Thailand created difficult relations between Thailand and the OIC, which also affected Thailand's relationship with the Muslim world, and the GCC States.

6.2.1   Background of the Troubled South: Trigger for Thai-OIC Sour Relations

Violence and unrest in the south was not totally a new phenomenon; Thailand has suffered from insurgency since mid 20th century. However, the sequences of violence, which intensified in early 2004, had attracted international attention. This is due to the large scale of violence and the government's measure to counter incidents that took place. In addition, international attention had been stimulated by the availability and swiftness of the media report on the incident and interconnectness among Muslims in different parts of the world. The unrest in the south arguably came to the government attention in 2004, when a group of militant robbed a military base in Narathiwat province and seized almost 400 weapons.[494] Since 2004, there had been a dramatic increase of violence in the south, including arsons, bombings, and homicides. Victims were teachers, Buddhist monks as well as lay people, both Buddhists and Muslims. Table 13 shows the numbers of incident in southern Thailand between 2004 and 2006, in which 2005 has the largest number of incidents. Arrests had been made and most of the suspects were local Muslims.

Table 13: Number of Incidents in the Southern Thai Conflict 2004-2006[495]

Year	Number of incidents
2004	1850
2005	2297
2006	1815

Source: Duncan McCargo, *Tearing Apart the Land.* 2008.

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[494] Duncan McCargo, "Rethinking Thailand's Southern Violence: Introduction," *Critical Asian Studies* 38, no. 1 (2006), p. 2.
[495] McCargo, Tearing Apart the Land, p.xi.

Two of the incidents in the south particularly caused the Muslim world to question Thailand's approach to handle the issue. The first incident took place in April 2004, when the Thai security officers shoot 105 young Muslim youths, who, mostly armed with knives, attacked several police posts in Thailand's southern province of Yala.[496] The shooting also took place on the same day at the Krue Se Mosque in Pattani province, where some of the youths who escaped from the police took shelter.[497] This incident had been criticised as not only it resulted in the perceived unnecessary death of youths, but also the ruin of the respectable ancient place of worship for Muslims. With Pattani is viewed as a historically significant Islamic city of Southeast Asia, the incident called for attentions from the Muslim world even more.

The second incident took place later in the same year in Narathiwat province; Muslim demonstrators were piled up into army trucks heading for Thai army camp after the mass demonstration took place at a police station in Tak Bai District.[498] Lacking of space in the truck, the high density of people piled up, plus the weak physical conditions of those in the truck resulted in suffocation caused 78 deaths.

In order to handle the incidents, the investigation committees, as well as the National Reconciliation Commission (NRC) had been set up in March 2005.[499] To provide an explanation to the incidents, the Thai ambassadors and consul-general whose missions are in Muslim countries were invited to visit the south and were given booklets explaining situation in the south. In practice, however, the way the Thai government handled the situation in southern Thailand has been questioned by the international community. In order to clarify the situation with the Muslim world, ambassadors from Muslim nations were invited to visit the sites where incidents took place, as well as to talk to local Muslims. In addition, Thailand sent special envoys to the OIC headquarters in Riyadh to explain the situations to key OIC officers.[500]

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[496] Ibid.
[497] Ibid.
[498] Ibid.
[499] "Thailand: National Reconciliation Commission Materialised," *Thai Press Reports*, 25 March 2005.
[500] "Thai Government Explains Southern Situation to Organization of the Islamic Conference," *Thai Press Reports*, 7 March 2005.

6.2.2   OIC and Thailand's Interactions through Southern Violence Problems

Thailand's relationship with the OIC under Thaksin's administration had been viewed as abandoned even before the southern violence took place. The government had been criticised as not utilised the OIC stage to efficiently clarify the situation in the south.[501] Twice, in June and July 2005, the OIC, with Thailand's approval, sent delegations to gather facts and meet with Muslims in the affected south. In its investigation report on the southern Thailand incident in June 2005, the OIC concluded that the situation in southern Thailand was "not religious conflict."[502] The organisation also expressed support over Thailand's effort to resolve problem in the southern provinces.[503]

Even though Thailand had demonstrated its willingness to resolve the southern problem, the situation in the south did not improve much. Violence took place almost daily, and in October 2005, the OIC Secretary General Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu expressed his concern over violence in Thailand, the Thai government's handling the case, and the suppression against Muslims in the south. Ihsanoglu urged the government to depend less on military means but more dialogue to restore peace and security.[504] Prime Minister Thaksin, however, responded negatively with the OIC Secretary General's comment, pointing out that such comments intensified even more the situation.[505]

In an effort to explain the southern incident to the Muslim world, the second foreign minister of the Thaksin administration, Dr. Kanthathi Supamonkol, attended the 32nd session of the OIC ministerial meeting in Yemen, where he delivered a statement that emphasised Thailand's ties with OIC members and the OIC. Being the first Thai foreign minister who delivered a statement at the OIC meeting, Kanthathi raised the issue regarding the situation in the south by pointing out Thailand's willingness to work with

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[501] "Editorial :Restore Tradition of Tolerance," *The Nation*, 16 March 2005.
[502] "Thailand, Islamic Conference Issue Statement after Talks on South Violence," *The Nation*, 9 June 2005.
[503] "Thai Minister Welcomes OIC Support for Efforts to Resolve Southern Conflict," *The Nation* 30 June 2005.
[504] Rungrawee Pinyorat, "Thai Premier Hits Back at OIC Criticism on Violence in South," *Associated Press Worldstream*, 20 October 2005.
[505] Ibid.

the OIC to solve the problem and that the support from the OIC reflected positive relations between Thailand and the OIC.[506] In the 33rd session of the OIC meeting in Azerbaijan, Kanthathi emphasised the government's effort in creating harmony with people of different religions, at the same time; Thailand offered to help OIC member states to fight over the Avian Influenza.[507] The 33rd OIC ministerial meeting also resulted in two documents related to Thailand; one document stated that the OIC secretary-general must cooperate with the Thai government to follow up on the condition of Muslims in Southern Thailand, while another document emphasised protecting the rights of Muslims communities and minorities in non-OIC member states.[508]

Until now, the situation in the south had not resolved to the normal level, despite much effort and change in government. There is a need for the Thai state to pursue greater efforts to stop the violence and at the same time to improve its image with Muslims in the region.

The relationship between Thailand and the OIC under the Thaksin administration had gone through a transformation: from cordial relations with the previous administration to perceived distant relations under Thaksin's administration. That the OIC's attitude toward Thailand had transformed dramatically and rapidly from 1998 when it was accepted as observer. Thai media recounted the rationale for the acceptance that was due to a positive account of Thailand's treatment to Muslim citizen.[509] The OIC changed from admiration to cautious optimism to hostile attitude toward Thailand.[510]

While intergovernmental organisations generally help mediate constrains and enhance a better understanding of situation within their member countries, as well as relationship

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[506] "Thailand and the Muslim Community Get Closer Relations," *Thai Press Reports*, 7 July 2005.
[507] Achara Ashayagachat, "Thailand Urges OIC to Condemn Perpetrators of Violence in South," *Bangkok Post*, 21 June 2006.
[508] Sopaporn Kurz, "Thai Foreign Minister: OIC Members View Southern Unrest as 'Internal Matter,'" *The Nations*, 22 June 2006.
[509] "Editorial: Restore Tradition of Tolerance." *The Nation.* 16 March 2005.
[510] Kavi Chongkittavorn, "Regional Perspective: Thaksin's Exceptionalism Vs Thai Diplomacy," *The Nation*, 28 February 2005.

among member countries, in the case of Thailand, state relations came second to the welfare of Muslim minorities who reside within Thailand. Identity plays an important role, as safeguarding Muslims rights strictly corresponds with the organisational objective. Sometimes, states employ international organisations to help clarify its stand and demonstrate its good will to solve problem. The Thai state under Thaksin had not done enough to utilise the OIC stage to strengthen its stand. Instead of internalising the OIC support to reduce potential constrain with the Muslim world, Thailand unintentionally fail to prevent constraint with the OIC itself.

6.3   Notes on Intergovernmental Organisations

Contemporary states employ intergovernmental organisation as mediators in enhancing inter-state relations. In the previous administration, the intergovernmental organisations largely acted as supportive mechanisms for states; in particular, they strengthened states' legitimacy and provide access for one state to develop grater bilateral relations with others. Through intergovernmental framework, state cooperation can be achieved much faster and more efficiently. Under Thaksin's administration, the Thai state initiated the ACD with the aim to develop the intergovernmental framework that enhanced greater cooperation in Asia. Under the ACD framework, Thailand was able to attract Asian powers to participate and take part in areas of cooperation. In addition, through the framework, Thailand was able to strengthen relations with the GCC States, even with Saudi Arabia; in 2005, Saudi Arabia joined ACD.

It can be seen under Thaksin's administration, however, that intergovernmental organisation can act as two-edge sword. In addition to facilitating state relations, the intergovernmental organisation can put into question and condemn a member state that disagrees or resists the principles and norm of the organisation. The organisational identity and values can be so significant that state who show destabilise such norms is at risked to be intervened and inquired. The state in question may run into conflict with the organisation, as well as the conflict with individual members of that organisation; this is the case of Thailand who risked being intervened by the OIC and risked having relations with its member undermined.

The southern violence had been the core agenda in Thailand's relation with the OIC. While the observer status allowed Thailand to be able to clarify its stand, which the government had tried its best. Such incident shows that the Thai state had used the OIC as stage to clarify its position, though not as efficient as it should have. The state's legitimate role in handling the situation had been confirmed as well as the confirmation that the conflict was handled without religious discrimination.

7. THE CHUAN AND THAKSIN GOVERNMENTS: A COMPARISON

The previous chapter and this chapter describe and analyse the nature of Thailand's relationship with the GCC States as well as the Muslim world. This section seeks to summarise the nature of the relations through comparing and contrasting the characteristics of the two governments' relations with the region through the observation of international relations factors, including key foreign policy, the content of the interactions, the participation of the private sector association, and the attention given to the GCC States and the Middle East.   The outcome of the comparison can be summarised in the following table:

Table 14: Comparison of the Chuan and Thaksin Administrations

Agenda/governments	The Chuan government	The Thaksin government
Key agenda in foreign policy	Adopting international principles and expanding the role of Thailand in international stage	Expanding trade, particularly to new markets
Relationship with the Middle East	Established new relations and improved existing relations	Enhanced the improved relations through increased state visits and proposed jointed projects, and stimulated more active trade.
Key agenda in interacting with the Middle East	Political and social aspects and the use of Muslim identity. This can be seen from Thailand's joining the OIC and the	Trade aspect. This can be seen through the attempt to expand the market for Thai

	launching of the Look West Policy	goods to the Middle East and the proposed of Free Trade Agreement with Bahrain
The participation of private sector and interest group in the relationship with the GCC States	Recognised and allowed the participation of the private sector in only limited areas, specially trade and social agenda.	Similar to that of Chuan. Recognised and allowed the participation of the private sector in only limited areas, specially trade and social agenda.
Attention to the GCC	Yes, but in the context of wider Middle East relations. Relationship with the Gulf states is largely defined through oil trade and through relationship with the greater Muslim world.	Yes. As the GCC is recognised specially as the emerging market. Instead of recognising the GCC as part of the OIC, individual GCC state had been given more attention, this can be seen through the plan to improve bilateral trade relations with GCC States and the planned Free Trade Agreement with Bahrain.
The use of state-centric agenda as tool in interactions	Islamic identity and human rights had been incorporated into the interactions	Non-state agendas were not as dominant as trade. Although people-to-people relations had been promoted through tourism.

The use of non-state agenda as tool to interactions	The government tried to boost bilateral relations through increased state visits, as well as trade expansion.	Government heavily promoted trade.

Source: Author-created table based on the discussion on the previous and current chapters.

From the above table, one can see that the Chuan and the Thaksin governments differ in their focuses. The key foreign policy agenda of the Chuan government can be described as heavily pluralism, multilateralism and internationalism, this can be seen in its attempt in joining international organisations and adopting several universal principles; on the other hand, the key foreign policy of the Thaksin agenda is liberal trade. Different objectives in the content of the foreign policy resulted in different nature in the interaction with the Middle East while the existence of Muslim minority had been the vital part of the Chuan Policy. The expansion of trade and mutual benefits enhanced the relations between Thailand and the Muslim World in the Thaksin era.

Thailand's relationship with the GCC States was firmly established under the period of Chuan administration, although it had been enhanced and continued by Thaksin administration, as noted by the increased in state visits and agreements signed between the two sides in the previous chapters. Under the Chuan administration the improvement in trade relations between Thailand and the Gulf states has not taken placed until a few years after the launching of the Look West policy, as one can see from the trade value, export value and growth in the back of the chapter. Moreover, there is no proof that the growth in export and trade value resulted from the Look West policy, it could be well resulted from the trade promotion and aggressive foreign trade policy encouraged during the Thaksin era.

The differences between the Chuan and Thaksin's administrations are demonstrated also in the manners the two governments handled domestic issues. Since human rights was the vital part of Chuan's policy, when combined with the government's attempt to

become the member of the OIC, its attention to Muslims in the South increased. The fact that the foreign minister was a Muslim elevated the welfare of the Muslims and improved Thailand's image over its treatment of the Muslim population. Under Thaksin, human rights faded from the key agenda, replacing it was the policy that stimulated trade expansion. At the same time, there was the escalation of violence in the southernmost region. The way Thaksin's administration handled the problem was counterproductive; not only could it not solved the conflicts, it also could not prevent the violence and confusion of the government's solution among the Muslims in Thailand While the internationalised-focus foreign policy under the Chuan administration tended to include as many socioeconomic and ethnic groups, the trade-oriented foreign policy of Thaksin administration tended to include only specialised groups, entrepreneurs, elite groups, civil servants and the military that were relevant to government's goals.

The role of non-state actors and people-to-people relations under the two administrations is different. While under the Chuan administration, people relations is emphasised in a broad manner, with much emphasis on domestic and international Islamic connections, as well as commercial relations; under the Thaksin era, people relations was clustered around tourism as well as business relations where the government encouraged more connection between businessmen of the two sides.

From the above observation, one can conclude that there are differences between the Chuan and Thaksin administration regarding their approach to the relations with the Middle East and the GCC States, the underlying reason is based on the stage of relationship Thailand was in with the region during each administration. Under the Thaksin administration, the government was at more advantage in taking the relationship further, for example increase trade relations. This is because the relations had been established from the previous administration. Considering which government had maximised the benefit gained from incorporating non-state actors is a challenging task, as the nature of focus each administration had was different. Under Chuan it was rather socioeconomic in nature, while under Thaksin it was mainly commercial. Although, one can say that the increase in state visits and the relationship between the government and

private sector under the Thaksin era was slightly greater, as there is a greater visibility of coordination between the government and the private sector associations.

8. THE WEAKNESS OF THE GOVERNMENT

Observing the nature of Thailand's relations with the GCC States and the OIC as a whole, one can observe some of the weakness that hinders Thailand from reaching the optimal goal in the development of relations with the GCC States and the Muslim world, some key weaknesses are noted as followed:

8.1 Shared Identity and OIC Membership

Even though Thailand had been successful in becoming the member of the OIC, its status is only observer. To become the member, a country must be Muslim country; the condition that did not apply to Thailand. As observing member, Thailand was allowed only to be presented at the opening and closing ceremony, it can say very little in the OIC meeting. Thus, the Thai government may have a stand in the Muslim world, but one cannot claim that its ability and status is much improved on what it had before.

Such fact means that the government does not have much access into the Muslim world. Thailand is and has always been recognised as Buddhist state; and it strongly maintains such identity. In addition, in terms of trade, the Thai government will be at disadvantage when compared to other Muslim countries in Southeast Asia. Examples can be seen in the case of Islamic finance, and halal food. Shared identity is one problem the state has in terms of interaction with the Muslim world; which sometimes state find itself struggling over the agenda.

With the Thai state is recognised as un-Muslim, it cannot receive full membership, neither it can, in practiced, be viewed as sharing identity with the rest of the organisation. Presenting the agenda Thailand has may not make strong case. The alternative to this problem can be done through seeking a back up through inserting opportunity to become membership in other Muslim organisations. Even though the government cannot have full rights within the OIC, the Muslim non-state actors from Thailand can try to become

members and exercise the right and create the sense of shared identity with other OIC-affiliated organisations.

The private sector associations and interest groups have vital role in supporting the government. The Muslims and state-sponsored Islamic agencies, these organisations are more specialised in professional and identity aspects. While the Ministry of Commerce encouraged the export of Thai goods to the Muslim market, the credibility and acceptance of Thai goods depends largely on the halal verification. In order to promote the goods and stimulate acceptance, support from the private sector is significant. The Muslim businesspersons and interest group have developed their own connections, many of them have spent some time in the Gulf States, and thus they are able to create confidence among Gulf buyer and officials.

The Look West policy may look promising for Thailand's relationship with the Middle East; however, it receives much public criticisms. The policy itself is broadly defined, by lumping the Middle East, South Asia and Africa as one whole geographical focus. The suggestion has been made for a policy specially tailored for each of the regions. Indeed, according to a scholar, one policy for the whole Middle East region is even too broad, as there are differences in economic progress and market demands among Middle East countries, particularly, with high economic performance, market demands and purchasing power of the GCC States. The government should specially design a trade policy for the GCC States. As noted, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has not devoted sufficient attention to the GCC States; so far, much of the attention has been given to the countries in south Asia, namely Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India.

In addition, the content of the Look West policy has been criticised as impractical. While the content looked promising, not much has been tangibly done since the launching of the policy.[511] During the Chuan's period, when the policy has just been launched, one may say that it took time for the policy to take off. The bilateral relations had only been in theory, with project planned, but not much has been done. It is during

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[511] Interview with Professor Jaran Maluleem, Thammasat University, Mr. Anirut Smutkojorn Director of TITIA.

the Thaksin era that the policy became more tangible, particularly in terms of the expansion of market in the Middle East. One cannot be certain, however, whether the expansion is the outcome of the policy or just part of Thaksin's new policy of trade expansion to the new market, which haphazardly relevant to the Look West policy, but was not directly developed from it.[512]

The government is not flexible to change sides or adjust their opinion; it has to go through several bureaucratic processes. Governments still have to consider their place and their stand with security guarantors and international powers. If changes occur at the international level, sometimes the non-government agencies can help fill the gaps. Changes in post-Cold War era, for example, 9/11 and the war in Afghanistan and Iraq, urged several states, Thailand and the GCC States alike, to seek international guarantors. This is because the ties the GCC States and Thailand have with the U.S. have been viewed as unstable, thus multilateralism became more preferable.

Compared to other parts of the world, the Middle East is considered peripheral. While the view is changing in the case of the GCC States, both the governments have been criticised as failing to recognise the capacity of the Middle East. Scholars have pointed out that the governments have been slow when it comes to decision making that is relevant to the relationship with the Muslim world, including the GCC States. A scholar pointed out that the government lacks of efficient adviser that will overlook and maximise benefit from the relationship.

There is the lack of initiatives as there are too many agendas for the government to cover. Since the Middle East is viewed as peripheral, initiatives are devoted to other prioritised areas, including the Western hemisphere, East Asia and Southeast Asia. In terms of relationship with the GCC States, the government is less active in developing new projects with the GCC States, which can benefit both.

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[512] Interview with scholar from Chulalongkorn University.

Decision making in the government has to go through layers of processes. Many Thai officials have little knowledge of the GCC States, thus some of the proposals regarding the GCC States have been delayed or disapproved. This is demonstrated in the noted difficulty in establishing Islamic bank in Thailand. Not until three years later that the first Islamic Bank could be opened in Thailand, enabling Thai-Muslim to become customer, instead of having to put money in Islamic Bank in Malaysia or in the Middle East.

After observing the role of the government in interacting with the GCC States, one can see that some of these weaknesses could conceivably be strengthened by the intervention from the private sector associations. Private sector could complement the government in the areas in which the government is not completely capable. The future relations between Thailand and the GCC States will depend on the role of the government and the private sector, as well as how much the government allows the private sector to manage the gap and assist in the areas in which the government has not explored. Thus the future of Thailand's relationship with the GCC States will also depend on whether the government will maximise the benefit they can earn from allowing private sector association and interest groups to manage the interaction.

The reasons that prevent the government working with and allowing the private sector to interact with GCC States include distrust and unfamiliarity in working with the private sector. One key reason is that the government does not trust in the capacity of the private sector to manage the relations and that the content of the relations will be for the self interest of that organisation; the other explanation is the traditional division of government-private sectors. We will explore whether other factors must be sought in the perceptions and preferences of non-state actors themselves.

9.   CONCLUSION

One must agree that trade expansion and economic development is the highlight of Thailand's foreign policy under Prime Minister Thaksin. With much focus in trade, several aspects within foreign policy, which had been developed during the previous

administrations, had been abandoned. The obvious example is the government's abandoning human rights promotions, which had been the core project of the Chuan administration. Under the Thaksin government, the state was still the key player with in foreign affairs. The key mechanisms of diplomacy, political and economic factors still defined Thailand's relations with the rest of the world.

What distinguishes the Thaksin administration from the previous administration is that the economic agenda preceded the political one, thus reflecting the reality of the globalised world, where the flow of goods and commercial transactions had become key national agendas of most countries. At the same time, political affairs still maintains its significance. Indeed, the state had been able to insert trade and people relations agenda into political agenda and diplomacy. To a certain extent, resolving difficult relations with Saudi Arabia had been done through employing the justice system along with diplomacy. However Islamic Affairs is still the vital and efficient tool to enhance and improve relations.

Thailand's relationship with the GCC States under Thaksin administration continued to move toward a positive direction. Oil and trade continued to be the key driving forces for the interactions between the GCC and Thailand. The additional driving force is the support Thailand gained from GCC States in the international platform, for example, the GCC States' support in the Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD).

Islam and people-to-people relations remain the significant factors in Thailand's relationship with the GCC States. The globalised world and improved telecommunication had enabled Thai Muslims to be connected with the international Muslim community. On the positive side is the support the Thai Muslim communities received from their Muslim brethren abroad; on the negative side is the pressure from these Thai Muslims who required that the state reveal its position in Muslim-related international phenomena, like the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan. Tourism had increased its significance after September 11, when the Arabs shifted their attention to Asia. In addition, there had been an increase in knowledge among the GCC citizens on

Thailand.   Such a non-state phenomenon had indirectly supported the state-centric mechanisms; it facilitated greater trade expansion as well as the interactions among government officials, where more cooperation could be obtained.

The violence in the southern part of Thailand to some extent affected Thailand's relationship with the Muslim world, including the GCC States. In the case of Thailand, the situation in the south put Thailand and the OIC in a difficult situation.   The constrained relations with the OIC also jeopardised Thailand's relationship with the OIC members, which are the members of the Muslim world. It was not improved until the end of the administration.

