

**Welcoming Remarks by H.E. Mr. Noppadon Pattama,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand
at the Business Summit on Thai-US Partnership Success Stories,
Government House, Bangkok, on 28 April 2008, 13.30 hrs.**

April 28, 2008, 2:42 pm

His Excellency Mr. Samak Sundaravej, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand,
The Honorable Chris Padilla, U.S. Under-Secretary for Commerce,
His Excellency Mr. Eric John, U.S. Ambassador to Thailand,
Mr. Matthew Daley, President of the U.S.-ASEAN Business Council,
Mr. Tom White, President of the American Chamber of Commerce in Thailand,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like, first of all, to thank Prime Minister Samak for honouring us with his participation in the Business Summit: Thai-U.S. Partnership Success Stories.

I warmly welcome Under-Secretary Chris Padilla from the U.S. Department of Commerce and all American executives who travelled all the way from the United States to take part in this Summit. I also wish to thank the U.S.-ASEAN Business Council and the American Chamber of Commerce for their active participation.

Your joint presence today sends a powerful message. It is that Thailand and the United States are serious about forging our special relations for greater mutual benefit. That this Summit is held here at Government House is unprecedented. It underscores the importance the Thai Government attaches to the Thai-U.S. partnership and to taking it to new heights.

This Business Summit is one of the highlights marking the 175th anniversary of the relations and friendship between Thailand and the United States. As globalization opens up ever more opportunities, the business connection between Thailand and the United States holds the key to bringing out the full potential of our two countries' partnership.

Last month, I had the honour of meeting with members of the U.S.-ASEAN Business Council in Washington.

-- I assured them of the soundness and competitiveness of the Thai economy. And thanks to our solid fundamentals, we should be able to weather the current challenges of rising commodity prices and sub-prime crisis.

-- I assured them then, as I wish to assure you now, that Thailand is committed to the rule of law and our international obligations. We are committed to intellectual property rights protection and – if I may add – should have been elevated to the Watch List instead of being stranded in the Priority Watch List.

-- I also assured our American friends that Thailand welcomes foreign investors, and that our Government is taking action to create a favourable investment climate – for foreign and domestic investors alike.

Therefore, today I am very delighted to see executives from so many multinational and reputable companies gather at our Government House.

Both sides will have ample opportunities to explore and exchange views about potentials and challenges in the Thai-U.S. partnership. Also tomorrow, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, you will have a chance to ask questions and get answers about Thailand's economic policies and investment opportunities directly from those in charge, including the Central Bank Governor and high-level officials from Thailand's main economic ministries.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

You come from the United States – home of the brave. Thailand is land of the free. A stronger partnership between the Thai and U.S. private sectors will help drive forward the close and cordial relations our two countries have enjoyed for 175 years. And now, more than ever, we see growing opportunities to expand that partnership beyond Thailand's boundaries.

One example is Thailand's on-going effort to intensify cooperation to develop regional linkages among countries of the Greater Mekong Sub-region – Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam and southern China. Logistics, transportation, and energy will be strategic areas in which Thailand hopes to lead. The emerging ASEAN Economic Community and closer integration among East Asia economies also afford the U.S. business excellent opportunities. The market of over 567 millions in ASEAN alone.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Coming from companies with global reach, you know where the best opportunities lie. Seize them. Add more success stories to the Thai-U.S. partnership. Your Thai friends are here to assist – to work with you and support you.

Now, I have the honour to invite His Excellency Mr. Samak Sundaravej, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, to give us his opening remarks.