As noted in the previous chapter, relationship with the inter-governmental organisations helps facilitate the bilateral relations between member states. In the case of Thailand under the Thaksin administration, Thailand's relationship with the OIC, taking into consideration the constraints caused by the southern violence, the relationship with the organisation did not facilitate the relationship with the OIC members.   Since the beginning of the administration, there had been distant relations between Thailand and the OIC; and such means losing connections and support from the OIC, its organisation body and its members. One remarkable point, while the relationship with the OIC had been distant, the GCC the relationship with the GCC States was not.   From the observation of bilateral relations between Thailand and individual GCC States, several GCC States supported Thailand's stand in the southern unrest despite constraint with the OIC; some even offered to help mitigate the constraint in relations. This incident shows that sometimes states face the dilemmas between the bilateral relations they have with other states and their attachment to inter-governmental organisations. Therefore, the nature of bilateral relations is not always subjected to organisations that states are members with.

This part has culminated in summarising weaknesses and strength of the Thai state in both administrations, as well as the nature of relations with the GCC States. It can be seen that in the contemporary politics, state alone may not be sufficient in improving or

strengthening relations with others. This is due to additional factors that come to play; one of the factors that had been highlighted is the identity, in which state may lack, but need, as important factor need to be part of the group. The support from the private sector associations within that state, who may be equipped with such identity, can facilitate the state to be able to create the linkage for the state.

The problem over lack of compatible identity is one of the key problems that limits states from maximising the interest in their interactions with one another. The recognition of potential that non-state actors can absorb some of the interests states fail to gain due to such limitation, and that they can act on behalf of states have become more compelling. Interestingly, while all state relations took place, the interactions among non-state actors were occurring all along. With that in mind, the state-centric approach that takes into consideration conventional state mechanisms, i.e. diplomacy, security, trade, and social relations, has very little to say about the emergence and dynamism of these non-state actors. Approaches that are pro-pluralism are needed to examine the realm of non-state actors, in which dynamism took place at the same time as the state realm.

PART 3

NON-STATE REALM

The previous part suggests the continued dominant role of states in international relations; however, it also notes the changing context of international environment into a more globalised world, where greater number of non-state actors emerged and became more active in international politics. While states find themselves being challenged by new agendas, non-state actors are viewed as alternative player who can address those agendas on behalf of states or can support the areas where states find limitation. Being perceived as a Buddhist state, it was difficult for the state to maximise its economic and cultural interactions with the GCC States and the rest of the Muslim world. Seeking support from non-state actors whose identity is one more level closer to the Muslim world is therefore viewed as an alternative way for the state to improve its relations with the GCC States.

The following chapters turn to the pluralist approach to examine non-state actors. The non-state realm is to be understood as taken place alongside the state sphere in the previous part. The rationale in separating the state and non-state realms from each other is to highlight that dynamism with each sphere occurred at the same time; however, within its own sphere. The interactions of actors between the two sphere is the highlight of the research; it provides explanation on the relationship between the state and the non-state actors, thus enable us to see the possibility that non-state actors can become more involve in Thailand's relations with the GCC States.

This part therefore provides a brief background on the development of private sector associations in Thailand and their relationship to the Thai government. In addition, two case studies are used to explore their relations with the Thai government and Muslim states, as well as their relations with other private sector associations and non-state actors in Thailand and abroad. It is worth noting the factors that induce these actors to interact with their counterparts, and the approaches they use to interact, which differ from those of the government in many ways. At the same time,

it is worth noting the amount of government's involvement in private sector associations' activity and endeavour to interact with their counterparts.

CHAPTER 5

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MUSLIM-RELATED PRIVATE SECTOR ASSOCIATIONS IN THAILAND
The Case of the Thai Islamic Trade and Industrial Association (TITIA)

1. INTRODUCTION

The previous two chapters focused largely on the role of state actors in maintaining and improving relations between Thailand and GCC States. The chapters suggest that in the two administrations the relations between the GCC States and Thailand has not been actively dynamic compared to Thailand's relations with other global regions; in particular, there has been a lack of knowledge between Thailand and small GCC States. Taking away trade of oil and commercial goods, there is very little agenda that can motivate state interactions.

This chapter seeks to explore the other sphere of world politics, which also contributes to Thailand's relations with the GCC States. It has been noted before that the state is not the only actor in the relationship. There are other non-state actors involved, including international organisations, domestic and overseas private sector associations, and specialised groups and individuals. Each has its own goals and interacted with the Gulf to fulfil such goals. The government has benefited largely from these non-state actors as sometimes it finds limits in developing relations because the IR mechanisms that the state possesses are not sufficient to accommodate contemporary relations. The non-state actors can therefore very well support the government. In this chapter, the role of private sector association will be elaborated. Private sector associations have several strong points; they are goal oriented and are less bureaucratic. There are, however, different size and capacity of private sector associations; and the government has been quite selective in coordinating with these associations. This chapter provides a case study of the small private sector association, the Thai Islamic and Industrial Association (TITIA), its functions and its relations with the Thai government.

The author begins the chapter by discussing the development of private sector associations in Thailand. The discussion then moves on to explore the development of TITIA, its objectives and activities. The next part of the chapter highlights TITIA's capacity to interact with its domestic and overseas counterparts through exploring how it manages to organise the International Islamic Economic, Cultural and Tourism Conference in 2007. The last part of the chapter discusses the future of TITIA, which is partly subjected to its relations with the government; this part also explores the possibility that TITIA will act as a proxy in Thailand's relations with the GCC States.

2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRIVATE SECTOR IN THAILAND

2.1 The Development of Private Sector and the Government's Recognition of Private Sector in Thailand

The development of the private sector in Thailand can be reflected in the National Development Plans.[513] The government's recognition of the significance of the private sector began in the 2nd National Development Plan (1967-1971), during which the government encouraged the development of private sector through promoting industrial and commercial private sector. In the 3rd National Development Plan (1972-1976), the government tried to engage private sector into the country's economic development by promoting the establishment of financial and industrial institutes as well as and agribusiness. The outcome was the establishment of the Thailand Stock Market, where the private sector managed and the government only monitored it according to legal obligation.

The private sector has played an important role in supporting and providing advice to the government in the aspect of international economic cooperation. Under the 4th National Development Plan (1978-1982) the role of private sector institutes increasingly expanded, particularly in terms of international economic cooperation, including the cooperation among private sectors in ASEAN countries. Significant private sector associations that emerged included the Thai Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of

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[513] The First National Development Plan was established in 1963; since then, the plans generally cover 4-year period. For greater detail on the National Development Plan, visit the National Economic and Social Development Board http://www.nesdb.go.th/. (Last accessed 25 May, 2009).

Thai Industry and the Thai Bankers' Association.[514] There had been the coordination between these private sectors with the government and foreign private sector. The private sector had increased its role in proposing to the government in creating the joint committee between the government and some private sector associations to help enhance economic development and trade.[515] Today, there are a large number of private sector agencies in Thailand; the private sector is divided into companies, non-government organisations, and private sector associations. The government has responded to the development and growth of the private sector agencies by assigning government units especially responsible for different types of private sectors; in addition, several legal bodies have been designed to coordinate with these private sector groups.

It is crucial to note that some leading individuals in the private sector usually have a significant connection with politicians and high rank officers. The connections between politicians or high rank officers and individuals in non-state actors or large companies is not unusual in Thailand; this is because politicians and officers frequently depend on entrepreneurs and elite class to support them in order to obtain political positions or higher position within the government. Prime Minister Thaksin himself has been having close connections with entrepreneurs in top companies both within Thailand and outside.

For example, under the Thaksin administration, the influence of Singaporean investors became more visible; there were a number of proposals and joint projects between Thai and Singaporean investors. A lot of the investments came under the Government of Singapore Investment Corps (GIC).[516] In addition, within Thailand, many members of the private sector are former or acting politicians, or have been providing support for political parties. TIITA committees and members, for example, have good relations with some politicians, some members themselves considered running in the general

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[514] Summary of the Government and Private Sector in the 5th National Development Plan (1981-1985).
[515] Ibid.
[516] "The End of Thaksin Era, the End of Singapore Funds, Watch the Arab Grasp the Real Estate Market," *NeawNah*, March 10, 2007

election.[517] Several honorary guests from the government attended TITIA's event in favour of TITIA members who were organisers.[518]

Thus, there is a mutual dependency between some Thai government officials and these individuals. The private sector and the government are sometimes linked through personal contacts. Consequently, many parts of the content in the trade and foreign policies are deemed to benefit merchants and entrepreneurs.

2.2 Selected Problems in the Cooperation between the Thai Government and the Private Sector

Since being recognised by the government in the 2nd National Development plan, the private sector had grown constantly, for instance the growth in cooperation between the private sector and the government. There are, however, some difficulties in the coordination between the government and private sector. The explanation for difficulties in coordination between the government and private sectors can be rooted from different goals and objectives. In addition, difficulties in coordination are rooted in difference in managing procedures between government and private sector. Figure 29 illustrates the differences in managing procedures, as well as aims and objectives between the government and private sector.

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[517] Discussion with an anonymous TITIA member.
[518] The direct observation at the World of Muslims 2006 Conference showed that the honorary guests from the government attended the event to enhance credibility and add value to the event despite the lack of relevance between the nature of their work and the content of the event.

Figure 30: The Differences in Managing Procedures between the Government and Private Sector
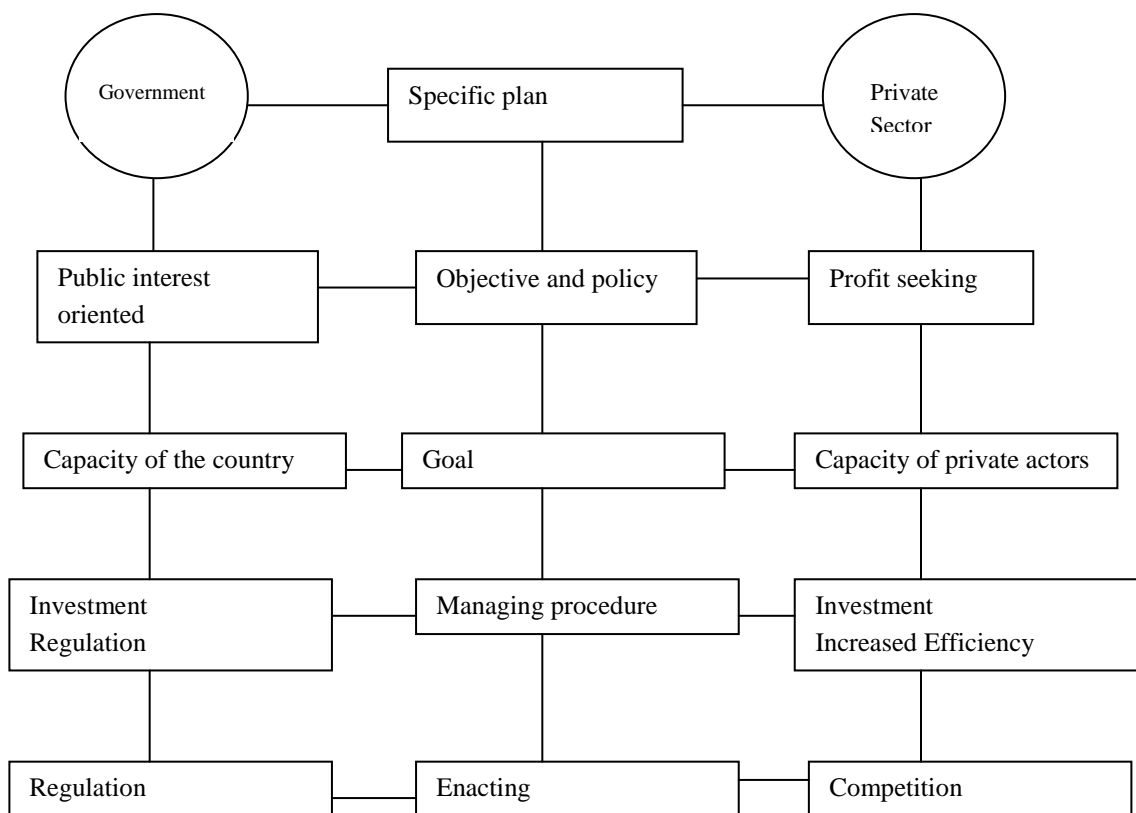
Source: The 5th National Development Plan, the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board.

The above figure was presented in the 5th National Development Plan (1982-1986) as part of the discussion on the problems in the coordination between the government and private sector. Within the discussion, coordination problem between the two sides had been listed as follow:[519]

1. There is a lack of linkage in terms of responsibility of national development between the private sector and government because decision making authority and ability to enact all the legal regulations belonging to the government. While the government is bound more with the legal and regulation it set forth, the private sector has more flexibility in performing.

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[519] Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB).

2. Different in goal. The goal of the government is public-oriented, while private sector is profited oriented, thus its target is based less on social justice.

3. The lack of coordination system between the two sides, which will yield more efficient, practical outcomes.

4. The private sectors have not been developed to have capacity that is less dependent to the government.

5. Lack of study and analysis on the nature of private sector on whether it can be developed to be part of the governmental mechanism, and how much it needs government inference.

6. There is the lack of knowledge and understanding among staff on the cooperation between the government and the private sector.

Recognising the problems over the development of private sector, the government, through the 5th National Development Plan, aims to increase the role of the private sector, as well as to encourage the government's support of private sector involvement. The Plan attempted to encourage greater participation, including the design of jointed project between the government and private sector, the plan to develop private business association by transfer some of governmental responsibility to private sector, and the plan to review laws concerning the establishment and management of private sector projects.

After the 5th National Development plan, the attention to increase the role of private sector had been replaced with the attempt to strengthen public-private partnerships.[520] Due to differences in interests, goals and organisational structure, it is still difficult for the government to coordinate with private sector, despite the recognition that it can alleviate some of the government's responsibilities. The problems regarding the establishment and the relationship with the government of the private sector reflected in the 5th National Development did not totally disappear. Since the end of such a national development plan, the effort in creating strong linkage between government and private sector has not been virtually carried out. However, in terms of the development of the

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[520] As set forth in the 6th and 7th National Development plan.

private sector itself, there has been an increase in number of private sector associations specialised in different areas. In addition, the key private sector associations that had been established during the 4th and 5th plan, namely the Board of Investment of Thailand, the Federation of Thai Industry, Thailand Stock Market and the Bankers' Association have become more active. These key private sector associations also support newly-emerged, smaller private sector associations, which come under the umbrella of these key associations, for example, the Thai Islamic Trade and Industrial Association, which is affiliated with the Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Thai Industry.

2.3   The Relationship between Private Sector and the Government

The relations between private sector and the government are mostly visible in the case of large private organisations in Thailand. Most of the large private sector associations like the Thai Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Thai Industry and the Board of Investment of Thailand have long been providing support to the government according to their specialties. The relations between these organisations with the government can be traced back to their establishment, in which all of them were originally set up with the support from the government according to the aims within the National Development plan.   In many cases, the establishments, the governmental support and the organisational links with the government can be reflected in the legal bodies, which are directly relevant to these organisations; for instance, the Federation of Thai Industry Act (1987), the Thai Chamber of Commerce Act (1966). In addition to stating the objectives, organisational structure, and functions of an organisation, the acts generally states that the organisation must provide support to the government. For example, the Federation of Thai Industry Act states that the Federation of Thai Industry has "To act as the sole representative of all industrial enterprises in Thailand in co-ordinating with the State in both the policy and operation matters," [521]   and "To offer appropriate advices, recommendations to the Government for the overall benefits of the industrial circle." [522]

Since the government plays a crucial role in their establishment, these organisations regularly work with and provide support for the government. Thus to engage with

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[521] The Federation of Thai Industry Act (1987), www.fti.or.th/nfti/org. (Last accessed 24 February, 2009).
[522] Ibid.

private sector associations, there are a few associations that the government will select. The associations are entrusted by the government to run projects and be part of the governmental committee. The participation of these associations are legally stated, thus the government's expectation on their role and the limitation of their interventions is clear.

The nature of relations between the government and small private sector associations is different. It has been suggested before that there are layers of support among private sector associations, in which the smaller private sector associations sometimes receive support from larger private sector association; indeed, these small associations can be seen as their subordinate, affiliated organisations. For instance, TITIA, the association under study, is a member of the Thai Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Thai Industry. These small private sector associations are more distant from the government. It is very rare that the government will directly interact with these associations. This is because, first, it recognises that these smaller organisations are affiliated with larger associations anyway, therefore, by interacting with the key associations the government will have access to these smaller organisations. Second, the larger organisations might fare better in providing supports needed. And third, as noted, there is an established relationship between the state and the larger organisations. The role and participation these organisations are expected to contribute to the government are clearly established, therefore, such make it easier for the two sides to coordinate. Even though it may be easier to work with larger associations, the downside to the government working with them is that they are not directly specialised in the field that is needed for the government. For example, the Thai Chamber of Commerce may be able to provide information on trade in the Muslim world, however, the association may not have as much connections and resources as TITIA does. Therefore, sometimes the Chamber of Commerce seeks support from TITIA, which is more specialised both in terms of geographical and functional. The next section will discuss in detail a kind of specialised association, the trade association.

2.4   Trade Association

The development of the private sector during the 2nd and 3rd National Development Plans led to the grouping of business and professional associations;[523] trade associations are among those associations being developed. According to the Trade Association Act B.E 2509 (1966 AD), trade association is defined as "an institution established by several persons, who are engaged in enterprises, for the promotion of the enterprises other than for sharing profit or income."[524] The promotion of the establishment of trade associations in the National Development Plan corresponds with the development and evolution of the Trade Association Act in 1966. The objective of the Act is to regulate the nature of trade associations within Thailand as well as to protect the Thai economy from being exploited by the grouping of entrepreneurs, particularly in terms of illegitimate profit seeking, and the influence of price. There are a large number of trade associations today, with different characteristics. The Thai Islamic Trade and Industrial Association is one of the existing trade associations. Trade associations are under the care of Ministry of Commerce, Department of the Internal Trade.

3.   SPECIALISED PRIVATE SECTOR ASSOCIATION—THE ESTABLISHMENT OF TITIA AND ITS INITIATIVES DURING THE CHUAN ERA

During the period between 1997 and 2001, not only did the state-to-state relations between Thailand and the GCC States become more active, there was also a greater development among private sector associations relevant to the Muslim world. The Thai-Islamic Trade and Industrial Association (TITIA) is one of the private sector associations that specialise in business and trade interactions with the Muslim world. The success of the organisation can be seen through positive responses it received from both Thai and overseas private and governmental sectors. Since its establishment, TITIA has hosted several important events, which drew participation from Muslim countries. The establishment of TITIA was three years after the government had launched the Look West policy.   Thus TITIA has indirectly benefited from the increased level of

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[523] The 2nd and 3rd National Development Plans, the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board.
[524] Trade Association Act, chapter 1, section 4.

interactions and exchanges of knowledge with the Middle East and the Muslim world.[525]
This section provides background of TITIA, its objectives, supports it received from the
government, and key activities it has undertaken during this period.

3.1   Background and Objectives

The Thai Islamic Trade and Industrial Association (TITIA) was established on 24
February 2000. The organisation was originally created by a group of Muslim
businessmen who wanted to consolidate their domestic network and to expand their
connections abroad to the Muslim world. In Thailand, TITIA is one of the most widely
known associations that promote trade and networking between Thai and Muslim
businessmen abroad.   Its identity is both professional and cultural oriented, thus,
focusing on the business and Islamic connections. TITIA has been appointed by the
Board of Trade of Thailand (BOI) to act as the Coordinator for the Middle Eastern and
North African Countries.[526] Such shows the cooperation and relationship between larger
private section associations and TITIA; it also shows that TITIA's expertise in trade and
connection with the Muslim world had been utilised by larger private sector associations
it interacts with. At the international level, it has been accepted by the Islamic Chamber
of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) as an observer member. Today TITIA is under
administration of Mr. Anirut Smuthkochorn. The aims of TITIA are:

1. To encourage trade, industry, finance and business management between Thai
   Companies and the Muslim world, as well as among Thai and Muslim
   businessmen.
2. To support the standardisation of factories and manufacturers for the purpose of
   expanding into both domestic and foreign market.
3. To cooperate with the Thai government in supporting trade and investment for
   the benefit of Thai economy in the long run. [527]

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[525] The interview with the President of TITIA and the staff suggests that there was no direct relationship
between the Launching of the government's Look West policy and the emergence of TITIA. The timing
was just co-incident.
[526] Background of the Thai Islamic Trade and Industrial Association, briefed in the during the inauguration
of the 4th meeting of the OIC Task Force on SMEs.
[527] Information on TITIA http://www.thaiislamictrade.org/thai/index/home.php. (Last accessed 25 June,

Since the establishment coincided with the time when the government tried to expand its diplomatic and commercial horizon to the Middle East, South Asia and Africa, the association and the government had mutually supported each other. The governmental units and larger private sector associations that interacted with TITIA included the South Asia, Middle East, and Africa department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Commerce, and the Board of Trade of Thailand. Businessmen and companies that joined the organisation are from diverse business groups, ranging from food-export, construction, travel agency, and shipping companies. Interestingly, from meeting with TITIA members during the fieldwork, it appeared that there seemed to be a good balance between the Muslim and non-Muslim members within TITIA. The table below (table 15) shows number and types of businesses of TITIA members:

Table 15: Number and Types of Business of TITIA Members

Type of Business	Number
Investment and Consulting	10
Travel and Tourism	9
Import-Export	15
Textile and Garment	6
Construction	5
Food and Agriculture	24
Auto Parts	3
Energy and Petroleum	7
Jewellery and Gem	4
Others	19

Source: Compiled from Thai Islamic Trade and Industry Association

http://www.thaiislamictrade.org/eng/index/business.php.(Last accessed 25 June, 2009).

In addition to having members from diverse backgrounds, TITIA also has some connections with government officials. There have been a few exchanges of information between TITIA and the governmental units; at the same time, TITIA depends on the government connections for high-level network, potential funding and operational

2009).

supports.[528]   There are three levels of interaction that TITIA has been involving: interactions with individual businessmen both domestic and overseas, with governments, and with international organisations.[529]   TITIA's objectives cover broad areas of business, and its network with global business circle and domestic sub-agencies allows it to have great potential to expand and to sustain itself despite lack or small support from government. Despite some connection with the government, TITIA does not have much visible role within the Thai politics and in international trade policy.

Factors that Motivated the Establishment of TITIA—the Role of Globalisation

Globalisation encourages more cross-border communication. Travelling and communication have become faster and more efficient; when combined with reduced cost, it created greater incentives for people to do business. In addition, the advancement of education, technology and transportation have increased skills of traders, and have encouraged them to link with other traders, not only domestically but internationally. In the case of TITIA, such changes allow greater and more efficient networking of the members. Muslim traders are able to benefit from efficient improved telecommunication and can be matched according to their focuses. It is this force of globalisation, which was recognised in Thailand since late 1990s, particularly during the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, which made people become aware of the global community around them and want to create specialised group to accommodate the global trend. Businessmen and trade were among those who aspire to improve their trade. Globalism also creates stronger sense of identity, particularly among Diasporas. Islamic Diasporas encourages Thai-Muslim businessmen to create a group. Using Muslim identity enabled the group to efficiently reach the counterparts.

3.2   The Significance of TITIA as an ICCI Observer

That TITIA is an observer of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), which is the affiliated organisation of the OIC, is significant to Thailand. This is because the Thai government could only obtain observer status from the OIC in 1998; an observer status does not allow Thailand to fully obtain all rights and benefits that the

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[528] Interview with Mr. Fad, the TITIA secretary.
[529] Interview with Mr. Anirut Smutakojorn, Director of TITIA.

OIC members have. In order to have greater access to the Muslim worlds in all aspects, there is the need to expand the network, which can be acquired from increasing linkages and channels. In several non-Muslim states that are observer or are not member of the OIC, Muslim private sector associations seek involvement with the Muslim world through obtaining observer status with the ICCI. Being non-Muslims, these states are unable to exercise the full rights; however, at least these states can be part of the meeting and can develop better relations with member states. The private sector associations from non-Muslim states that are member of the ICCI include Singapore-Malay Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Singapore, New Zealand's Federation of Islamic Associations, and the Philippines National Committee for Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry of OIC. [530] Even though the observer status does not allow TITIA to fully benefit from the ICCI, it allows greater connections and opportunity for Thai Muslim entrepreneurs to interact with Muslim entrepreneur overseas. To the Thai government, TITIA's membership with the ICCI indirectly helps in creating greater connection with the Muslim world.

Through its membership with the ICCI, TITIA has brought additional linkage and channel for Thailand to interact with the Muslim world. Non-Muslim states are limited in having an access into Muslim organisations and groups. Increasing linkage, using Muslim organisations, is therefore an alternative for these non-Muslim states to have access to the Muslim world. The Muslim identity attached to TITIA has made it more eligible and directly relevant than any other trade organisations in Thailand, even the Thai Chamber of Commerce, whose identity is largely viewed as more attached to Thai-ness or Buddhism.

3.3   Relations with Other Private Sector Associations

As noted, TITIA is a member of other private sector associations and non-government organisations in Thailand, including the Thai Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Thai Industry, the Central Islamic Committee of Thailand, and the Board of Trade. TITIA has a close relationship with the foreign trade section of the Thai Chamber of

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[530] The Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry, "ICCI Guide: Brief of the ICCI Activities," http://icci-oic.org (Last accessed 25 May, 2009).

Commerce, particularly the Middle East Market task group.[531] The staff of the two associations always meet and travel together to the Middle East to meet entrepreneurs and companies. The President and committee of TITIA also act as consultants to the Chamber of Commerce, and most of TITIA's members are members of the Chamber of Commerce.

Without individuals' connections, the larger private sector associations like the Chamber of Commerce cannot provide much support to TITIA in terms of finance, and operational support. Its support, according to one of the TITIA's committee is only through incorporating TITIA into its projects and through events relevant to trade with the Middle East. As noted before, there is a distant relationship between the Thai government and small private sector associations. In terms of the relationship between big associations and small ones, there is a linkage and mutual interests among them. Sometimes the bigger associations gain advice and network from smaller associations in order to fulfil its tasks and commitments with the government. The smaller associations, on the other hand, gain some access and recognition from the government through their contacts with the bigger associations. Therefore, to some extent, there has been the mutual dependency between small and large private sector associations.

Organising conferences and meeting has been the highlighted activities of TITIA to strengthen networks and attract more members and partners. TITIA also encourages and supports its members and interested businessmen to visit to Muslim countries to seek trade and investment opportunity. The association also supports the government by participating in the events which are relevant to the organisation, namely the signing of trade agreement between Thailand and other Muslim countries, i.e. Pakistan. Many TITIA members are sometimes part of the Thai delegation, acting on behalf of Thai businessmen, in the official visit to Muslim countries.

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[531] Discussion with an anonymous staff of the Thai Chamber of Commerce, 30 August 2007.

4. THE ROLE OF TITIA UNDER THAKSIN ADMINISTRATION

Aforementioned was the development of TITIA during the Chuan administration. This section moves on to examine the development and the role of TITIA under the next administration, between 2001 and 2006.

Under the Thaksin government, TITIA had shown constant growth. The growth should be viewed in many aspects, including the organisational growth and the growth of connections abroad. There had been an increase in number of members and in TITIA's ability to draw attention from businessmen in Thailand who aimed to trade with the Muslim world. There had also been constant increase in TITIA's connection with external partners, namely the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI). The growths in number of its members and the increase of external partners had led to greater confidence. As well, the growth had allowed TITIA to organise more activities and aspire to create greater network between Thailand and the Muslim world.

After the coup d'etat in 2006 and the subsequent change in government, TITIA continued to engage in relationship with its domestic members and increasingly with the overseas counterpart. With the interim government in charge of the country, and with the unresolved southern violence, TITIA, and Muslim private sector associations in Thailand did not seem to be much affected by the events. In 2007, TITIA went on to host the World of Muslims Conference and Trade show, the details of which will be elaborated on in a later section.

4.1 Activities

4.2.1 Seminar on "Thailand's Trade with the Muslim world"

Under Thaksin administration, there were close relations between TITIA staff and government officials in Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Thus there has been the exchange of knowledge and cooperation. Regularly there were joint seminars between the government officials and TITIA staffs on trade in the Muslim World. In 2002, the author participated in TITIA's conference *Thailand's Trade with the Muslim world*, where the chief of the Department of South Asia, the Middle East and Africa gave a talk

about Thailand's trade with the Muslim world. During that time, there was a close tie between TITIA and governmental officials. Along with the meeting was the small exhibition of business enterprises. The aim of the meeting was to point out the opportunities that existed for Thai businessmen in trading with the Muslim world, as long as businessmen can look for contacts and facilitators, which the ministry of foreign affairs, the department of export promotion, the Thai chamber of commerce, can support. The joint meeting and the cooperation between TITIA and the government took place quite often; there were also task-sharing between the government and TITIA, where TITIA helped the government in seeking information and created network of contacts.

4.2.2   SMEs Task Force Meeting: January 2005

TITIA organised the 4th Meeting on OIC Taskforce on Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Bangkok in January 2005. The taskforce was established in 2001 by the Secretary General of the OIC, with the coordination of representative of the General Secretariat of the OIC, the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), the Islamic Centre for the Development of Trade (ICDT), the Statistic Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRTCIC), the Islamic University of Technology (IUT), the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), and some selected National Chambers of Commerce of OIC member states and the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO).[532] The meeting was organised with marginal support from government agencies, particularly in terms of funding.[533] The marginal support from the government allows TITIA to take credit of its ability to draw support from different external agencies, and to attract participations from members of the OIC states.   Upon choosing Thailand as the venue for the meeting, the Taskforce had coordinated with TITIA as well as larger private sector associations, namely the Thai Chamber of Commerce and the Board of Trade of Thailand. From Thailand's part, the event had been supported by relevant governmental organisations including the Department of Export Promotion (DEP), Ministry of Commerce, Royal Thai Government, and the Board of Trade of Thailand. However, TITIA played a significant

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[532] For more information on the meeting, see Ahmad, "Seeking Schumachers of the Muslim World," and http://icci-oic.org/ac/SMEs/3task-e.DOC. (Last accessed 25 May, 2009).
[533] Interview with TITIA staff member, September 25, 2007.

role as key organiser and coordinator. TITIA's ability to persuade the OIC Task force committee to use Thailand as a venue shows that the association has been well accepted among the Muslim states. Being granted an opportunity to host the event was symbolically satisfactory as it was the first time the meeting was held outside Muslim countries.

5. THE 'WORLD OF MUSLIMS' 2007 CONFERENCE

'The World of Muslims' was a large conference and trade exhibition held in Thailand in 2007, and the one that the author had participated directly as observer. The significance of the event is that it highlights TITIA's capacity to interact efficiently with the international organisation with minimal support from the government. It also shows TITIA's capacity in persuading OIC member states to choose Thailand as a venue.

5.1 Background of 'The World of Muslims' 2007

The 2nd International Islamic Economic, Cultural and Tourism Conference 2007 was held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 7 to 9 September 2007 at the Impact Exhibition and Convention Centre in Bangkok, Thailand. In concurrence with the conference was the World of Muslims Trade Exhibition 2007. The conference was a three-day event, in which there were working sessions of different themes, all are largely relevant to economic, cultural and tourism cooperation and development in the OIC member countries. The exhibition provided opportunity for Thai manufacturers--many who were Muslims--from various industries to promote their products to businessmen who attended the conference.

The proposal to host an event in Thailand was done by the President of the Thai Islamic Trade and Industrial Association (TITIA), during the first preparatory meeting in Iran. After a discussion with ICCI and OIC members in the meeting, Thailand had been accepted as the venue for the event. Once the proposal had been accepted, TITIA asked for support from the Thai government and private sector.[534] The Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB), which was the public company, partly owned by the

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[534] From an interview with a TITIA staff member.

government, offered to sponsor the entire event; this means that in this event, TITIA did not bear financial responsibility. In organising and choosing the location, TCEB hired a professional organising company Expolink Ltd to promote and organise the event. As the prime sponsor, TCEB had a crucial role and almost absolute authority in decision-making. Though, TITIA still maintained a key role as a host, handling content, invitations, and training staff for the event. This is because TITIA possesses the connections with the participating organisations and individuals.

While the role of the government in this event was comparatively marginal, the government exerted supports through TCEB. In large part, its role can be viewed as symbolic supporter. This is because the governmental participation is only through the attendance of high-rank officers during inaugural session, through the participation of government staff in workshops, and through booth-displaying their organisations in the exhibition. The outcome of the event, however, helped improve the image of Thailand as a whole after the constrain it had with the OIC and the Muslim world over the government's handling of the southern tension. It can be seen that the government benefited from this event as it helped to develop and enhance linkages between Thai government units and their counterparts in the Muslim world, the event also helped to create positive attitude towards Thailand among OIC member states, and partially, it helps reaffirm the Thai government's effort in solving problems in the south.

5.2   The Role of TITIA

As noted, the role of TITIA in this conference was crucial. The initiatives and responsibility TITIA took on board showed the commitment and the ability that private sector associations had in order to run big events and create linkages at the international level. In the remark at the inaugural ceremony of the 2nd International Islamic Economic, Cultural and Tourism Conference, the president to TITIA implies that private sector associations can take greater role in supporting the government in enhancing existing relations. He pointed out that international relations with the Muslim world should be multi-channel; that the state should not be the unitary or primary actor in these relations; and that private organisations and groups can encourage relations and cooperation:

> Quest for Muslim brotherhood and unity has been always burning the
> mind and hearts of every Muslim around the world. Numerous serious
> initiatives and efforts have been taken by OIC and Observer States to
> make this dream come true. Now is the time to realise that political
> government alone cannot achieve the desired results unless the social,
> cultural and business communities of all OIC and Observer States come
> forward and create an environment of cooperation and collaboration.[535]

The speech confirms the readiness on the private sector associations' part to support the government in international relations with the Muslim world. Multi-channel relations also imply different actors, working to fulfil their own objectives, which mostly culminated to help enhance international relations. TITIA therefore provides additional channel to the government; it works toward its organisational goals, which at the same time also contribute to enhance the overall pictures of the relations.

During the preparation period, the author shadowed the TITIA president and staff to preparatory meetings. The observation confirms that TITIA had been capable of connecting with many staff from Islamic organisations overseas, in which there were both existing and new contacts. Taking care of participants from both overseas and in Thailand was TITIA's task, in which the staff felt comfortable. A TITIA staff pointed out that while the government constantly changes, and while government officers rotate from one position to another, TITIA staff, particularly the president, remained the same for a long time; this allows the association to maintain contacts, if not to improve and strengthen relations with existing counterparts. A staff mentioned that without TITIA's personal connection with the ICCI staff, it would be rather impossible for Thailand to be chosen.[536]

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[535] The welcome message of Mr. Anirut Smutkochorn, President of the Thai Islamic Trade and Industrial Association (TITIA) to the conference.
[536] Phone interview with a secretary of TITIA, January 2008.

5.3   Analysing Success

The success of the 2nd International Islamic Economic, Cultural and Tourism Conference can be seen through the high participation of guests from both the OIC states and from Thailand. In addition, there have been a lot of business deals and matching among entrepreneurs who attended the event. The event demonstrates that TITIA is able to work independently in interacting with the OIC, its affiliated organisations, and key individuals involved in the Muslim world. Thailand's relationship with the GCC States will benefit and be strengthened if smaller private sector associations are considered as having capacity, and that they are given opportunity to work with the government. Having multi-channel relationship and actors apart from government that could induce concept of shared identity, norms and mutual interest, like the Muslim entrepreneur groups or Muslim scholars, can create deeply embedded international relations, which would make such relations last longer even though there is a change in material interests. The success of the event also shows that the transnational linkages among individuals, particularly when there were shared professional interests, identities and faith, have become more frequent. Individuals have become more skilful in using technology to developing their networks and business; small successes have led to greater confidence in participating in larger scale of international relations. In such phenomena, the role of states is just marginal, giving ways to the new type of international relations, whose dynamism is driven by non-state actors.

In summary, the case of TITIA provides an example to show that some private sector associations are capable of being involved in international relations and enhancing international relations. They are able to rely on minimum governmental support, or sometimes totally bypass the government and establish relations with their counterparts overseas. Such a fact helps confirm the ability of the private sector associations to act as proxies for the Thai government in strengthening Thai-GCC relations. Other questions, however, remain. This includes the durability of these organisations and, knowing that these organisations have capacity to act as proxies, whether these organisations and the government are considering the increased interactions and proxies as optimal option.

The answers to these questions can be found through the discussion on TITIA's relations with the government in the next section.

6. TITIA'S POTENTIAL ROLE AND UNDERLYING FACTORS

Since the objectives of TITIA are clear and specific, the organisation has been able to organise activities that are exclusive enough, and correspond to the needs of its members. The nature of members reveals that TITIA members can even network among themselves to complement each other's businesses, which range from food manufacturing, import-export services, shipping, and other kinds of services. The positive experience each member received from networking and support mediated by TITIA created loyalty and encourage more membership. Having a loyal group also means more capability and confidence in making contact with their counterparts overseas without much support needed from the government.

As noted, dependency existed between TITIA and the government, even though TITIA's ability to bypass or acquire marginal support from the government shows that the organisation can be independent enough. The relations with the government, however, exist, through the network and individual connection the organisation has with the government. Many times TITIA members have been allowed as part of the Thai delegation during state visits. Other time, the organisation strives to develop its own channels for trade on the international network.

The fact that the organisation is non-government means that it is less affected by changes in politics, both international and domestic environment. As well, the organisation will be less subjected to foreign policy and cabinet decision. Thus TITIA will be less likely to change and will be relatively stable. This helps TITIA to be able to attract external and domestic members; thus, it helps TITIA in maintaining its network. The non-government status also makes TITIA's identity more independent from the government, therefore, it has more chance to capture the interaction opportunities that the government finds itself having limit.

For many members, TITIA represents their identity and motivation as Muslim businessmen; in addition, TITIA provides an image as an organisation managed largely by Muslims, for its Muslim-majority members, in order to do business with their Muslim counterparts overseas. To members, these identities create group power, as well as sense of belongings: as Thai-Muslim businessmen; this makes it easy for the members to form a team to propose business plan and to request support from the government. The use of Muslim identity creates confidence among members that cooperation and proposals might be responded. By not being attached to the government, rather attached by business goal and religion, TITIA can penetrate business circle in the Muslim world better. The perception that there is no strong government influence also makes it easier and appears less formal and monitored.

While most Thai government officers at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other ministries have a good knowledge about the Muslim world, many lower-rank officers, who also have to manage contacts between Thailand and the Muslim world, possess very little knowledge about the region. Even though many officers have good knowledge about the Middle East and the Muslim world, many of them are Buddhists, and are not accustomed in interacting with Muslims from overseas. Many of the TITIA members are Muslims, who have had several contacts within the Muslim world; in addition, they are motivated by the urge to interact with Muslims abroad. Thus, they are more accustomed, enthusiastic to the culture. In the region of the world where infirmity and personal ties are significant, TITIA can be more effective in connecting with the Muslim countries and with the Gulf States than some government officers.

Other fact that contributes to the durability of TITIA is that there are few or no existing organisations similar to it. Thus, there is little competition. The TITIA, therefore, is a dominant organisation that aids businessmen with Thai-Muslim relations. Instead of having competing organisations, TITIA has several associations that complement its work, including the Halal Food Institute, the Central Mosque of Thailand, the Muslim Youth group, and so on. With little competition from another association, TITIA is

quite unique in its field and is able to serve potential members and the government in terms of specific knowledge, expertise and connection. Thus, its existence is still crucial.

7.   THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TITIA AND THE GOVERNMENT

The interview with the president and other members of TITIA reveal that the relationship between TITIA and the government depends largely on personal contacts. TITIA and other private sector associations are usually incorporated into governmental projects when the leading government officials have personal contacts and are familiar with TITIA's work. Between the early to mid-2000s, there had been a close relationship between TITIA and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where TITIA had been invited to the meetings, the drafting of joint projects and the conference. At the same time, government officials also supported TITIA's activities by attending TITIA's events despite the fact that during the World of Muslims 2007, the support was marginal. The interest, however, faded away after the regular rotation in governmental offices, which occurs regularly in Thai government. On average, however, the relationship between the two sides has not been regular; with the government usually failing to recognise the significance of TITIA. The president of TITIA and the members point out the difficulty in arranging to meet with government officials. In addition, government officials hardly attended any of TITIA's initiated events, despite the fact that there were guests who represented foreign governments and international organisations, something that would have benefited the government in terms of connections and relationship building.[537]

Form the view of the government, TITIA is a small, profit-oriented organisation, and much of the activities are comparatively less relevant to the work of the relevant government units. The discussion with a group of anonymous government officials reveals their lack of interest and knowledge of the events organised by TITIA, no matter how big and internationally significant it could have been in the Muslim world.[538] The officials' explanation rested largely on the lack of linkage between the government and the private sector, the traditional separation in sphere of work between private sector and government, and the view that the goals of private sector and government differ.

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[537] Interview with an anonymous TITIA's member, 25 September, 2007.
[538] Interview with an anonymous MFA staff, July 2008.

Attending those events, to them, is not useful. Such perception does not motivate the government to draw TITIA to be involved with a government project. The interactions do occur sometimes, many times through indirect contact, through other larger private sector associations. Each side has its own interaction channels, where TITIA has its own network, and the government has linkages with government sub-units and with those private sector associations that it trusts. This notion demonstrates that the difficulties for the government to coordinate with the private sector, as suggested in the past National Development Plan, continue to linger.

The view of the academics supports the notion that the government has not paid significant attention to private sector associations. The case of TITIA is one of the many cases where private sector associations have been left almost on their own in managing their interaction with their foreign partners, not counting the lack of financial support. The relationship between the government and private sector associations has long been separate in nature, as the government is sometimes reluctant to let private sector associations intervene with their projects.

8. THE FUTURE OF TITIA

The future of TITIA can be understood through looking at the size, network, and relations with the government as commented by the organisation's staff, academics and government officers. The findings from the semi-structure interviews have been useful in suggesting how the future of the organisation will take shape.

In terms of size, interviewees from both the TITIA and government sides, as well as academics, agree that TITIA will be smaller; however, interviewees differ on the underlying causes for the reduction in size. According to the President of TITIA, the future organisation has to be smaller is because of budget constraints; in addition, there is the need to reduce the size to make the organisational structure more efficient and manageable.[539]   The reduction in size does not imply the reduction in efficiency and dynamism; on the other hand, the efficient management will make the organisation runs

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[539] Interview with Mr. Anirut Smutkojorn, President of TITIA, 4 September 2008.

better and can serve its members better. On the other hand, government officers comment that the reduction in size of TITIA is based on the view that the organisation is very exclusive and member-oriented, thus its potential expansion is less likely.[540] For academics, the reduction in size may be resulted from the lack of regular source of income, which will make it difficult for the organisation to expand and even to run larger projects.[541] It can be seen, therefore, that the prospects on the future of TITIA with regard to size is largely subjected to budget and the organisational structure of the organisation.

Regarding network, connections with external partners and additional members will benefit and help expand the organisation. While TITIA has been optimistic about the expanded network it will have in the future, government officers and academics have been sceptic. To TITIA staff, the organisation has been developing strong network with external organisations, as well as businessmen in the Muslim world; the existing connections will lead to additional connections, thus making TITIA's connection with external partners quite strong.[542] Strong connections with external partners will support TITIA in running its own projects with little financial support needed from the government. At the same time, TITIA claims that their internal connections will continue to grow; it expects the number of members to increase.[543] To several academics in Thailand, connections with both external and internal partners will be vital to the future of TITIA if it wants to be independent from the government. One scholar points out that the problem with TITIA and other private sector associations in Thailand is the lack of strong network and groupings, which will strengthen their existence.[544] If TITIA does not maintain strong network with other associations in the private sector, such as Thailand chamber of commerce, Central Mosque of Thailand, or the Halal Research Centre, it will be difficult to for TITIA function and sustain itself.[545] Another

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[540] Interview with anonymous officer in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand, 27 August 2007.
[541] Interview with Professor Jaran Maluleem, Professor of International Relations and Middle East Study, Faculty of Political Sciences, Thammasat University.
[542] Interview with Mr. Anirut Smutkojorn, President of TITIA, 4 September 2008.
[543] Ibid.
[544] Interview with Professor Jaran Maluleem, Professor of International Relations and Middle East Study, Faculty of Political Sciences, Thammasat University.
[545] Ibid.

scholar points out that the future of TITIA depends on leadership and personal connections of its member with other key players in the Thai and overseas governments and Muslim organisations.[546] So far, TITIA has enjoyed good relations with foreign partners, thanks to strong personal connection its president has with key Muslim countries, i.e. Iran, Saudi Arabia and African countries.[547] Also, it is important that TITIA maintains loyalty of its member and committee with connection from these agencies, as well as recruiting more members with additional connection. Without having a strong connection from domestic and foreign parties, TITIA will not be able to maintain or increase its initiatives it has been having now.

In terms of TITIA's relations with the government, according to the President of TITIA, the organisation has come to realise its own capacity and how it can sustain itself with marginal support from the government; in addition, considering the network it has developed, it can therefore be more independent and needs to seek little support from the government. TITIA will run its own project and network with agencies in the Muslim world while asking for minimum support from the Thai government.[548] The government, however, will continue to benefit from TITIA's initiatives, connections and the outcomes of the meetings with the Muslim world. From the government's view, the government does not recognise the significance of TITIA, most of its activities are considered private-sector oriented, not that relevant to the government, even though much of the content had to do with Muslim world. The boundary between the two sides has been barred by traditional attitude that international affairs are sensitive agendas, and the government should solely take responsible for it.[549] That private sector should share the task with the government has been much frown upon in some areas. Scholars, however, suggest that TITIA and the government cannot be absolute separated from each other, as there are mutual benefits between the two sides; while TITIA needs some support from the government despite trying to be independent, the government also needs TITIA for its connections and expertise for trading with the Muslim World. The

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[546] Interview with anonymous researcher from Chulalongkorn University at the SME Task force for the OIC, Assumption University, Bangkok, Thailand, 16-18 August 2008.
[547] Ibid.
[548] Ibid
[549] Interview with anonymous officer in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand, 27 August 2007.

future of TITIA will thus depend on its ability to create strong connection with the Thai government.

The observation reveals that even though the motivation and the skills individuals put into developing TITIA are countless, the structure of the organisation is weak. There are no clear written guidelines on how projects should be done and the committees are not solidified. Committees are scattered and the participation of members is scarce. The president constantly seeks projects, which are usually conference organising and funding, most of which comes from personal contact. Lacking financial support, the association does not have a permanent office, but is now located at Assumption University in Bangkok. This is due to the ability of the association to link the university with the OIC[550], in that the OIC member can seek educational and training facilities for their students in Thailand. TITIA therefore, will act as coordinator for such linkage.

Therefore, the association is not strongly established. Unlike the larger private sector associations whose role and responsibilities had been formally defined by the government thus allowing them greater chance to participate with the government activities, the smaller private sector associations like TITIA are on their own, having to constantly survive through seeking external project and financial support. The future is not guaranteed. The government, unaware of geographical and operational capacity or barred by traditional idea that the small private sector associations are insignificant, does not intervene to support these organisations. The future does not look promising for these organisations; without external funding, many of them, including TITIA, could collapse. There is a need for the government to help providing support or for the association develop a more defined and better financial strategy and project plans.

8.1 The Future of TITIA based on Observations

In looking at the future of TITIA, there are several factors that should be drawn into consideration. Two key factors are TITIA's own capacity factor and external factors. The significance of analysing the future of TITIA is to evaluate the possibility that the

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[550] Interview with the President of TITIA and staff, August 2008.

organisation can act as additional actor between Thailand and the GCC States. The resilience of the organisation is the first question prior moving on to evaluate the willingness of both sides to coordinate.

If TITIA wants minimum support from the government, it will need to sustain itself in many ways, particularly through financial and political supports; so far it has been able to do so. However, it is inevitable that the government intervenes with TITIA in some matters, including the needs of approvals from different ministries in some of its events and initiatives. To be politically and financially sustained, TITIA's relationship with its members, partners, and other organisations will be crucial; these non-government sectors will provide financial support and together as a group they can lobby for political support. In addition, the success of the members will strengthen TITIA's status and reputation, which will call for additional membership and partners; the more links TITIA can create, the higher chance it can sustain itself and grow. In terms of capacity, identity, trust and network, the World of Muslims 2007 and the SME Task Force Meeting of the OIC member countries had proved that TITIA does have capacity. However, TITIA alone does not have capacity to fully influence interstate politics; such activity needs the intervention from the government. In sum, TITIA does have substantial capacity to act independently from the government in terms of international relations, however, in interstate relations; sometimes the nature of the interaction makes government interactions inevitable. There are also smaller factors about internal structure of TITIA that will determine the future of TITIA, which will be discussed in the following sections.

TITIA depends largely on financial distribution from its members, who are mainly businessmen and companies engaging in trade with the Muslim world. One of TITIA's main goals is to link Thai businessmen with their counterparts in the Muslim world through country-visiting, informal meetings, networking and exhibitions during conferences. So far, members have been happy with TITIA's initiative and efforts.[551] In order to secure support from the members, TITIA will have to continue to work with

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[551] Interview with members of TITIA who set up display booths at the World Muslim Trade Exhibition 2007.

existing members, as well as inviting more membership. It will need to support businesses of its member. This is because their successes render greater support and attract more members. So far, TITIA has been quite successful in drawing its members to do business in the MENA region, including in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and North African countries.

As noted, financial support is crucial to TITIA. Much had been pointed out that the weakness of TITIA is its lack of funding. The president himself mentioned the need to seek sponsors to support most of the events; and the sponsors are mostly the members of the organisation. Without a steady source of income, the association cannot grow or even sustain itself. So far, there are two main sources of income for TITIA, one is the contribution from its members; as noted, these contributions are subjected largely on the success of TITIA's effort in providing support for these businessmen with their trade in the Muslim world. The other contribution is from foreign sources, including funding from foreign governments and organisations such as the ICCI and the OIC. This financial support is not regular, and depends largely on the personal connections of TITIA members and ability to point out the need and benefit that contributors will get. So far, the financial support TITIA had received came from Islamic charities outside Thailand, which TITIA has used in running its initiatives and member meetings and also to provide scholarship to Thai students in needs.[552]

Domestically, TITIA has several agencies that it usually coordinates with, including the Chamber of Commerce and the Halal Sciences Centre at Chulalongkorn University. While holding events, linkages with additional agencies are usually developed on temporary basis. For example, in the World of Muslims 2007, TITIA worked with the Central Mosque of Thailand, TCEB, as well as with sub-governmental agencies. In order to secure the future, TITIA must try to secure a more permanent linkage with these domestic agencies.

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[552] Ibid

In terms of linkage with foreign agencies, it can be said that TITIA has been successful at certain level. This can be seen through its ability to attract support from organisations like the OIC, ICCI, and South-South cooperation task force of the UNDP. It is remarkable that this small private sector association can link with international organisations with minimum support from the government. Each year, TITIA has increased its membership and partners with organisations abroad. While relationship with domestic agencies is largely temporary, the relationship with foreign organisations appears to be more stable and permanent. To explain such phenomenon, identity plays an important role. It is clear that several external organisations that coordinate with TITIA have identity and functional compatibility with TITIA, i.e. they are Muslim associations and they are groups of Islamic chambers of commerce. The cooperation of these associations demonstrates the attempt of these associations to group themselves internationally, and to become a transnational functional or identity group.

External factors include any agencies outside TITIA, this includes the Thai government and its agencies, governments of the foreign countries and the international organisations and groups where TITIA would like to create a network.

The future of TITIA will be subject to the attention received from the Thai government. If the government gives more support and recognises its significance, the chance to secure more funding and developing joint programs will be greater. The support from relevant government agencies, including the Ministry of Commerce and Ministry of Foreign Affairs are important because it will enable TITIA to embark on new initiatives, as well as creating greater confidence among its member and potential partners. However, it is difficult, as noted, that the government will be committed and recognise the work of TITIA, as it focuses mainly on its own project, which is governmental-based, and free from the intervention of private sector.

8.1.1   *Foreign Governments and Organisations TITIA Associates with*

As noted, TITIA is able to link with foreign government with small support from the Thai government. Much of TITIA's initiative had been supported by the OIC and the

ICCI member countries.   The future of TITIA in terms of financial support and networking will therefore subject to continued support from these countries. As long as there are a good numbers of businessmen from these countries interested in doing business with the Thai partners, and as long as TITIA can act as linkage for these businessmen, these countries will likely support its activities. So far TITIA has good relations with Muslim countries, for instance Iran, Pakistan and African countries. Gradually, the organisation aims to develop the network further to countries in the Gulf states; some network already exists, but not as strong as those in Iran and South Asia.

As for organisations, from the observation, there are two kinds of organisations that interact with TITIA in organising events. First is Muslim business organisations, this include the ICCI, the OIC, and other business-oriented organisations including the chambers of commerce in foreign countries. The second type of organisation is the international, non-profit organisations namely UNDP and UNIDO. With the first type of organisations, identity of TITIA as Islamic and business oriented organisation is a key factor that crates the linkage, which is likely to endure and will continue to be developed as there are more sub-branches of OIC that can be related to TITIA. The relationship with the second type of organisations will be subjected mainly on the nature of events and initiatives TITIA jointly organises with its partners. As long as the goals are relevant and closely related to the UNDP and UNIDO, these organisations can be drawn into the project.

8.1.2   *Situation in Global Trade, Politics, and Society*

The future of TITIA will also subject to global trade, politics and society, particularly Thailand's trade with the Muslim world. Therefore, it depends on the country's foreign policy and responses it receives from global community. In terms of global trade, most of TITIA's activities are based on trade with the Muslim world; therefore, as long as there is the positive trend in economic and trade prospect in the Muslim world, it is most likely that countries in the region will continue to interact and coordinate with TITIA. As well, if Southeast Asia can demonstrate itself to be suitable for investment and trade, Muslim businessmen would be willing to invest and attend trade shows, conferences and

exhibitions in Thailand and thus need to seek partner, which TITIA will be potential candidate on Thailand's part. The future of TITIA also depends on political and social situation in Thailand. If the Thai government consolidates and enhances its foreign policy with the Muslim countries, as well as promotes its support, economically, politically and socially to Thai Muslims, it will create a pleasant atmosphere in investment.

Therefore, the future of TITIA does not depend only on the organisation itself. It is subjected to many factors. Each factor is well related to one another. Though, the most significant is the ability of TITIA to sustain itself should it receive only minimum support from the government. What the association needs to prioritise is securing regular funding and strengthening its existing and potential network. Even though it does not want support from government, as long as the government finds itself having difficulty with its relationship with the Middle East, it might benefit from support from TITIA. It will be difficult, and very unlikely, however, for TITIA to reject governmental intervention at all. In order to move into the future, support from the government is necessary.

9. TITIA'S POTENTIAL ROLE IN THAILAND'S RELATIONS WITH THE GCC STATES

It may seem that TITIA has not developed strong connections and contacts with the GCC governments and businessmen. The relations between TITIA and foreign governments are limited to only a few countries, as noted, Iran, Pakistan, and some African countries. It is, however, important to recognise the potential development of the relations between TITIA and the GCC States through the association's relations with the OIC and ICCI, in which the GCC States are members. The GCC entrepreneurs were among the guests and participants in the events held by TITIA. Considering positive responses the association has received from interactions through OIC and ICCI channels, TITIA's relations with the GCC States will be improved and should not be difficult. As long as TITIA can maintain good relations with the OIC and ICCI, the outcome of the relations can spill over to positive interactions with their member states.

Thailand's relations with the GCC States, therefore, may be enhanced by interactions among TITIA, the GCC governments, and their private sector associations. So far TITIA has shown to have strong foundations through the context of multilateral cooperation; this will facilitate the bilateral relations between TITIA and each GCC States too. TITIA is can be considered as an appropriate additional actor from the non-state sphere within Thailand-GCC States relations. The problem, however, is that despite being an appropriate proxy, TITIA is not entirely willing to intervene within international relations, which is considered as government's sphere. It will take some effort from both the government and TITIA to recognise mutual benefits and adapt their organisational goals to suit each other. It is also crucial for both sides to have a positive attitude toward each other and to change traditional perceptions about the division between government-private sectors.

Since its establishment in 2000, it can be seen that TITIA has achieved certain level of success in its attempt to strengthen relations with the Muslim world. The end of the World of Muslim Conference in 2007 sees potential cooperation between TITIA and other organisations as followed:

- ICCI in cooperation with Chulalongkorn University and the Thai Islamic Trade & Industrial Association (TITIA) aims to organize Training programmes for the entrepreneurs of OIC Member Countries in the area of Halal Food.[553]

- There is also the plan to promote business, economic, tourism and cultural partnership between OIC Countries and Thailand, in line with the MOU, that had been signed in the World of Muslim Conference between the Halal Science Centre in Thailand and International Centre for Education in Islamic Finance (INCEIF) in Malaysia, for establishing an International Medical Centre project in Thailand.[554]

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[553] The Report of the 2nd International Islamic Economic, Cultural and Tourism Conference, Bangkok, Thailand, given at the closing ceremony, September 9, 2007.
[554] Ibid.

- At the end of the conference, a committee had been proposed, comprising of OIC, IDB, ICCI, ISESCO, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, the UAE and TITIA to follow-up on the Recommendations and proposal made during the conferences.

While it may be seen that there were not many participants from the GCC States in the World of Muslims 2007 Conference, there was recognition of potential significance of the GCC States among organizers, including TITIA committee. As noted, the UAE had been recommended to be part of the committee, which implies the increased recognition of the significance of the UAE as a gateway to further relations with the GCC States.[555]

In 2008, the president to TITIA had been appointed as the Director and Board Members of Halal Standard Institute of Thailand, which is part of the Central Islamic Committee of Thailand (CICOT).[556] With such position, TITIA became more integrated into Thailand's Islamic Affairs. The nature of TITIA's work that focuses on strengthening trade and economic relations between Thailand and the Muslim world had been combined with the attempt to promote Halal food from Thailand to the rest of the world. In addition, in the same year, there was an MOU signed between TITIA and the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Mines (ICRIC) to establish the Halal World Brand in Thailand.[557] In February 2009 the officials from the ICRIC visited Thailand and met with TITIA president to follow up the plan of inaugurating the ICRIC office in Thailand and to discuss the aim to develop the ICRIC projects in Thailand.[558] The Halal project, which TITIA had signed an MOU with the ICRIC had been further developed; with the ICRIC officials met with Thai officials and the TITIA president, who, as noted, also directs the Halal Standard Institute of Thailand as well.[559]

As for the relations with the GCC States, as of 2008, TITIA has become the link for Saudi businessmen, Saudi government officials, and Thai businessmen. In 2008, the Saudi Arabia embassy in Thailand requested support from TITIA in locating Thai

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[555] Ibid.
[556] Phone interview with an anonymous TITIA staff September 2009.
[557] Information from www.halalworld.org, news section.
[558] The Iranian Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Mines websites.
http://en.iccim.ir/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=711&Itemid=58
[559] Ibid.

manufacturers for several products demanded in the Saudi market. Furthermore, TITIA's president, who acted as the committee for the Middle East wing of the Thai Chamber of Commerce, was able to visit Saudi Arabia in 2008 to strengthen trade relations between Thailand and Saudi Arabia. Both phenomena demonstrated the acceptance of TITIA's efficiency in promoting Thailand's relations with the GCC States.

10. CONCLUSION

This chapter begins by providing an overview of the development of private sector associations in Thailand, and how they are relevant to Thai politics and foreign trade policy. The highlight of the chapter is the introduction of the Thai Islamic Trade and Industrial Association (TITIA), which is used as one of the cases study to examine the role of private sector associations in Thailand's relations with the GCC and the Muslim world.

Theoretically speaking, this chapter discusses the transformation of international relations environment, from state-centric to a more pluralist environment, where the non-state actors increased their role, agendas and participation at international levels. The contemporary international relations in Thailand see not only that the number of non-state actors have increased; but also that their development and network have constantly grown to sometimes bypass the government in interacting with their foreign counterparts. The identity both the state and non-state actors have constructed or attached to themselves while interacting with each other also play an important role in determining the nature and outcome of the relations. In this research, the Islamic identity plays an important role in giving the Muslim private sector associations some advantage in interacting with the GCC States, while the government, being perceived attached to Buddhist identity, finds limited access to closer relations with the GCC States. Constructivism has therefore been useful concept in reflecting the role of identity in this international relations process. The development of non-state actors and later transnational non-state actors has also urged the state to develop legal body that manage these organisations; such phenomenon reflects the government's effort in adjusting itself to accommodate, but control, these non-state actors. The choice that the government

made in developing relations with these organisations can be understood through functional and liberal institutional concepts.

The findings in this chapter lead to the conclusion that even though the government faces some challenges in conducting international relations with the GCC States, it stills controls most of the activities; and the functions organised by private sector associations are being controlled in some way by the government. The government's relations with the private sector associations show that the government is very selective in allowing private sector to handle foreign affairs. However, it is clear from this chapter that in some areas, private sector associations, with less bureaucracy and more flexible characteristics as well as a more compatible identity and focus, can act as efficiently as the state in international interactions.

In the case of the TITIA, the association is smaller and comparatively recent in its establishment; therefore, it receives less attention from the government. Its linkage with the government comes largely through the larger private sector associations, in which it is member, and through its specialisation and through personal connections both domestically and in the Muslim world. Even though having less support and recognition from the government, looking through the development and role of TITIA throughout the two governments, one can see the potential of this association in working as proxy for the government in Thailand's relationship with the Middle East, including the GCC States. The problems lie in that TITIA has not received much governmental support, and it is less willing to act as the formal governmental proxy. Its main priority is its members; this is because much of TITIA's ability to survive depends on domestic members and foreign financial support. The future of TITIA therefore depends on the association's capacity to maintain the level of financial support it can get, and whether the government will recognise its potential in enhancing relationship with the Middle East. It will depend also whether TITIA will be willing to consider public interest along with, or sometimes against, private interest as it mainly does now.

The case of TITIA is a case study that shows how local private sector associations can be affected by the government; and how these small private sector associations struggle to develop their own network with the GCC States, according to their focus, which in the case of TITIA is trade. While it can be seen that the local private sector associations have been regulated and their relations with the government depends on size, familiarity with the government and the nature of establishment, it is interesting to see if foreign Muslim-related private sector associations in Thailand are affected by the same regulations and how their relations with the government looks like. The next chapter will provide the case study of foreign private sector association that operates in Thailand, the World Assembly of Muslim Youth, whose function is largely charity based. The two cases will show a more holistic picture of the non-government sphere of Thailand's relations with the Muslim world, where different types of private sector associations and other non-state actors exist.

CHAPTER 6

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FOREIGN MUSLIM-RELATED
PRIVATE SECTOR ASSOCIATIONS IN THAILAND
The Case of the World Association of Muslim Youth (WAMY) Thailand

1. INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, we discussed the development and roles of private sector associations in Thailand's international relations with the Muslim world. The author's argument shows that the Thai state has set a clear role and expectations for the private sector associations, which define the nature of relations between the government and the associations. The level of relationship between the government and these associations varies, depending on the government's familiarity with and sizes of the associations. The highlight of the last chapter is also the observation of the Thai Islamic Trade and Industrial Association (TITIA), which is a smaller, local private sector association that largely involves in trade with the Muslim world. The findings of TITIA's relations demonstrate that, with connections and ability to initiate relations, TITIA has potential capacity to act as proxy for Thailand's relations with the Muslim world and highly possible the GCC States; however, TITIA is less enthusiastic to intervene with the international relations sphere, which it perceives to be entirely controlled by the government.

The existence of private sector associations in Thailand is not limited to those locally originated; there are also foreign private sector associations and regional office of the foreign associations. The role and regulations set for these foreign non-government organisations differ from the local associations. They are bound to much stricter scrutiny due to national security concerns. With their links to foreign partners, these foreign associations are viewed by some as potential proxy for the international relations, particularly in the relations where states find it difficult to gain access to greater development. The constrained relations between Thailand and Saudi Arabia is one example, question arises whether the foreign private organisation, founded and supported by Saudi Arabia, can play any role in improving the relations.

This chapter seeks to examine the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY) in Thailand. WAMY Thailand is a branch office that responds to its headquarters in Saudi Arabia. This chapter begins by discussing the position and regulation imposed on foreign non-government organisations in Thailand. The second part of the chapter provides a brief overview of WAMY Thailand, and then moves to examine the relationship between the association and the government. The fourth part of the chapter explains the growth of WAMY Thailand while the next part points out the factors that contribute to the success of WAMY. The sixth part seeks to explain the future of WAMY. The next section of the chapter seeks to answer the question over the role of WAMY in Thailand's relations with Saudi Arabia, as well as the overall relations with the GCC States. The author argues that WAMY contributes very little to international relations between Thailand and the GCC States. There are several reasons that account for this: first, there is a clear boundary between the state and foreign private sector associations, which set how much these foreign associations can get involved in the government sphere and that WAMY Thailand is limited by it not being legally recognised in Thailand; second, both the government and the foreign private sector are less likely to cross paths, traditional bureaucratic procedures is to limit themselves to their own sphere; and third, the nature of WAMY's management and existence requires very little support from the government, its financial independence and the support it receives from Muslim communities in Thailand makes it require less attention from the government, thus there is no need for the interaction between the government and WAMY.

The argument from the previous chapter and the argument gained from this chapter have culminated to provide the reflection over the non-state sphere, particularly in the world of private sector associations. The end of this chapter seeks to compare and contrast TITIA and WAMY. The similarities and differences observed from these associations will be remarked, as well as the nature of their relationship to the government and to international relations with the GCC States and the Muslim world.

2. FOREIGN PRIVATE SECTOR ASSOCIATIONS IN THAILAND

Foreign private sector associations in Thailand are usually viewed under the umbrella of foreign private organisations. This is because the characteristics of the private sector associations closely correspond with the definition of the foreign private organisations set forth by the government. According to the Rule of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare on the Entry of Foreign Private Organisations to Operate in Thailand B.E. 2541 (1998), foreign private organisation means "*a foreign institution, organisation, society, foundation, other juristic person or group of persons which is a private organisation or is supported by a foreign government.*"[560] There have been a large numbers of foreign private organisations in Thailand; the characteristics of these associations differ. A lot of foreign private organisations are the regional offices of the international organisations abroad; and others are organisations that are established with much support and funding from foreign sources. There are several purposes of these organisations, including charity, environment, and development. The nature of the organisations, which are heavily linked with foreign agencies, creates concerns for national security. Therefore, the Thai government has been vigilant in the operations of these organisations.

The legal bodies that are used to enforce and regulate foreign private sector organisations in Thailand is the Rule of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare on the Entry of Foreign Private Organisations to Operate in Thailand B.E. 2541 (1998).[561] The rule establishes that the committees have duties and power to monitor the operation of the foreign private organisations. In addition, it sets guidelines over the qualifications and nature of operations of these organisations. Compliance with the Thai law, observation of the Thai public order and morals are crucial conducts for these organisations. In addition, the foreign organisations must not be profit-making or have political purposes. Most of the foreign organisations in Thailand are charity-based and aim to promote development of specific groups. In 2000, the Ministry of Labour launched the new guidelines for the committee established to consider the entry of

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[560] The Rule of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare on the Entry of Foreign Private Organizations to Operate in Thailand B.E. 2541 (1998), Ministry of Labour, Thailand.
[561] For more details on the Rule of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare on the Entry of Foreign Private Organizations to Operate in Thailand B.E. 2541 and the Rule of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare on the Entry of Foreign Private Organizations to Operate in Thailand B.E. 2541 (1998).

foreign private organisations in Thailand.[562] The rule for the entry of the foreign private organisations became stricter, with more screening procedures from security agencies.

Compared to local private sector associations, the legal bodies used with foreign private organisations are subjected to tighter control. While the legal bodies relevant to local private sector associations require that these organisations comply to law, public order and morals of the country, the enforcements and screening procedures are not as strict and detailed as the one used with foreign private organisations. The committee that consider the entry of these foreign organisations include officials from Ministry of foreign affairs, the Office of the National Security Council, the National Intelligence Agency, Armed Force Security Centre Supreme Command Headquarters and the Special Branch Bureau Commissioner, show that national security and international relations are at stake.

The role of foreign private organisations in Thailand's international relations cannot be denied; this is because of linkages and the nature of funding and support from abroad. However, the nature of these organisations' operations sometimes creates concerns over national security. The lack of monitoring can affect national security as well as the relations with other countries. Unlike local private sector associations, it is not surprising that the legal bodies and regulations for the foreign private organisations are comparatively stricter. At the same time, with the potential that these organisations can affect international relations; the regulations had limited the roles and areas of activities of these organisations.

3.   WAMY THAILAND—THE ESTABLISHMENT AND ITS INITIATIVES

WAMY Thailand was established in 1996. The organisation was primarily run by small group of volunteers, who received neither compensation nor benefit.[563] Later, the WAMY headquarters in Saudi Arabia, aiming to motivate and reward the volunteers,

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[562] The Rule of Committee on Consideration of the Entry of Foreign Private Organization B.E 2543 (2000), posted in the Government Gazette, 21 November 2000, p. 131.
[563] Phone interview with the Director of the Women's Activities Section, WAMY Thailand, 23 January 2009.

decided to formally establish an office and provide staff with salary.[564] Since then, WAMY Thai office has direct links with WAMY's headquarters. In additional to receive funding for Islamic activities, the volunteers have become full-time staff; and now there are 14 full-time staff at WAMY Thailand.

3.1 Objectives

According to a WAMY staff, there are five key objectives for WAMY including:[565]

1. To coordinate among youths and social organisations both at the domestic and international levels, as well as to coordinate with multi-faith organisations. In addition, to seek ways to establish world peace and improve livelihood.

2. To promote human rights for people at all level of life.

3. To battle against crime, social immorality, drugs, and violence.

4. To support programs and projects on environment and world economy which are suitable with human life and nature.

5. To cooperate with the UN and other organisations that work to create peace, prosperity and humanitarian support.

Such objectives reflect WAMY's vision to become a leading organisation that build distinguish Muslim youths. In order to achieve the objectives and vision, WAMY strategic plans include inserting itself in youth activities, becoming youth's refuge and consultant, establishing strong relationship with youth, and improving revenues to better support youths. The examples of means WAMY has been doing to follow the strategic plans are to provide financial support to youths, to help coordinate projects, workshops, and knowledge distribution. The areas of support WAMY Thailand has been providing include the areas of education, Islamic affairs, humanitarian, health and sports, socioeconomic development, women studies and development and training.[566] Further details on the nature of WAMY's activities on these areas will be discussed in a later section.

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[564] Phone interview with the Secretary of WAMY Thailand, 14 December 2009.
[565] The World Assembly of Muslim Youth, Thailand (WAMY) www.wamythai.org. (Last accessed 19 June, 2009).
[566] WAMY briefing document.

3.2 Division of Work and Sources of Funding

WAMY Thailand divides its tasks and responsibilities into different sub-divisions. Each of the division has to propose at least 8 projects and activities each year, and the proposals have to be submitted to WAMY office in Dumman for approvals and funding. The divisions include:

1. Administrative division
2. Activity division, which is further divided into female and male divisions
3. Knowledge and information technology division
4. Educational division
5. Workshop and development divisions

As for sources of funding, there are two sources of income that WAMY Thailand receives. The main source of income is from WAMY headquarters in Saudi Arabia. The other sources are from donations and campaign sought domestically. Occasionally, WAMY receives donation from Arab philanthropists. The incomes are used for emergency issues, i.e. to support victims of natural disasters and fire; for charity, including scholarship and for orphans, and for workshops, camps and seminars.

3.3 The Existence of WAMY

Since its establishment, WAMY's existence in Thailand has not been formally recognised. While WAMY had been informally set up since 1996, its formal establishment has not been completed. In 1999, the organisation tried to register at the department of foreign labour, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, as required by the Thai law; however, the application lacks crucial documents, including proofs of income, registered capital stocks, and administrative capital; thus, the application did not go through.[567] In 2000, the organisation filed application again and was turned down due to lack of the proof that demonstrated the legitimacy of the head office in Saudi Arabia.[568] The WAMY Thai office could not provide such a document to the ministry, as the Saudi

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[567] Briefing on background of WAMY Thailand, document provided by WAMY Thai office, personal correspondent between the author and a WAMY staff.
[568] Ibid.

law did not require that charity organisations register; therefore, there was no document that shows that WAMY headquarters have been granted permission to function in Saudi Arabia.[569] Therefore, with the lack of such document, the Thai government does not allow WAMY to be lawfully established and function in Thailand.

Until now, the existence of WAMY in Thailand is theoretically not legitimate. However, the organisation has been functioning in practice, with very few obstacles. The organisation indeed is open to the public; it has Web site and radio stations.[570] It receives positive feedbacks from Muslim communities in Thailand. One WAMY staff pointed out that even though WAMY does not have the formal permission from the Thai government, the legitimacy of the organisation rests on the fact that it had been established by the Saudi king, it receives recognitions from Saudi authorities, as well as acceptance from several countries in the world, even the UN, since WAMY is UN-affiliated.[571]

3.4   Factors that Motivated the Establishment and the Existence of WAMY Thailand—the Role of Globalisation on Individuals

3.3.1 Thai Muslim Students and Alumni from the Arab World

Most of WAMY staffs are alumni from universities in the Arab world; several staffs and members attended the al-Azhar University in Cairo, as well as universities in Saudi Arabia. These former students had developed strong network of radical, Arabic speaking Muslims. They have also learned about Islamic ideology and Islamist concepts from the Arab world. Once come back to Thailand, these students therefore seek way to maintain, as well as to distribute their knowledge and ideology, with the hope of strengthening Muslim communities in Thailand. That's when the former Saudi-university alumni primarily came together to set up WAMY.

One must say that the availability of scholarships offered to Thai Muslim students, as well as lower travel cost, play an important role in facilitating the establishment and

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[569] Ibid.
[570] Phone Interview with Mr. Abdul Aziz, a WAMY staff member, 26 January 2009.
[571] Ibid.

existence of WAMY Thailand. As long as Thai Muslim students are provided with the opportunity to study in the Muslim world, the chance that they will come back, wanting to promote Islam through some of the Muslim organisations in the country remains high.

3.3.2 Improved Telecommunication Technology and Global Muslim Network

Ability to attract coordination and membership through different media tools is one of WAMY's strengths. Improvements in telecommunication technology, as well as Thai Muslims' greater accessibility of this technology have facilitated the establishment of the organisation. It also makes the contacts between WAMY Thailand and its headquarters, as well as contacts between WAMY Thailand and other local Muslim organisations possible. That WAMY continues to attract more Muslims and Muslim organisations is because of its accessibility through internet and other media.

3.3.3 The urge to strengthen Islamic network, domestically and internationally

Prior to the establishment of WAMY Thailand, several local Muslim organisations had existed. However, they were lacking of sufficient funding and public relations. Therefore, the first batch of WAMY volunteers were urged to create an organisation that helped strengthen Islamic network and Muslim youth development in Thailand. When combined to the networks these former students had in the Arab world, as several of them had joined Muslim organisations while they were students, these students were able to bring establish WAMY Thailand and attract for funding and support from headquarters.

4. RELATIONS WITH OTHER PRIVATE SECTOR ASSOCIATIONS
4.1 Domestic Level

Domestically, there are two organisations officially affiliated with WAMY Thailand. These are the Association of Thai Muslim students and The Young Muslim Association of Thailand. WAMY Thailand also has connections with other Muslim organisations in Thailand including the Santichon Muslim foundation, the Foundation of Islamic Center

of Thailand, the Central Islamic Committee of Thailand (CICOT), the Islamic Committee of Bangkok, etc. Most of the organisations are religious based and most of them are linked with one another. This is because Muslim organisations in Thailand believe in the concept of ummah, or Islamic community. Therefore, there is a great deal of information sharing among these organisations.

From observation, WAMY Thailand generally provides support, i.e. financial support and staff support, to smaller Muslim organisations, including the Muslim Youth groups in Thai university campuses and Muslim community groups. WAMY Thailand also coordinates with other larger Muslim associations in the rally to promote the rights of Muslims. Key Muslim organisations in Thailand usually get together to share their views, and to demonstrate their stand. Throughout contemporary Thai politics, these key Muslim organisations have actively protested and pressured the governments on Thailand's foreign policy or to renounce any acts perceived to threaten the well-being of Muslims. During the Thaksin administration, it was these key Muslim organisations, WAMY included, which criticised the government's contribution of troops to Iraq. The Arab-Israeli agenda has impelled Muslim organisations in Thailand, WAMY included, to pressure the government and to rally for support to Palestinians.

In relation to other Muslim-related private sector associations, i.e. TITIA, there was small level of connection. During the World of Muslims Trade Exhibition, WAMY participated in setting up booths to promote its publication. Asides from occasional interactions, there is no visible joint project between these two associations. This can be rooted in different objectives and goal, as well as nature of network and target groups; TITIA's main target groups are Muslim entrepreneurs, while WAMY's target groups are students and youth. Therefore it is unlikely for both organisations to cross paths.

4.2 International Level
4.2.1 Relationship with WAMY Headquarters
There is a close relationship between WAMY Thailand and the WAMY headquarters in Saudi Arabia. The WAMY headquarters looks after finance, appointments committees,

approves proposed projects, links WAMY Thailand with other WAMY offices and assigns some projects and tasks to WAMY Thailand. The WAMY office in Dammam is in charge of all WAMY offices in Asia-Pacific, and answers to the WAMY headquarters in Riyadh. Staff from the WAMY headquarters and guests from the Arab world, i.e. Gulf States, regularly visit WAMY Thailand.

4.2.2 Relationship with WAMY Worldwide

There are reportedly several WAMY offices worldwide (this number excludes the WAMY offices in the Middle East). Some of the offices are listed below (table 16) according to the regions they are located.

Table 16: Some Selected WAMY Offices Worldwide

Regions	Countries
Asia	Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Azerbaijan, Philippines
Africa	Nigeria, Kenya, Senegal, Sudan, Liberia, Malawi, Etiopia, Sierra Leone
Europe	Germany, Belgium, Russia, UK, Bulgaria, France
Australia	Australia, New Zealand
America	USA, Argentina

Source: WAMY office Thailand.

The WAMY offices worldwide coordinate and meet through workshops. Different offices, in addition to the tasks and projects assigned by the headquarters in Saudi Arabia, run their own projects and initiatives. WAMY offices that share similar interests, and are in the same geographical region coordinate with one another more often. WAMY Thailand has especially good relations with WAMY Philippines.[572] Therefore, transnational Muslim linkage is visible in this case, as it is reflected through the network of WAMY offices worldwide, including in Thailand.

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[572] Phone interview with the secretary of WAMY Thailand, 14 December 2008.

5. RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER INTERNATIONAL MUSLIM ORGANISATIONS

WAMY is recognised as affiliated with the UN's Non-government organisations; the UN also accepts WAMY's role and allows WAMY to have representatives with in UN committee. [573] The relationship with other international organisations is not well recorded. Interestingly, there is no record of the link between WAMY and the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), which is the world's largest Muslim organisation. The staff of WAMY Thailand points out that there is very small interaction between WAMY and other international Muslim organisations abroad, except other WAMY offices worldwide. The focus of WAMY Thailand is more to develop network domestically with Muslim organisations in Thailand.

5.1 Key activities

WAMY Thailand provides support for activities initiated by other organisations as well as actively organises its own activities. There is the division in the nature of tasks and responsibilities of staff. Tasks are distributed according to suitability of activities and to genders of participants. There is one section of WAMY Thailand that specifically manages activities for women. While on the men side, there are several sections, each manages different activities, including Islamic studies, orphanage, charity, etc.

Being a sizeable, independent, and economically sustainable Muslim organisation, WAMY can organise activities both directly and indirectly. This means that some of the activities are run by other Muslim organisations, but usually with financial and staff support from WAMY. Other type of activities is those that are truly organised by WAMY. Some of WAMY's key activities include:

5.1.1 *WAMY Radio*

An interview with a producer of WAMY radio provides information on this activity. WAMY Thailand broadcasts its one-hour program, WAMY radio, daily. The WAMY radio provides information on Islam as well as news, music and lifestyle. Audiences are

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[573] As claimed by WAMY Thailand.

not limited to Thai Muslims, but from other religions as well. The producer pointed out that from the calls the radio program receives, there are a few Buddhist audience who point out they benefit from the programs. The samples of the programs' content include the information on Islamic tradition, Islamic concepts, guidelines for good praying, etc.[574] The producers points out high airtime renting (around 1000 pounds/month) for a one-hour program daily; he claims that it is worthwhile because people have learned more about Islam and there has been positive feedbacks. The contents of the radio program have been saved in several Muslim Web sites in Thailand.

5.1.2   *Youth Seminars and Camps*

As noted out, organising workshop and youth seminars is one of the areas that WAMY Thailand specialises. Usually the nature of the seminars and workshops are Muslim Youth Leadership camps, Young Muslim Camp, and seminar on relevant topics of Islam. [575] The example is WAMY's coordination with The Association of Thai Muslim students in organising the program on Leadership Development for Thai Muslim students, in which WAMY provided both funding and staff support. WAMY also coordinated with the Islamic Study and Muslim Community Development for Peaceful Social Integration Project at Walailak University, in Nakorn Si Thammarat province in organising Muslim Student Leadership program. [576] In addition, WAMY also organises smaller scale workshops, generally weekend activities for Muslims, including WAMY women social groups and short trips for Muslim Youths.[577]

5.1.3   *WAMY Publication*

WAMY also publishes and distributes books and reading concerning Islam and Islamic thinking. One of WAMY Thailand's publications is the al-ikwan al Muslimun, the

translation from Arabic from   الموسوعة الميسرة في الأديان والمذاهب والأحزاب المعاصرة, which

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[574] www.islamhouse.com. (Last accessed 12 June, 2009).

[575] http://www.muslimtsu.com/2008/index.php?module=webboard/view&id=54. (Last accessed 27 January, 2009).

[576] For more information about the coordination between WAMY and Walailak University, visit Islamic Studies program at Walailak University. The most updated activity has been organised in 2009, see http://www.wu.ac.th/2550/news/showNewsV.php?id=11846. (Last accessed 27 January, 2009).

[577] www.wamythai.org. (Last accessed July 17, 2009).

emphasises the Muslim Brotherhood, its founders Hassan al-Bannah and its significant figures, including Syyid Qutb. The publication comes in the form of small, thin booklet, with all explanation in Thai. Most of WAMY publications can be purchased at the WAMY office Thailand and in bookshops of the Foundation of Islamic Center of Thailand. During the World of Muslims exhibition, WAMY attended the Muslim Trade fair through having exhibition booth, selling its publications, as noted before.

5.1.4   Arabic Class

Since most of WAMY staff graduated from universities in the Arab world, almost all of them speak Arabic fluently. Several of the staff graduated from al-Azharr University in Egypt. Indeed, the preferred languages for the interviews were either Thai or Arabic. Other key activity provided by WAMY is Arabic class, which is open not only to Muslims, but general members of the public.

5.1.5   Charity and Orphanage

WAMY also provides support for orphans and orphaned families. WAMY defines being 'orphan' according to Islamic tradition, that a child without father is considered to be orphan; therefore, the orphans supported by WAMY are both those without parents, and some of them are without fathers. There have been approximately 400 orphans under care of WAMY Thailand, and the orphans are from different parts of Thailand, not limited to Bangkok areas. The support includes financial support, as well as providing gifts and food during Islamic celebrations, including Eid. In addition, WAMY also provides support for inmates, both men and women. The support is through career development, financial aids, as well as religious teaching.

5.2 The Measures Used to Support the Communities

As noted, there are different types of activities that WAMY organises and supports. According to WAMY, the nature of activities supported by the organisation can be classified in different categories as followed:

a. **Education**—WAMY provides academic advice and information on scholarship, provides scholarship for Thai students, provides funding for different educational programs, and organises workshop for teachers.

b. **Tradition and religion**—To promote tradition and religion, WAMY distributes pamphlets that promote morality and publish some works about Islam.

c. **Humanitarian support**—WAMY seeks to help youths and groups that need urgent support due to the impact of war, poverty, natural disaster and provides help through rallying for donations. In addition, WAMY coordinates with other organisations to help with humanitarian projects.

d. **Health and sports**—WAMY supports the establishment of Muslim physician groups to provide medical support for people. As well, WAMY organises workshops and provides financial support for sports camps.

e. **Socioeconomic improvement**—WAMY provides financial support for educational and social projects, as well as job development. In addition, it helps organise workshop that help improve livelihood of people in the rural areas.

f. **Women activities**—To promote women activities, WAMY has a women committee that work in educational and social projects to improve women status.

g. **Workshops and seminars**—Organising workshops and seminars are WAMY's focus and areas of specialty. WAMY usually coordinates with local Youth organisations in their workshop, it helps providing both financial and staff supports.

The diversity of the activities provided by WAMY helped attract more members; this is because the activities are able to target different groups, ranging from different age groups, gender groups and socioeconomic groups.

Unfortunately, the data on funding, factual contract among WAMY Thailand, its headquarters and the Saudi embassy in Thailand could not be obtained. WAMY staff preferred not to disclose the information.

6. WAMY UNDER THE CHUAN AND THAKSIN ADMINISTRATIONS

The interviews with WAMY staff and consultants reveal that WAMY has not been affected much by changes in government and Thai politics. The policies and administrations of both Chuan and Thaksin had no impact on WAMY Thailand. Once asked whether the foreign ministership of Dr. Surin, who is a Muslim, helped with the activities of WAMY and help with the promotion of Muslim private organisations in Thailand, a WAMY staff pointed out that the Muslim foreign minister did not have any impact on the work of Muslim organisations. It is misleading to see that Muslim politicians and high-ranking government officers will largely contribute to the operation of Muslim organisations. Indeed, the division between the government and the private sector is clear, and nobody wants to intervene in each other's sphere.

The global situation is the significant factor that affects WAMY. Under the Chuan administration, it was much easier for WAMY to operate. This is because during the pre 9/11, there was not much difficulty in terms of financial transaction from Saudi Arabia. After 9/11, financial transactions have become more complicate, as it has to go through tighter scrutiny. In addition, WAMY activities have been increasingly monitored by the government.

In sum, government administrations barely affect the work, development and the growth of WAMY. This is because WAMY is financially independent and has capacity to attract members and cooperation from other Muslim organisations. Common misperception is to overestimate the link between WAMY and the government. Indeed, there is a clear separation between them, and each of the spheres has its own dynamism.

7. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WAMY AND THE GOVERNMENT

According to its claim, WAMY Thailand has a cordial relationship with the Thai government. Despite not being officially recognised in Thailand, WAMY has been clear that its goals and objectives do not contradict with the government's regulation on the entry of foreign private organisations to operate in Thailand. It is noted that the government has been strictly vigilant on the potential national security and threat to

international relations from the operation of foreign private organisations.[578] Several governmental institutions, which may be not aware of WAMY's not being recognised formally, do interact with WAMY. The association had been invited by several government units to participate and help in events which are not major governmental projects. The examples include WAMY's participation and support during the World Boy Scout Camp and the Scout Camp of Asia Pacific, where WAMY helped host and provided support for Muslim scouts. WAMY had also been invited to participate in workshop on ethics and academic support on Islam from the government. When there is the need for the government to host or welcome guest from Saudi Arabia, several times WAMY had been asked by governmental units to provide translator and advices on Islamic tradition.

Financially, WAMY Thailand is self-sustained; this is because it receives funding regularly from its headquarters in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, WAMY Thailand does not seek domestic funding; on the other hand, it provides funding for other domestic Muslim organisations in Thailand. WAMY can therefore be considered as financially independent, thus, it is less compelled to closely interact with the government.

From observation, the relationship between WAMY and the Thai government is interestingly remarkable. While WAMY is, according to the Thai government, not a legitimate foreign private organisation in Thailand, its existence has practically been widely open and accepted. The government still interacts with WAMY in some of its activities, but the interactions are based largely on informal basis. That the informal interactions between WAMY and the government occasionally occur despite it not being formally recognised can be explained as:

1. There is the lack of coordination among government offices. The Office of Foreign Workers Administration, who is responsible for granting permission and monitoring the operation of foreign private organisations in Thailand,

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[578] For more detail, see The Rule of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare on the Entry of Foreign Private Organizations to Operate in Thailand B.E 2541 (1998). www.mol.go.th

may not share information with other governmental offices. Therefore, there is the lack of knowledge about WAMY's status with in other relevant governmental offices.

2. Thai law is loosely implemented. There is no clear procedure over how to treat organisations that are not formally recognised. At the same time, personal contact and informal interactions allows WAMY officers to interact with some government officers.

3. The cost of closing down WAMY is more than letting it operate and keeping a vigilant eyes on it. Closing down WAMY can negatively affect Thailand's relationship with Saudi Arabia, which had already been constrained.

It has been noted before, however, that most of the foreign private organisations in Thailand are under strictly monitoring process by several agencies, including the Office of the National Security Council, the National Intelligence Agency, Armed Force Security Centre Supreme Command Headquarters and the Special Branch Bureau Commissioner the Royal Thai Police Department. National security is one of the most crucial agendas the government takes into consideration in permitting an organisation, both Thai and foreign, to establish and operate. In the case of WAMY Thailand, traditional perception that some Middle East states provided support for separatism in the south, plus Islamophobia resulted from 9/11, may have stimulated stricter scrutiny from the National Security agencies. In the eyes of the Thai government, WAMY is considered to be the organisation that promotes radical Islam. The consultant of WAMY, a devout Muslim himself, admits that WAMY promotes a strict, radical Islamism; this, he points out to be the characteristics of most Muslim organisation in Thailand, which are funded and supported by the Arabs.[579]

International relations are one significant aspect for the government to consider when dealing with WAMY and other foreign private sector associations. The Thai government faces a dilemma of undermining national security and international relations. One of the core agendas in allowing the entry of a foreign private organisation is that the

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[579] Interviewed with the undisclosed consultant to WAMY, 28 January 2009.

organisation does not create tension between Thailand and other states.[580] In the case of WAMY, not recognising the organisation should yield the contrary outcome. Even though WAMY is unable to provide necessary document, lacking support and sensitivity to the Saudi legal process in the establishment of WAMY from the Thai part project a more negative connotation. It has not helped improve the constraint the state has had with Saudi Arabia. This is because, first, the organisation is Saudi-founded, and second, the organisation is heavily Islamic-oriented.

8. FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE STRENGTH OF WAMY

The factor that highly distinguishes WAMY and TITIA is the ability of WAMY to have access to greater range of Muslims within Thailand. While TITIA's membership is viewed as exclusive, in that almost all members of TITIA are Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs, WAMY members come from different social groups; even though youth is the emphasis of the organisation. This is because WAMY's projects are more diverse, unlike TITIA whose projects are trade-oriented. Thus it is not surprising that WAMY attracts more members and participation. In addition, WAMY projects are viewed as constructively engaging Muslims into individual and social development. Therefore the organisations can reach more people through its highly valued objectives and projects.

WAMY's ability to attract greater members is also based on its ability to promote the organisation and its activities through different modes of communication. WAMY has been using different kinds of media, including internet, radio programs, as well as through its publications. In addition, the Association of Thai Muslim students, one of WAMY's officially affiliated organisation, has been an important source that link WAMY to Muslim youths.

One must admit, however, that perhaps the internet is the most significant factor that contributes to the strength of WAMY. In Thailand, internet domains relevant to Muslims, Islamic and Islamic lifestyles are booming. Muslim youths are active users

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[580] See The Rule of Committee on Consideration of the Entry of Foreign Private Organization B.E 2543 (2000), posted in the Government Gazette, 21 November 2000. p. 131

within these Muslim webpage. WAMY has constantly updated its webpage on its activities and news. Members of WAMY also actively promote WAMY through other Web Pages; thus making WAMY more popular and able to attract more members.

As noted, WAMY has strong networks with other Muslim organisations. When there is an agenda that is relevant to the well-being of Muslims, all Muslim organisations in Thailand are urged to collectively work together; good examples are, as mentioned, the dispatch of Thai troops to Iraq, and the Arab-Israeli conflicts.

Both of WAMY's affiliated organisations, the Young Muslim Association of Thailand (YMAT), and the Association of Thai Muslim Students are significant Muslim organisations. The YMAT is based in southern Thailand, and is able to attract Muslims in the south, while the Association of Thai Muslim Students has been able to attract Muslims in different universities all over Thailand. WAMY has capacity to develop stronger bonds with these Muslim organisations because of its financial influence and staff expertise. The network of Muslims organisations in Thailand is impressively strong. The Muslim communities in Bangkok are not so large; therefore staffs of Muslim organisations are usually familiar with one another. Indeed, several of the staff in a Muslim organisation can sometimes be consultants and active staff for other organisations. There is always an exchange in information and joint activities among these organisations. A webpage of one Muslim organisation generally links to other Muslim organisations.

One of WAMY's strength is its ability to create links with other Muslim organisations overseas, as well as with Muslim states. The nature of the rapport, however, is largely in the form of people-to-people relations or inter-organisational relations. Interestingly, however, there is not much record of the relations between WAMY and OIC. This may be due to the fact that the OIC is a large scale, politically-oriented organisations, while WAMY is a smaller, local-based organisations.

Unlike TITIA, funding is not the constraint for WAMY Thailand. The organisation has a secure source of funding from WAMY headquarters in Saudi Arabia, as well as occasional funding the office receives from its campaign in Thailand. The fund from the Saudi headquarters is paid regularly once all the projects and proposals submitted by WAMY Thailand have been examined and approved. Generally, the fund is transferred to the bank account in Thailand. The 9/11 incident, as well as southern violence in Thailand have made fund transferring more difficult; this is because account has been under greater scrutiny. The funding gain domestically comes from Muslim philanthropists and the *zakat* from Muslim community during Ramadan and special occasions. Unlike TITIA, where donation depends largely on members' loyalty, donation to WAMY is based on the Islamic faith and the urge to support people in the *ummah*; such motivation to contribute money is less volatile and depends less on profit calculation. In addition to financial support, WAMY Thailand claims other kinds of support from the Saudi government. The organisation receives support from the Saudi embassy in Thailand. Arab philanthropists from outside Saudi Arabia also occasionally helps provide financial support. It can be seen that WAMY has broader and more powerful support bases than TITIA, whose support base is very small and unpredictable.

9. THE FUTURE OF WAMY

In order to assess the future of WAMY Thailand, it is crucial to analyse internal and external factors that are relevant to it. In terms of its own capacity, WAMY can sustain itself both in terms of financial capacity and member support. This is because WAMY staffs are not only capable and strongly motivated by faith, but they are also securely paid by its headquarters. The activities organised receive good feedbacks from participants, and from it, WAMY increasingly attracts more volunteers to assist its activities. With more volunteers, the possibility for the organisation to increase its activities to other parts of Thailand and to attract more participation is greater.

As noted, funding and support from its Saudi headquarters is one of the most important reasons that contribute to the strength and durability of WAMY. Financial

independence and strong tie with headquarters leaves WAMY with very little need for WAMY to seek external support other than its headquarters.

According to a WAMY consultant, WAMY will continue to operate in Thailand with little difficulty. It is easy to think that by not begin registered, WAMY's status and its future in Thailand is shaky. In reality, there are a lot of organisations in Thailand that are functioning without permission to register; law enforcement in Thailand in this aspect is quite relaxed.[581] At the same time, the nature of WAMY's focus is harmless and beneficial to Muslim communities; therefore it has strong popular support. WAMY is also supported by Muslim politicians, many of whom had worked in the government.

While the future of WAMY is secured in terms of funding, member support, and feedbacks from the community, its future is still subjected to the government. This is because of its existence, which is still considered illegitimate according to the Thai law. So far the organisation has been able to functions because of the government's turning of blind eyes on it or lacking of knowledge of its operation. This reflects the nature of Thai law enforcement, where sometimes authorities let loose on security control, and permit unregistered organisations to operate. In addition, several of WAMY members or consultants are respectable figures within Thailand; therefore, it makes it more difficult organisation to be asked to close down. This does not mean, however, that WAMY is not under the government surveillance and scrutiny; and the organisation will be under investigation and asked to be closed down any time should there be any suspicion on national security.

With the current nature of WAMY Thailand, it is less likely that the organisation will become more significant to the government. On the other hand, WAMY can be viewed by the government as an obstacle in the government's attempt to develop strong links with Muslims. The network WAMY has developed, together with other Muslim organisations, is viewed as threat rather than benefit to national security; it very much excludes the government, as well as blocking the government's role in supporting

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[581]Phone Interview with a WAMY Staff, November 2008.

Muslim populations. Muslim communities are more likely to rely on socioeconomic support from Muslim organisations than from the government. Therefore, the government's attempt to secure loyalty from the Muslims is hindered.

One must admit that WAMY Thailand is a well-established organisation, with staff having strong incentive and motivations. Secured funding and strong support, as well as faith, play an important role in creating strong incentive within the organisation. The division of tasks and activities have created a strong foundation for WAMY to attract Muslim communities. Considering the future of WAMY in terms of its stand in Muslim communities, it is very likely that WAMY will continue to function; this is due to continued positive response and good coordination it receives at popular level. Assessing the future of WAMY by incorporating its relationship with the government, there is no guarantee of the organisation's future on this part. It depends largely on the government's enforcement on national security, and the global security trend. At the same time, considering WAMY's linkage to Saudi Arabia as well as its founder and supporter, the Saudi royal family, it is less likely that the organisation will be forced to close down, as long as it does not project a threat to Thailand's national security.

Even though the Governing Principle to Regulate the Entry of Foreign Private Organisations to Operate in Thailand states clearly about the role of foreign private sector organisations, the decision to let WAMY operate also depends largely on WAMY's connection to government officials. With its staff and consultants having connection with politicians and high-rank government officials, it helps WAMY to be able to exist. As well, the cost of closing down the association, which might have negative implication to Thailand's relations with Saudi Arabia, is not worth; it may be better letting it organisation operate while keeping an eye on it. The further details on the role of WAMY to Thailand's relations with Saudi Arabia and to the GCC States will be described in the next section.

10. THE ROLE OF WAMY IN THAI-SAUDI RELATIONS

While it can be seen that the Thai government has been struggling to improve its relation with Saudi Arabia, the idea of improving the relation through different sources has been proposed and implemented. Civil society is one source that is considered to be able to help providing greater access to normalise relations with Saudi Arabia. WAMY which is an organisation originated in Saudi Arabia is viewed as potential candidate to help improve Thai-Saudi relations.

According to WAMY staff, improving the relations between Thailand and Saudi Arabia is beyond WAMY's responsibility; it is outside the framework set out by the WAMY headquarters. At the same time, WAMY recognises that the government has its own capacity to improve the relations, it has its own staff and seems to preserve the task within the government sphere; it has not asked any Muslim organisations to support its campaign. Therefore, it is also misleading to view that WAMY, as well as other Muslim organisations in Thailand, will participate in international relations. Most of Muslim organisations in Thailand will focus on their own projects and are less likely to intervene with government and state sphere. At the same time, the government is less likely to seek much support from private sector associations, particularly the foreign ones.[582]

As for WAMY, the constrained relation between Thailand and Saudi Arabia has very little impact on the organisation. This is because WAMY is a private organisation for the benefit of Muslims; therefore it has little to do with the Thai government sector and interstate relations, where the constraint exists. With no impact on the operation, there is no urge from the WAMY Thailand office to initiate or offer itself to help with the issue.

As for WAMY's potential role as a proxy for Saudi Arabia within Thailand's relations, WAMY staff pointed out that it is beyond WAMY's scope of responsibility. There is a good relationship between WAMY Thailand and Saudi Embassy in Thailand; however the relations are limited to cultural and religious activities. WAMY Thailand does not get involved in the political and international relations aspect at all. While WAMY does

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[582] Phone interview with a WAMY staff, November 2008.

not directly get involved in improving relations between the two sides, WAMY has been a good link between Saudi Arabia and Thailand through incorporating the Saudi Embassy in Thailand into supporting its activities, i.e. Eid, and sponsoring orphanages in Thailand.[583]   There has also been an attempt by WAMY to strengthen relationships among staff of WAMY, Arab embassies in Thailand, Muslims and Thai organizations in Thailand through creative activities i.e. football match.[584]   The Saudi embassy in Thailand did not comment on its relations with WAMY, but stated Saudi's foreign policy as in according with the GCC framework and in accordance with other GCC States; as with the relationship to Thailand, the Saudi embassy has highlighted the attempt in improving relations from both the Saudi and Thai sides.[585]

In sum, WAMY plays a very small role in Thailand's relationship with Saudi Arabia. While the government is not likely to have WAMY act on its behalf considering WAMY's unofficial existence within Thailand, WAMY itself does not want to take part in inter-state relations. The constrained relationship between Thailand and Saudi Arabia has had very little impact on WAMY; this is because its focus is at popular level, and the funding has not been disrupted. The existence of WAMY in Thailand, however, can be considered to have implication for Thai-Saudi relations. Government's closing down of WAMY can affect the constrained relations even more, considering the nature of WAMY's establishment. The status of WAMY is therefore considerably awkward for the government; it cannot be registered as it cannot provide sufficient documents, at the same time, rejecting its operation might informally affect the already constrained relations.

11.   THE ROLE OF WAMY IN THAILAND'S RELATIONS WITH THE GCC STATES

While WAMY Thailand has a close relationship with Saudi Arabia, its relations with other GCC States were not distinguished. As noted by WAMY staff, philanthropists

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[583] Interview with an anonymous WAMY staff, 21 January 2009.

[584] Information from WAMY website. www.wamythai.org

[585] A letter explaining the position of Saudi Arabia's foreign policy and the GCC in response to interview permission sought, August 2007.

from the GCC world may donate some money for the organisations, but it is only occasionally.   There has been little contribution from other GCC States, both at government and people levels, into the work of WAMY Thailand.   Most of the GCC States governments have their own channels of funding and support; as noted, they prefer their contribution go through the Thai government or registered organisations, where they can demonstrate the transparency.   In addition, charities in the GCC States prefer to go directly to the communities, i.e. Islamic school or communities in the South, instead of donating or providing money to WAMY Thailand.

In summary, aside from Saudi Arabia, WAMY has a very small role in strengthening the relationship between the GCC States and Thailand.   One can see that TITIA's focus is partly outward-looking.   It has good potential to include GCC state agencies and businessmen abroad to participate in its activities.   WAMY's focus is on the other hand inward-looking; it largely focuses on domestic Muslims; and aims very little to attract external support to help with its organisations.   Even though one can point out that the staff, who were alumni from universities in Arab world, may attract Arabs to participate, the chance that the GCC States will be involved in WAMY activities is very limited.

12.   WAMY AND TITIA COMPARED

This chapter and the previous chapter dealt with the characteristics of the private sector associations that exist in Thailand.   One of the clearest differences among these organisations is that one is considered to be local private sector association, while the other as foreign based.   This difference contributes to the nature of the associations'relations with the government.   This part seeks to compare and contrast selected characteristics of the associations, which are relevant to Thailand's relations with the GCC States.

12.1 Transnational-Ness

WAMY and TITIA provide case studies of two different private sector associations that are considered to be transnational.   The transnational-ness of WAMY may be clearer than TITIA, because of its strong linkage with its headquarters in Saudi Arabia and its

relations with WAMY office worldwide. The transnational-ness of TITIA may not be as clear; however, the attempts of the organisation in developing network with organisations of like-nature abroad, i.e. chambers of commerce and trade associations in the Muslim world, as well as the ICCI, also show the trend to become greatly more transnational.

While WAMY and TITIA are both considered as private sector associations, WAMY is considered as foreign association and TITIA is a domestic one. The Thai state treats associations of the two natures differently; this can be seen through different legal bodies used to regulate them. (The details of the legal bodies on domestic association and foreign private sector associations are in the indices). As for the associations themselves, the nature of their practices are also different. It is clear that WAMY is a charity-based association, while TITIA is a trade association. With that come different objectives, key activities as well as the target groups of members. WAMY has more capacity to attract and accommodate Muslims from wider ranges of the society, with the nature of its organisation that offers diverse activities, suitable for both youths and people in general. TITIA's target is rather professional focus, exclusively attract businessmen and companies.

In terms of the ability to maximise the governmental support limitedly provided to private sector associations, it is clear that TITIA has greater potential to absorb the available support. This is because, first, the guidelines and role assigned to domestic private associations is more receptive to its relations with the government; plus, local private sector associations are subjected to less security scrutiny, thus allowing greater potential for cooperation with government units as well as opportunity to be involved in different projects. Second, the objective of TITIA corresponds to the government's interests, which is international economic policy; it is therefore easier to incorporate TITIA into its projects. Third, the network of TITIA consists of organisations that also have strong links with the government i.e. the Thai Chamber of Commerce; therefore, it is easy for the whole network to absorb the available support. In sum, TITIA and local private sector associations of the like nature are more likely to be able to maximise the

government's support for its development, both for its growth and its attempt to strengthen its relations with overseas counterparts.

12.2 The Organisations' Relations with the Thai State

As observed, there is a clear separation between the governmental and private sector spheres. The Thai state is clear in stating the role and regulations for private sector associations, in a way such regulations limit and regulate the role and how much these private associations can be involved in state projects, as well as international relations. Such limitation is mainly rooted in national security concerns, which can be further explained by the threat most states face in contemporary international politics: the threat that their sovereignty is being undermined by transnational movements and non-state agendas. That states use legal body and regulations to construct a boundary from the private sector participating in international affairs is also aided by traditional state practice, where government officials generally interact within government bodies. They are, therefore, reluctant to draw the participation of private sectors into its projects, with the exception of large private sector associations that they are familiar with.

From the private sector association aspect, there are only a few reasons for the need to interact with the government, one is the need for connections with relevant government authorities, and the other is the need for operational supports. In addition to that, most private sector associations are likely to intervene very little with the government sphere. There is the dynamism within the private sectors, where most of these associations have developed their own network to maximise their independence.

In sum, there is a separation between the government and private sector association spheres. Neither the government nor the private sector associations want to cross path with each other, this is because each sphere has its own dynamism and objectives to fulfil. In terms of the relationship between Thailand and the GCC States, there is very small chance within the relations where the government can coordinate with the private sector associations. This is because neither side would like to directly cooperate. Most of the outcomes of Thai-GCC relations are from dynamism within each side. The

question on the role of private sector associations as the proxies for the government in Thailand's relations with the GCC States will be discussed in the next section.

12.3   Relations with the GCC States—Proxy Questions

While both organisations have already, and potentially, developed linkages with the GCC States, the possibility for each organisation to have strong linkages, as well as to stimulate greater state interactions with the GCC States differ. While WAMY is well known in the Muslim world, the potential that that it can stimulate greater interactions between Thailand and the GCC States is very limited. The GCC States, as noted, have their own channels in interacting with Thailand; transparency is a crucial issue and each GCC States have tried to clarify how their funding is being transacted and nature of activities they support. Asides from a chance to develop greater relations with WAMY branches in the GCC States, there is very little chance that WAMY Thailand will be able to stimulate relationship with the GCC States, both at state and people to people level.

As for TITIA, the organisation has shown to have greater potential to act as proxy for Thailand's relations with the GCC States. Being a trade association, it is easier for TITIA to attract associations and businessmen in the GCC States to cooperate. Although it can be seen that so far TITIA interacts very little with the GCC States, it is very likely that there will be greater development; the chance that its network will expand internationally is much greater than WAMY, this is because of TITIA's focus, and the existing network it already has with the ICCI and the OIC.

In considering about possible role as state proxy, it is also crucial to examine the overall political environment, the traditional relations between government and private sector associations, as well as the level of constraints and willingness of the private association to act as proxies. While the ability to absorb governmental supports differs, it is not definite that associations that have high ability to maximise government support will be willing to act as proxies.

 Indeed, the interviews and the observation of the two private sector associations reveal that the private sector associations do not want to act as official or direct state proxies.

In the case of TITIA, despite its need for government funding and operational supports, the organisation does not accept its role as direct state proxy. It prefers to act on its own, particularly in seeking cooperation from foreign associations and trade partner. It tries to depend less from the government. A great deal of its activities, the World of Muslims 2007 for example, demonstrates that TITIA depended very little on the government and seek its own channel by seeking overseas network. In the case of WAMY, it is very unlikely that the organisation will act as the government's proxy. This is because, first, the nature of WAMY as charity-bases, inward-focus, and Muslim oriented; its objectives and focus have no room for international relations. Second, being transnational organisation, Thailand's national interest means very little compared to the need to support Thai Muslims, considering the *ummah* perspective. Third, WAMY is fully supported, particularly it is financially independent, therefore, and it seeks little support from the Thai government and thus, is less willing to help support the state in improving Thai-Saudi international relations.

13. CONCLUSION

This chapter starts off by providing an overview of the nature of foreign private associations in Thailand and their relations with the government, then it moves on to introduce WAMY, whose case had been selected to provide additional example of private sector associations relevant to Thailand's relations with the GCC States. While TITIA is local private sector association, whose objectives, activities and means to seek cooperation has made it transnational, WAMY is a foreign private sector association, whose existence and relations with headquarters and WAMY offices worldwide has made it transnational in nature.

Examining WAMY also provides the insight of transnational Islamic organisation in Thailand. The role of transnational organisation has been viewed theoretically as having potential to undermine state's sovereignty. The way state maintains its sovereignty and national security is to regulate the foreign private sector associations and to put most of them under strict scrutiny. In the case of WAMY, its identity as transnational Islamic organisation has challenged state's sovereignty. The organisation's ability to attract

Muslims within the country, its ability to rally support for international Islamic causes, and its ability to develop its own relations with countries in the Muslim world, using its Islamic identity and influence from its headquarters in Saudi Arabia, have threaten Thailand's national security and potential state's international relations.

The transnational agenda has begun to challenge states even more. Globalisation and the improvement of transportation and telecommunication have made it even more difficult for states to monitor the dynamism of these transnational organisations. The Thai state, upon countering the challenge of these organisations in taking over its role, clarified the limit on the role and regulations for these organisations. The law has been set clear for both Thailand-based organisations trading with the Middle East, and Saudi and foreign-based organisations operating in Thailand.

While liberal institutionalists would argue in support of the prospect that institutions and organisations, both domestic and international, can potentially help improve the capacity of state in enhancing international relations, the result of these two chapters suggests that the argument must be examined case by case; and the role of institutions in enhancing international relations is largely subjected to how much the government agencies allow private sector associations to participate. In Thailand, the Thai government agencies have a tradition of not engaging private sector and non-government associations into state agenda, particularly in international affairs. The chance for the private sector intervention is even much lower in the case of foreign private sector associations; this is because national security concern is even graver.

The findings in this chapter confirm the conclusion in the previous chapter that state controls most of the activities in international relations. It demonstrates further that foreign private sector associations are even more limited in its ability to be involved in state's sphere of international relations. While some private sector associations have potential to create strong network and linkage in the GCC States, its involvement is very limited; and most private sector associations are content in keeping it that way. This is because the dynamism within these organisations has made supporting the government

secondary to focusing on its organisational objectives; this can be seen in both the cases of TIITA and WAMY, where fulfilling their objectives is their priority. The following table (table 17) includes a comparison between TITIA and WAMY.

Table 17: Comparison of TITIA and WAMY

Organisations/ agendas	TITIA	WAMY
Background		
Establishment	Establish 2000, formally recognised by the government. This is because it was registered as required by the Thai Civil and Commercial Code, cause 78-109, regarding the establishment of association.	Set up in 1996, although the establishment has not been recognised due to the lack of document. Therefore the establishment is not completed and approved according to the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare's regulation on foreign private organisations (1998).
Status	Domestic association	Private foreign organisation
Purpose	Trade promotion. To support Muslim businessmen with foreign trade partners, particularly in the Muslim world.	Charity and Islamic promotion. To support Muslim youth groups and Muslim communities in Thailand.
Target groups	Thai Muslims and overseas businessmen, largely focus in Bangkok.	Muslim youth and Muslim communities, the focus includes also Muslim youths and communities in and outside Bangkok.
Activities and dynamism		
Relationship with the GCC	Has a trade relation with some businessmen in the GCC States, although there is no strong established connection. The existing relations had been partially supported by the Thai Chamber of Commerce, who had been supported by the government.	Has strong relationship with WAMY headquarters in Saudi Arabia. The organisation is claimed to be founded by King Faisal. Therefore, is well relevant to Saudi Arabia. WAMY has office worldwide, and has been recognised in the GCC States.
Relationship with the Muslim world	Is part of the OIC's affiliation, the ICCI. Also, has some relationship with other OIC states.	WAMY has offices worldwide. Not only in Thailand. There is a strong links with other international

		Muslim networks.
Relationship with the Thai government	There are some interactions between TITIA and the government, and TITIA is sometimes included into some of the governments' projects, as well as occasionally become part of the delegation during state visit.	The government does not officially recognised WAMY. Although, some of the government divisions have coordinated with WAMY. The relationship between the government and WAMY has been a shaky one. There is some suspicion over WAMY's activities, which are claimed to threaten Thailand's national security.
Relationship with other domestic organisations	Has a cordial relation with Chamber of Commerce and trade organisation.	Has cordial and strong connections and network with Muslim organisations
Relationship with Thai Muslims	Connected largely with Muslim businessmen.	Connected with a lot of Muslim communities, in a broad range.
Nature of activities	Conference organising, trade show, trade support, business matching.	Charity, Islamic studies and training.
Nature of organisation		
Membership	More exclusive, mostly businessmen, pay membership fee.	Anybody, mostly free or low cost entry through taking part in WAMY activities.
Staff	Committee, elected as part of the association as require by the Association Act.	Full-time paid staff, appointed by WAMY headquarters and local volunteers.
Financial source	From members and temporary sponsor seeking.	Secured funding from headquarters.
The need for domestic/external support	Need funding and loyalty from members, external support is necessary to maintain the existence of the organisation.	With full backup from the headquarters, does not need much domestic and external support.
Future of the organisation	Smaller, but functional, this is due to lack of funding.	Should be the same, although can be subjected to the change in government's control. Its function can be stopped any time.
Potential role as government's proxy	Has been indirectly acting as government's proxy, although not willing to interfere in government's sphere.	Cannot act as formal proxy because the organisation itself is not legitimate. Does not want to interfere with

		government's sphere.

Source: Author-created table based on the comparison between WAMY and TITIA in the current and previous chapters

The relations between the government and the private sector associations vary. Most of the relations are defined by the supported these organisations needed from the government. Organisations that are well financed are more independent from the government. At the same time, informal relations exist, as there are interactions between these organisations and the government.

This leads to the last question over the possibility that private sector associations can act as proxies for the government. The two chapters suggest that the dynamism within the private sector association sphere makes it difficult for these associations to act as proxies. To answer the question over the possibility that private sector associations can act as proxies for the states in relations with the GCC States, two key areas should be evaluated, one is capacity and the other is willingness of the organisations. The previous chapter and this chapter have highlighted both criteria to evaluate the readiness of these associations. In terms of capacity, it appears that both TITIA and WAMY do have some level of capacity, and with only small support, they are able to act as efficient proxies. On the other hand, in terms of willingness, none of the associations under studies want to be involved in foreign affairs. Each association prefers to limit itself within the private sector sphere and to develop their own network. The goals and objectives of these associations do not equip them to become proxy. Therefore, the overall evaluation suggest that while these private sector associations have capacity, the organisational structure and objectives they have, which are not supportive to proxy role, discourage them to take the proxy roles.

CONCLUSION

The GCC States have become increasingly significant to Thailand, not only as trade partners and crude oil providers, but as political allies on the regional and international stage. The aim of this research was to investigate the nature and future direction of the relationship between Thailand and the GCC States through observing the interaction processes between the state and non-state spheres, who have been involved with Thailand's relations with the GCC States. Particular attention was given to the role of transnationalism and non-state actors. The main question is to what extent the Thai private sector associations involved in the Middle East and the Muslim world can support the Thai governments when it faces the limit in international relations with GCC countries. The objectives of the research sought to explore the nature of current Thailand's relations with the GCC States, to identify significant agendas within the relations, to select significant non-state actors to conduct case studies and to use the understanding from case studies to explain the nature of interaction process between the state and non-state actors.

In achieving the research goal, which is to examine the role of some private sectors associations in Thailand and evaluate their potential to act as the government's proxies in Thailand's relationship with the GCC States, qualitative methodology based on historical analysis and semi-structured interviews have been employed to understand the nature of state-to-state relations, the development of private sector associations in Thailand and their relationship with the government and their overseas counterparts. In terms of methods, this research examined the state-centric and non-state worlds independently, before looking at the nature of the overlapping sphere. The state-to-state relations explored in chapters 3 and 4 have shown the essence of state-centric nature, where state-centric agendas like diplomacy, trade and securities were examined. Chapter 5 and 6 examined the world of non-state actors, where selected private sector associations, TITIA and WAMY, were explored in terms of their development, their relations to the Thai government, and the possibility of their involvement in Thailand's relations with the GCC States. The main research question and its objectives led to the need to design a theoretical framework and model that could facilitate the analysis.

Thus the state-centric, pluralist and postinternational views had been selected as key theoretical concepts for the research, with the addition of concepts in constructivism, globalisation, cultures and individuals in international relations. While several concepts have been included into the discussion, Rosenau's postinternationalism ultimately sums up the argument over the need to combine state-centric and pluralist view to better understand international relations; this is because the nature of postinternational view facilitates both state-centrism and pluralism. The concepts have been simplified into the model, which has been heavily influenced by Rosenua's bifurcated world politics. The highlight of the model is to show the separation and overlaps of the state-centric and the non-state spheres. In this research, what had been added from Rosenau's model is a greater emphasis on the environment surrounded the existence of the two spheres.

ASSESSING THE THEORETICAL CONCEPT AND MODELS

Assessing the efficiency of theoretical concepts and models proposed, the theoretical concepts have been useful in helping to understand the dynamism within the state and non-state spheres. State-centric view is valuable in understanding state behaviours, particularly the way in which the Thai state reacted to changes in international relations during the period under study. Indeed, the findings of the research have shown that state-centric view is proved to be significant for the understanding of the state's behaviour and the continued dominance of the state. As it can be seen from the findings in chapter 5 and 6, the Thai state has been able to manipulate and control the involvement of private sector associations. At the same time, it can be seen that the state has been able to develop its own capacity to interact with the GCC States over time. Thus, the state-centric view continues to be significant to the understanding of the role of the Thai state. Pluralism helps identify and understand the behaviours of non-state actors and agendas, which the state-centric view cannot sufficiently explain. In addition, pluralism helps to understand the state's behaviours and see that interactions through institutional framework can lead, to certain extent, enhanced bilateral relations, i.e. the case of Thailand's entering the OIC. Constructivist concept has helped to understand the role of identity in influencing the nature of relationship between the two sides, particularly in

the case of Islamic identity, which affected the state's ability to interact with the GCC States or supported the non-state actors in their interactions with their overseas partners.

Since Rosenau's postinternationalism facilitates the understanding of the dynamism within both the state-centric and pluralist environment, and also provides an explanation for additional factors that influenced the dynamism within world politics, i.e. the role of globalisation and individuals, it deserves further elaboration. The motivation to use postinternationalism in this research is based on the nature of contemporary international politics, where the roles of states have been infiltrated by non-state actors. Postinternationalism can be seen as a reflection of development in the IR thought process, from viewing states as dominant players in state-centricism, to adding non-state actors, and then ultimately to combining the two phenomena. Examining the work of Rosenau in the last two decades, it is clear that, in his opinion, this development has taken place. Indeed, Rosenau's book trilogy clearly reflects his prediction that world politics will take shape in the postinternational manner. The question he raises in this trilogy is simply whether this pattern is permanent or transitional, and if so, for how long. In his most recent work, Rosenau delves even further into the essence of his postinternational argument, this time highlighting the significance of people.

Postinternationalism is proved to be useful in this research, both in terms of its flexibility and its ability to accommodate both state and non-state actors. Moreover, it addresses the significance of individuals, whose skills and political activeness have increased. Understanding the development of private sector associations can be explained in many ways, but increased skills and education, as well as improvement in technology and telecommunication under globalisation, as proposed by postinternaitonalism, is one of the best explanatory mechanisms for such development.

The model proposed in this research has proved extremely helpful in terms of gaining an understanding the dynamism of the two worlds, and the overlapping world. By separating the actors into government and non-government worlds, appropriate concepts can be specifically applied; thus the outcome is more precise. In addition, giving significant weight to non-state actors, including here collective individuals and groups,

through assigning another sphere has been suitable to world politics, where non-state actors have become as significant and require as many explanation mechanisms as state actors. Adding environmental factors, i.e. culture, individual and globalisation, into the model is crucial; failing to do so means omitting a significant link that can be used to explain the insufficiency and efficiency of state and non-state actors. In addition, what make Rosenau's bifurcated model useful is the ability to find suitable space for the micro level unit, individuals and groups in particular. As noted, the increased significance of individuals in international relations is widely acknowledged; however, finding a suitable place to locate them in the theoretical framework and model is a challenging task. Through Rosenau's model, and the newly constructed model used in this research, one is able to place individuals in the non-state actor sphere. In addition, the influence of individuals also appears in the overlapping areas within the model, where individuals are considered the driving mechanism for the interactions of state and non-state worlds. It can be seen that much of the discussion on private sector associations has been based on activities run by individuals involved; incorporating it into the model, such activities and individuals' participation shows dynamism within the non-state sphere and potential linkages with the government in the overlapping sphere.

Putting the theoretical concepts together to test the hypothesis has been a challenging task. This is because little research has previously been done in this area; this is particularly true in terms of the application of similar theoretical concepts to the empirical realities of Thailand's international relations with the GCC States. Rosenau has done very little himself in testing his proposal and model with empirical data. Thus, with few accounts of previous experiments that relate the theoretical concepts to reality, it is difficult to reflect the degree of dynamism or 'cascading' nature between the interactions of state and non-state actors, which may result in potential task-sharing in international relations. Many of Rosenau's case studies and examples relate to the Western Hemisphere, and little, if anything at all, has been done in the developing world. The significance of this remark is to point out the difference in the degree of acceptance in the participation of civil society and public between the West and the developing world. While the dynamism between the government and non-state actors in domestic

and international politics can be conveniently observed and discussed in the West, it might not be so clear in the developing world. That, however, does not mean that interactions do not take place, it may only mean that the pattern has still been controlled or influenced by states, who, unlike in the West, continue to have a strong hold on authority despite their sovereignty being partially threatened by the challenge of non-state actors. Therefore, the outcome of the analysis may not be precise in, for example, the case where non-state actors are fully developed and have the capacity to interact with government and other counterparts, but have been controlled by the government; thus we cannot see the optimal pattern. Therefore, recognising the background and the nature of the empirical case is important for the research.

In order to ensure that the research objectives have been fulfilled and that the hypothesis has been tested, it is crucial to recapture the explanations and analyses that have been provided in previous chapters. The next sections bring different aspects of the research together, the co-existence, the overlaps, and the interactions between the two worlds will then be discussed with recognition of theories proposed at the beginning of the research.

THE STATE SPHERE

Chapters 3 and 4 argue that despite the increase significance of the GCC States to Thailand, the nature of relations between the two sides has not been active compared to relations between Thailand and other regions in the world. Identity, religion, global changes, and domestic politics are issues at stake. The cases of unresolved constrained relations between Thailand and Saudi Arabia, and the domestic problem in the south have challenged the state. Thailand's membership with the OIC only helped partially; this is because, as a non-Muslim state, Thailand could only be an observing member of the OIC, therefore it does not have the full rights that Muslim states enjoy in the OIC. This case shows that the Thai state has limited resources and means to resolve conflict and improve relations with Saudi Arabia and other GCC States. Identity is one crucial question; the Thai state is being labelled as Buddhist state, it is difficult for the state to develop relations with the Muslim world, there in which lies the GCC States. One cannot deny the dynamism within the state sphere. In addition to key state-centric

mechanisms relevant to international relations, diplomacy, security and national interest, a large part of the dynamism within this sphere resulted from the challenge states encounter in the contemporary world. Globalisation has facilitated telecommunications, transportation, and the proliferation of the media. In a way, globalisation has challenged the Thai state with the threat of losing loyalty and marginal people, i.e. the Thai Muslims, whose loyalty that was once directly toward the state has shifted to the international Muslim society. Conflict and pressure to the Thai state can potentially occur should state policies contradict with the interest of the international Muslim movement. Palestinian issue has demonstrated itself as a cause that creates bonding among the international Muslim network, including Muslims in Thailand.

The way that the Thai state has tried to engage more with the GCC States and the Middle East through institutional and regional relations shows that states adjust themselves to fit with the changing context of contemporary world. Despite emergences of non-state actors, as well as new types of domestic problems, largely influenced by globalisations, states are able to find ways to accommodate and resolve those conflicts in order to maintain relations with other states. States are seen to transform themselves in many ways, as well as seeking to group together to strengthen their durability. The intergovernmental organisations, in this case OIC, have been useful sources that act as a "middleman" for states to interact. It is a stage for states to enhance their relations and to clarify their positions in world politics. In Thailand, the threat of losing cordial relations with the Muslim world during the southern violence, as well as the increased interactions of Muslims in Thailand and Muslims abroad through internets and rapid telecommunication have stimulated the state to embark on the new strategic plan for the diplomatic promotion of Thailand's relations with the Arab world; this can be seen through the development of the foreign ministry's Web site, www.thai2arab.com, that promotes the relations with the GCC States. Entering the OIC is also one way of developing closer relations with the GCC States; and increased trade and economic cooperation projects have also been the Thai state's attempt to develop greater relations with the GCC States.

THE NON-STATE SPHERE

The findings in chapter 3 and 4 also suggest that the comparatively low level of interactions between Thailand and small GCC States is due to the lack of knowledge and interest about the region. A lack of knowledge leads to a lack of interest in developing further relations. In addition, the previous chapters point out that the interest in the GCC States and the Middle East fluctuates, depending on the government's policy as much as the expert of policy-makers and high-rank officials. Differences in culture and religion make it difficult for the Thai state to be attracted in interacting with the GCC; and this perception is prevalent in the Thai government sector.

The agendas discussed above are well related to one of the research questions. As states find themselves having limited resources and means to improve relations, can non-state actors who do not have such constraints act as proxies or complement the role of states in international relations. This question can be clarified by referring to Rosenau's explanation that states are bounded by the sovereign rules they have set for themselves; such rules, for example, include the nature of regime, identity, culture and alliances; in interacting with other states, a state has to comply with these key guidelines. On the other hand, non-state actors are freer to act, they are free from strict sovereignty rules; and as Rosenau argues, their relationship with other agencies are less formal, and prone to a more temporary basis. Unlike states, non-state actors have more capacity to negotiate, and develop deals with foreign counterparts, which can be foreign governments or other organisations.

The answer to the research questions on the possibility of the increased role of Thai private sector associations involved with the Middle East and Muslim world in international affairs can be done through exploring the nature of the associations and measuring their capacity and willingness to be involved in the government-led international interactions. Chapters 5 and 6 explored the cases of TITIA and WAMY. The observation of the two associations reveals that there has been progressive development in both associations since its establishment between 1996 and 2000; this can be seen in the diversity of activities, network and relations with overseas partners.

In the case of TITIA and WAMY, it is clear that the two organisations have their objectives clearly defined. The objectives and the means to achieve them are largely self-contained, and require little government intervention. Both organisations apparently try to bypass the government in running their organisations and activities. While WAMY is financially sustainable and well supported by its headquarters; TITIA seeks financial support from members and external funding. Its main source of funding comes from foreign organisations. Similar to the state-centric sphere, there is high dynamism within the sphere of private sector associations. Seeking funding, arranging activities and networking with members and potential partners are the major parts of the dynamism within this sphere. The nature of interactions among these actors involves transnational and functional linkages. Identity (being Muslims) and functional focus have facilitated TITIA and WAMY to interact with both domestic and overseas associations.

The findings of interviews and participant observations in chapters 5 and 6 show that private sector associations that are used as case studies are less willing to become involved in international relations, which they consider to belong to the government sphere. Different factors can explain why these organisations do not want to act as proxies. In the case of WAMY, the financial independence and sufficient support it has received from its network and headquarters has made the connection with the government less necessary; the established relations with the headquarters overseas also make the international interaction with the GCC States redundant. In the case of TITIA, the established network and previous success in organising international conferences and exhibitions with marginal support from the government has made contact with the governments less necessary. TITIA, however, still needs financial support from its members, and external partners; in addition, with its linkage to other private sector associations, i.e. the Thai Chamber of Commerce, there is a greater chance that it will become involved with the government in conducting international relations with the GCC States. To a certain extent, it appears that the level of eagerness a private sector association has in interacting with the government depends also on how much it seeks support from that government.

THE OVERLAPPING WORLDS

In order to assess the plausibility that private sector associations can act as proxies for the Thai government or to help enhance existing relations, examining the overlapping worlds between the Thai government and the associations is useful. The overlapping area is where the government and private sector associations, who are compelled either by legal or functional agendas, cross paths and interact with each other to fulfil their organisational goals. The findings in the four chapters suggest that the overlapping of the two worlds is very rare; within this rarity the interactions occur more between the government and larger private sector associations. Both the government and private sector associations have their own rationale why they prefer to be contained in their independent world.

In the case of non-state actors, the general outcome of the observation shows that these two associations are self-contained, have clear objectives and goals and are community-oriented; such characteristics explain why these organisations are less keen in acting on the national level, becoming involved in international relations and interacting with the government. There is also a common perception that international relations belongs to the state sphere, and private sector can contribute very little in enhancing what the state has done. Lacking attention, as well as being viewed with suspicious eyes, has discouraged private sector associations from making an effort to interact with the government. The government bureaucratic system and lack of connections have also made it difficult for small private sector associations, as can be seen in this research, TITIA, to draw participation from the government in its activities. In addition, past success in interacting with the overseas counterparts with marginal support from the government has encouraged the private sector associations to be self-contained. Distrust and fear of being monitored also affect the motivation to interact with the government; this is because some associations, i.e. WAMY, have not been formally established in Thailand.

On the government's side, interviewing both the government staff and the private sector association staff reveals the perception that international relations belong largely to the

state-centric world, and that private sector associations have a very small impact on the relations. There is also the prevalent perception that private sector associations are profit-oriented and only seeking to fulfil their own goals, then these associations are less motivated to support the government. In addition, there is a prevalent distrust of private sector associations over security agendas and national interests; this is because the government's tasks, particularly in terms of international relations, are regarded as highly sensitive, and there is high risk, particularly in terms of national security, in allowing greater participation of private sector associations in governmental projects. The outcomes of such perceptions lead to a little motivation on the government's part to incorporate private sector associations into government projects relevant to international relations.

Therefore, the nature of the overlapped area between the government and the private sector associations is defined by the perceptions and characteristics of each world. Thailand's relations with the GCC States seem to have been claimed by the state as its sphere; and the state has managed to demark a boundary between itself and private sector associations. In doing so, the Thai state uses legal bodies to limit how much private sector associations can intervene in international relations. For the overseas private sector associations based in Thailand, the legal bodies used to enforce them are even more rigid. It strictly imposes rules and restrictions on these associations, plus it places foreign private sector associations under close monitoring by different governmental units, including intelligence agencies and the foreign ministry. National security and national interests are the main concerns the state uses to point out the rationale of the legal bodies. In additional to using legal bodies to limit the private sector's involvement, in practice, the governmental units are less keen to cooperate or create a jointed project between the government and small private sector associations. The government's participating in events run by private sector associations is also rare; however, it is still possible to see the contribution of governmental units in some of the events.

THE BIFURCATED WORLD ENVIRONMENTS

The environments in which the state and non-state spheres exist and interact have strong impact on the dynamism in each world and in the overlapping area. Cultural and identity compatibilities are crucial issues in the universe of world politics. In the case of Thailand's relations with the GCC States, culture and identity act as both barrier and potential supporter to the relations. In the state sphere, non-Muslim identity, lacking of knowledge and cultural differences between Thailand and the GCC States have discouraged the motivation for states to engage in interactions. At the same time, among the non-state actors, cultural understanding and shared Muslim identity have allowed greater potential for these associations to interact with overseas partners and with the GCC governments. In the environment in which technology and telecommunication have facilitated transnational interaction and provided greater opportunity for transnational movement, the private sector associations can be good proxies for the government. To assess the potential role of the non-state actors as proxies in Thailand's relations with the GCC States, therefore, cultural and identity compatibility are important determinants. Furthermore, considering that in both Thailand and the GCC States, policy-making process is largely influenced by individuals; the assessment of the proxy question will also depend on the views of high-ranking policy makers and their connection to leaders of the private sector associations.

Therefore, it can be seen that there is a symbiosis between the two spheres and the environment in which those spheres are embedded. The environment defines and influences the nature of interactions between the two sides; and interactions also affect or re-construct the environment around it.

HYPOTHESIS REVISITED—THE PROXY QUESTION

Prior to the observation, the hypothesis had been proposed that private sector associations could become more involved or can act as proxies in Thailand's relations with the GCC States. The hypothesis suggested that private sector associations in Thailand that have already been involved with the Middle East and the Muslim world are potential players to act as proxies for Thailand's relations with the GCC States; they

can stimulate more interactions and can take over some tasks that once belong to the state. With less identity restraint, these associations should be able to act as proxies between Thailand and the GCC States. With greater participation of private sector associations, the future of Thailand's relations with the GCC States therefore, could continue to grow.

The outcomes of the research show that the hypothesised potential role of private sector as proxies in Thailand's relations with the GCC States is not very encouraging. This is because there is no willingness from both the government and the private sector associations to take initiatives on the proxy option, nor has there been any potential of actual task sharing between the government and private sector associations. The observations of dynamisms within the two worlds and their interactions with each other have shown that neither side wants to cross paths. The government is less motivated in allowing the private sector associations' involvement in international affairs and indeed in the wider aspect of government affairs. The private sector associations also prefer to be contained in their own sphere, and are less willing to engage with the government and to act as proxies. Such unwillingness is based on the associations' characteristics as well as the boundary that the government has created to prevent their intervention in state affairs. Therefore, that private actor association can act as proxies for government must be answered carefully. In theory, cultural and identity compatibility have made private sector associations suitable candidates for promoting greater cooperation and understanding between Thailand and the GCC States, both at government and private sector levels. In reality, however, the observations have shown that the government does not support private sector associations to act as proxies. The obstacles that have been created by the government have discouraged the associations for considering such role.

PROXY QUESTION AND THE IMPLICATION FOR FUTURE THAILAND-GCC STATES RELATIONS

This research therefore suggests that private sector associations involving with the Middle East and the Muslim worlds have capacity to act as proxies for Thailand and

GCC States; this is due to their cultural and identity compatibility. However the possibility that they can become proxies is hindered and conditioned by the government, who has limited the role and boundary of these private sector associations. The threat of losing control over its foreign policy control and national security is significant factor that channels the government to act in such manner. The private sector associations are less willing to act as proxies. This is because their objectives and activities are domestically oriented and are not geared toward international relations; many restrictions and indirect barriers from the government also discourage these associations to intervene.

This research views that the future of Thailand's relations with the GCC States will be heavily managed by the government. This may not be that surprising when considering that sovereign states will continue to persist within the international system; thus the traditional sphere of state influence and international affairs will continue to be handled by states. With the state continuing to play a significant role in international affairs, the nature of relationship between Thailand and the GCC States will not change from what it looks now, where trade and oil flow continue to define most of the relations. Taking these factors away, there is not much motivation for the states to interact. State actors, as this research shows, have not been able to substantially cultivate good knowledge of one another, neither have any cultural and social compatibilities been developed to prospect any improvements and initiatives in state relations. So far, state agencies have not fully managed to induce more active and multi-channel relations.

The possibility that there can be more active relations asides from trade; and where both Thailand and the GCC States can develop greater knowledge and a positive attitude among one another depends on support from non-state actors. This research suggests that the influence of non-state actors in Thailand's relations with the GCC States will be subject to the government. At present, the government does not facilitate the participation of private sector associations. If the Thai government considers incorporating more private sector associations into the projects, as well as encouraging

them to be engaged in international relations, it may help in inducing these associations to help.

In summary, the future outlook of Thailand's relations with the GCC States may continue to be viewed with the Two Worlds' model that shows the co-existence between state and non-state actors. Despite the findings shown in this research that the government will continue to dominate the overall relations, non-state actors continue to emerge and grow, and they cannot be neglected within the analysis of Thailand's relations with the GCC States. However, the question whether this condition is only a transitional phase of the relations or whether it will persist depends largely on the change in the state's move[586]—whether it allows other actors to share the task and diversity the linkages. For the time being, the separation between the government sphere and the non-state sphere continues to exist. It is the overlapping area that may be changed; and it depends on the government whether it will allow a greater participation from private sector associations.

CHALLENGING THE CLAIM

While the claim at the beginning of the research suggests that non-state actors will increase their role and become dominant actors in international relations between Thailand and the GCC States, the previous sections, hypothesis-revisiting and the answer to the key research question on the non-state actors' potential role as state proxies reveal otherwise. From the findings, it is important to acknowledge the tension between empirical evidences of case studies and the claim that promotes the dominance of non-state actors in the relations. While the claim suggests that the Muslim non-state actors may undertake tasks that once belonged to the state and would do better due to their connections, familiarity with culture, and identity compatibility, the findings show that the state has been able to enhance its capacity and adjust its perception it used to have regarding relations with the GCC States.

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[586] The discussion on the scenario is partly motivated by Rosenau's view of the 4 scenarios of the future world politics in Rosenau's *Turbulence in World Politics: A Theory of Change and Continuity*, pp. 453. Two out of four scenarios is the persistence of the bifurcated world, while the other scenario is that the bifurcated world is only the transitional phrase where it determines how the world politics will take place.

In addition to being able to regulate and limit the involvement of the non-state actors within the system, as can be seen from the function of the legal bodies that are able to demand compliance from non-state actors, the evidence of interactions between Thailand and the GCC States shows that the Thai state has constantly developed relations with the GCC States. While the level of interactions with some GCC States has not been high, there has been constant development, particularly in terms of state-to-state relations.

Additional information on Thailand's relations with the GCC States following the period under study shows that after 2001, the relations between Thailand and the GCC States have largely been done through state relations; it shows, therefore, that the Thai state has constantly been developing its network with the GCC States.

The development of Thailand's Islamic Banking sector is one of the examples that show the state's attempt to provide a foundation for improved economic relations between Thailand and the Muslim world. As of 2007, the bank had an asset of only 12 billion baht, with 29 branches, 11 of which are in the five provinces of southern Thailand. In the past, small number of branches, low asset, and lack of understanding of the nature of Islamic bank are the drawbacks of the bank.[587] In 2009, the bank has developed so much with the state support that it offered to lend 50 billion Baht to Thailand's major public companies, including Thai Airways International) and PTT Exploration and Production (PTTEP); the fund will be raised in Malaysia by issuing Islamic bonds.[588] Many of the customers of the Islamic Bank of Thailand are Thai entrepreneurs who do business with their counterparts in the Middle East. These counterparts prefer their financial transaction to be done with the Islamic Bank.

In terms of trade, the Thai and the GCC States have been trying to increase the number of trade. Table 18 shows that Thailand's exports to the GCC States have been increased almost four times between 1997 and 2007. The level of imports also increases and

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[587] Jiwamol Kanoksilp, "Thai Islamic Bank to List in Three Years," *The Nation*, April 4 2007.
[588] Wichit Chaitrong, "Islamic Bank of Thailand Seeks Bond Aid for Thai, PTTP," *The Nation*, 30 March 2009.

continues to be highlighted by oil purchase. Oil has continued to rank among the top imported goods for Thailand.[589] In 2008, the value of Thailand's world crude oil import was USD 30159.8 millions, of which USD 21877.8 million went to the GCC States;[590] thus almost 73% of Thailand's oil purchase comes from the GCC States.

Table 18: Export Structure to the GCC States in Selected Years (USD Million)

| Type of Goods/year	1995	1997	2005	2006	2007	2008
Agricultural products	124.4	65.2	69.6	90.7	144.4	387.6
Agro-industrial products	62.6	73.2	112.5	148.5	212.6	270.7
Industrial products	1,612.0	931.6	2,379.3	3,076.9	3,998.3	5,290.8
Mineral and fuel products	0.9	30.8	62.2	35.6	20.9	107.1
Others	10.1	16.7	50.4	65.5	49.8	n/a
Total	1,810.0	1,117.5	2,674.0	3,417.2	4,426.0	6,056.2

Source: Ministry of Commerce, Royal Thai Government. http://www.moc.go.th/. (Last accessed 2 October, 2009).

As noted, oil trade continues to be the highlight of the interactions between Thailand and the GCC States; the GCC States continue to be the top sources for Thailand's crude oil import (see figures 31). The UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Qatar continue to be important sources of crude oil for Thailand.

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[589] Information from Ministry of Commerce, Thailand. www.moc.go.th (last accessed 2, October 2009).
[590] Ibid.

Figure 31: Top Ten Sources of Thailand's Crude Oil Import 2008 (by percentage share)
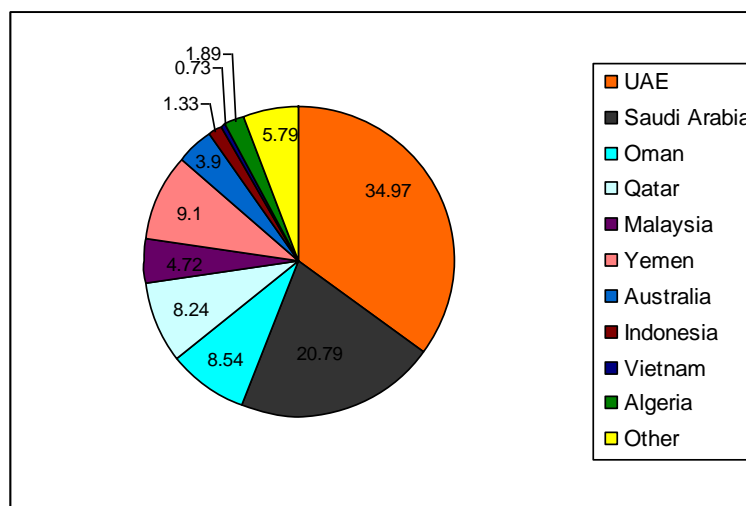
Source: Author-created diagram based on data from the Ministry of Commerce, Royal Thai Government. http://www.moc.go.th/. (Last accessed 2 October, 2009).

The development in terms of Thailand's relations with the GCC States can also be seen in the increase in investment from the Arab side. The Thai state has also come to recognise the significance of investment and funds from the GCC States. The Ministry of Finance, in Feb 2009, established the Committee for Fund Raising According to Islamic Principles.[591] The Thai Ministry of Finance is interested in Middle East funds because of the good liquidity and because they are relatively less affected by global economy. Raising funds from these countries is also cheaper than raising funds from countries in the West (about 0.25-0.50%), while some countries in the region also offer benefits.[592] According to the Office of Trade Policy, most of the Arab funds are invested in real estate, hotel, hospital and mega projects, by buying shares in the company or buying stocks in the stock market or through financial institutions. So far, some of the significant investments include the investment from the Mubadala Development Company, which has acquired the Pearl energy, one of the most significant Southeast Asia oil and gas exploration and production companies. Pearl energy's exploration portfolio includes a gross acreage of more than 135000 sq. km in

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[591] "Ministry of Finance Appointed Committee for Fund Raising According to Islamic Principles," *Matichon*, February, 25, 2009
[592] Ibid.

Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam and the Philippines.[593] In 2007, the production from the three fields in the flagship Jasmine offshore field in the Gulf of Thailand, and in Indonesia had yielded a production rate of approximately 19000 barrels of oil per year.[594] It is planned that in 2008, Pearl will drill 47 development wells to expand its exploration in the Jasmine oil field in Thailand. Thus the Gulf of Thailand has become a significant investment opportunity for companies in the GCC States.[595]

In addition, the Dubai Investment Group, a specialist in construction, real estate, and finance, had bought shares in Thailand's Thanayong PLC. In addition, the Depa United Group, based in Dubai, whose business in construction and interior design is the biggest in the Middle East, initiated a joint venture with Thailand Carpet Manufacturing PLC. In terms of real estate development, the IFA Hotels and Resort Group, and Istithmar Hotel Fze invested with the Raimond Laond PLC. There has been the joint investment for hotel business in Sathorn Square project between Thailand's Golden Land Property Development PLC and Istithmar Hotel Fze.

Investments from smaller companies and juristic persons from the GCC States have also become significant to the Thai economy; from the record of the Department of Trade and Business Development, Ministry of Commerce of Thailand, as of August 2008, there are 137 Arab Juristic persons, of 2370 million baths. Investors from the UAE rank first, having invested 83% of the total value, meanwhile the Qatari investors rank second, having invested 11% of the total value. Investors from different GCC states have different interests, thereby resulting in different kind of investments. The UAE investors are interested in hotel business; while the Qatari investors are interested in entertainment. The investors from Saudi Arabia are interested in investing in firms, investors from Kuwait are interested in hospital business, investors from Oman are interested in entertainment and consulting firms, and investors from Bahrain are interested in logistics and transportation (see figure 32).

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[593] www.AMEinfo.com
[594] Ibid.
[595] Ibid.

Figure 32: The Percentage of each GCC State's Investment in Thailand (from Total GCC Investment in Thailand), as of 2008
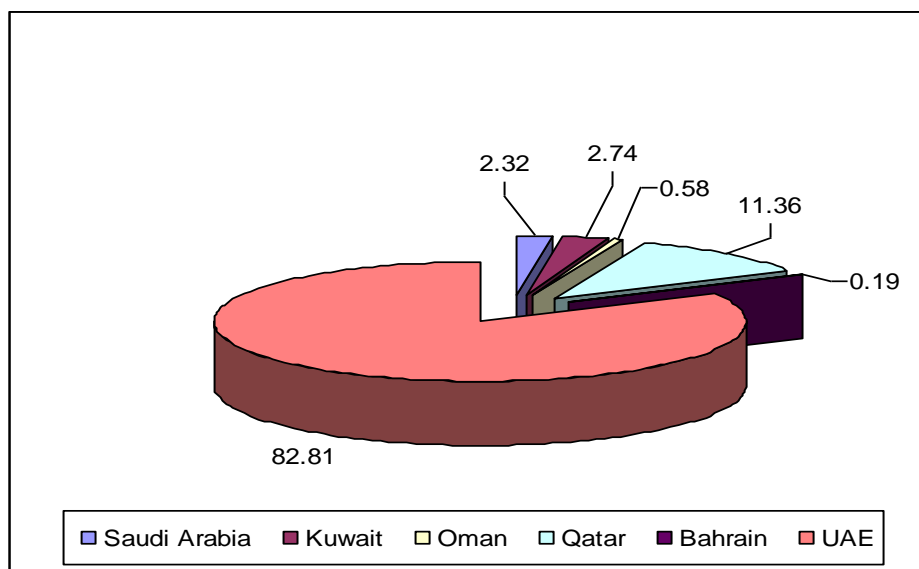
Source: Based on the information from the Office of Trade Policy, Ministry of Commerce
https://otp.moc.go.th

As for the investment from the Thai side, most of the investments have been in the field of medical services and hotel management. Several private hospitals in Thailand have continued to expand their referral offices into more countries in the Gulf States, i.e. the Bumrunrad hospital, which has expanded the referral offices to Kuwait, the UAE, Bahrain, and Oman.[596] The Dusit Dubai Hotel, which has been run under Thailand's Dusit group, continues to be popular among Arabs. At the same time, a larger number of Thais and Arabs have opened Thai restaurants in the Gulf States.

Two key reasons therefore suggest the supremacy of state relations within Thailand's relations with the GCC States. One is that the state has been seen to improve its capacity and reduce the limit it used to have in order to exploit the benefit from interacting with the GCC States. The recent data demonstrates recognition of the greater significance of the GCC States to the global economy and to the Thai economy, as well as the way Thailand adjusted its policy and behaviour to develop further relations with the GCC States. With the improved capacity, the suggestion of the need for non-state actors to fill in the gap where the state used to find limits is likely to be less valid.

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[596] Information from Bumrungrad Hospital www.bumrungrad.co.th

Second, while it can be seen from the findings that private sector associations do have the capacity to increase their roles in Thailand's relations with the GCC States, their ability to be involved is still subjected to the Thai state; and several organisations still depend on the state's support in order to exist, therefore it may be fair to suggest that the Thai state still has strong control over these organisations; until the state allows it, these private sector associations cannot exceed the state in their relations with the GCC States.

STATE SUPREMACY?

The last section suggests the tension between the claim and the empirical findings. While the claim suggests the growth of private sector associations to exceed the role of the state in international relations between Thailand and the GCC States, the findings largely suggest the supremacy of the state in two manners. First, the state has developed its capacity to interact with the GCC States, thus making the suggested role of private sector associations as proxies redundant, and, second, the state has strong control over private sector associations.

The findings therefore lead us to the final reflection on the nature of theoretical framework and the validity of theoretical concepts. Earlier in this chapter different theoretical concepts were evaluated in terms of their utility in understanding international relations. This part will discuss the implication of the findings to the value of the two key concepts that are the highlights of the argument, state-centrism and pluralism.

According to the findings, the strength of the state in international relations between Thailand and the GCC States cannot be denied. Such conclusion adds positive standing to state-centric view; it supports the claim over the resilience of the state and the theoretical concept supporting it. This being said, it is important not to neglect the existence of emerging non-state actors. Despite being controlled by the state, non-state actors continue to have some effects, both positive and negative, to Thailand's relations with the GCC States. Therefore, pluralism is still a useful concept to be used along with state-centrism.

In summary, the future outlook of Thailand's relations with the GCC States may continue to be viewed using the combination of state-centrism and pluralism; with state-centrism playing a role as the key theoretical concept due to the dominant role of the state within the relations. For the time being, the separation between the government and sphere and the non-state sphere continues to exist. It is the overlapping area between the two spheres that continue to be the important question; it is up to the government whether it will allow a greater involvement of private sector associations.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

While showing that the Thai state will continue to dominate Thailand's relations wit the GCC States, this research also suggests that private sector associations have the capacity to assist the Thai state in promoting and diversifying relations with the GCC States. It shows that the factors that hinder these associations are the lack of support from the government and the lack of motivation from the associations themselves. While the supremacy of the state is clear in the relations, the Thai state will benefit from more diverse channels of interactions, as well as from increased or regular trade and oil deal, if it has private sector associations assisting in the areas where the state has limits or is not familiar. The research findings therefore suggest several courses of actions and changes which should be made:

COURSES OF ACTION

▪ The government should promote the consolidation of joint committee between itself and private sector associations. The choice of private sector associations being selected into the committee should be based on, as noted, regional and functional expertise--in this case the GCC States, the Middle East and Islam--and not the familiarity with the government or the size. The joint committee provides advice to relevant government agencies in projects and initiatives with the GCC States. So far, there has been some joint committee work between the government and the private sector associations, but the committee is temporary and less specific.

- A joint organisation between the government and the private sector association should be made available to provide information about business opportunity, businessmen and company profiles, as well as trade regulations between Thailand and the GCC States to individual Arab and Thai investors who are interested in investing or doing business in Thailand. So far, the Export-Import Bank of Thailand (ExIm Bank), the Thai Chamber of Commerce and Ministry of Commerce have been providing such service. However, these organisations are oriented toward larger companies and organisations; it is difficult for small investors and entrepreneurs to be served. Individuals and small companies, lacking sufficient information on business and import-export regulations, are less motivated to do business in Thailand and likewise. Unlike other countries--i.e. the EU, USA, Australia and East Asian countries--that have their own chambers of commerce in Thailand, Arab businessmen do not have agencies to provide information. So far, aside from the Chamber of Commerce, TITIA, and their embassies in Thailand, there ware no organisations similar to chamber of commerce for the Arabs.

- The government must participate and, if possible, coordinate in the initiatives or events organised by private sector associations, especially those of the GCC governments and Muslim international organisations like the OIC.

- The government should examine into details the existence and nature of private sector associations involving with Muslims, the Middle East and the GCC States. The database on these associations allows the government to be aware of their information; in a way, it can indirectly monitor these organisations, at the same time, it can coordinate and gain a connection with the GCC States through these organisations.

- The government, with support from the private sector associations, can initiate the inter-government cooperation program between Thailand and the GCC States. Functional cooperation can be established through using the expertise and focus of

the private sector associations, which already exist but lack the support of the Thai government.

- More information on the GCC States and the relevant governmental agencies should be made available to the members of the publics. Such will encourage greater knowledge about one another, leading to increased interactions among populations from the two sides.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

- The government should examine more closely the existing regulations and limitations on private sector associations in Thailand. Changes should be made to the regulations that are too strict and impractical. In the case of foreign private sector associations functioning in Thailand, the regulations applied to them must be considered on a case-by-case basis, as the establishment of these organisations from headquarters are based on different rules, thus documents and procedures required by the Thai government may be impossible for these organisations to comply with. Limiting too much involvement of these organisations means discouraging them from being involved in governmental projects, and from considering drawing government into their projects.

- This research shows that there has been a development in non-state actors in Thailand. The increased role of civil society in world politics is the phenomenon that will continue to grow; and the Thai government must not ignore such a fact. Therefore, the old perception that the government has to be in charge of all aspects of international relations must be adjusted toward a more task-share oriented fashion.

RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This research has attempted to answer questions on contemporary and future of Thailand's relations with the GCC States, with the focus on the role of non-state actors, considering the limits in space and time of the research, several other interesting aspects have not been touched upon. Further research, using different empirical cases, or

different non-state actors, may be useful. Therefore, it would be interesting if further studies can be undertaken in the following areas:

First, if the debate on the involvement of Muslim private sector associations in Thailand's relations with the GCC States should be moved forward, it would be worthwhile to conduct a study to assess the involvement and role of the Muslim private sector associations in Muslim countries, preferably in ASEAN. Such a project will provide a comparative study with this research that highlights the relationship between Muslim private sector associations and the Thai government and how much the government allows these organisations to be involved in Thailand's relations with the GCC States. The proposed project can help answer the question over whether Islamic identity plays an important role in the relationship between the government and these Muslim private sector associations, and how much influence this identity can affect the amount of involvement and task sharing the government allows private sector associations in international relations with the GCC States. If the result is not dramatically different, then the attention can be moved on to other factors, i.e. governmental mechanisms, domestic politics or the security agenda.

Second, the development of non-state actors in Southeast Asia and Thailand has been a recent phenomenon; this research only focuses on one kind of non-state actors: private sector associations. Other transnational non-state actors that would be worthwhile studying is the role of the Muslim transnational companies in Thailand's relations with the GCC States. This recommendation is based on the field research and news survey between 2008 and 2009, where there have been more reports on the investments of companies from the Gulf in Thailand. At the same time, there have been some investments or joint project between Thai companies and Gulf companies. Focusing on these transnational companies can also provide a comparative case study to this research whose focus is on private sector associations.

Third, it is worth examining further the long-termed trend of Thailand's relations with the GCC States. As noted, the proposed model and conceptual framework are largely

influenced by the work of James Rosenau. According to Rosenau, the bifurcated world can be either the transitional period or it can be a permanent condition of the world politics. Rosenau offers four scenarios for the future shape of world politics, including: [597]

- **Global Society Scenario**: This scenario offers the world politics closed to idealist perspective. This is the case where the world politics is tied by the "aspirations, procedural norms, and loyalties that are globally shared."[598]

- **Restored State-System**: This scenario suggests the case that state or sovereignty-bound actors re-emerge as dominant player in world politics again. Under this case, states are successful in convincing to their citizens that there are no other units better suitable to serve them than states.

- **Pluralist Scenario**: This scenario suggests the case in that non-state actors become dominant players over states.

- **Enduring-Bifurcation Scenario**: This scenario suggests the continued bifurcation world politics in that, "both sovereignty-bound and sovereignty-free actors would be sufficiently powerful to resist the other and thus to preserve their own autonomy, but neither would be powerful enough to subordinate the other."[599]

Instead of applying Rosenau's prediction to the world politics, which is a macro structure, this prediction can be conveniently applied to the micro structure like Thailand's relations with the GCC States. The further research can take into consideration the result of this research, which provides an account of Thailand's relations with the GCC States through the bifurcated world model; future studies must be done to seek additional factors that will channel the nature of relations, i.e. more research on identity, economic dependency or regionalism.

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[597] James Rosenau, *Turbulence in World Politics: A Theory of Change and Continuity*, pp. 453.
[598] Ibid.
[599] Ibid.

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Interviews

Author-Conducted Interviews

- Dr. Jaran Maluleem, Department of International Relations, Faculty of Political Sciences, Thammmasat University, Bangkok, Thailand.

- Eight officers at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Royal Thai Government.

- Former Foreign Minister of Thailand. Dr. Surin Pitsuwan.

- Mr. Anirut Smutkojorn, President to the Thai Islamic Trade and Industrial Association

- One staff from the Thai Islamic Trade and Industrial Association

- Two scholars at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand.

- Two staff from the World Assembly of Muslim Youths (WAMY)

- His Excellency the Ambassador of UAE at the UAE Embassy, Thailand.

- Two political analysts at the Qatar Embassy in Bangkok, Thailand.

- Mr. Nitipoom Naowarat, leading journalist on foreign affairs in Thai Rath Newspaper.

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