



Towards the 21st Century

by
Dr. Chira Hongladarom, Executive Director, Human Resources Institute, Thammasat University.

IN THIS WEEK'S HRI—POST CO—OPERATION COLUMN Dr Chira wonders how it is possible to maintain a long term view when politics focuses on short term issues. He also investigates an outsider's view of Thailand's role in Indochina and introduces several new ideas and services being launched by the HRI/Post Cooperation Team.

As the summer season in Thailand is already under way, Thai people are deeply involved in such short term issues as the political conflict among the coalition partners and the impending 17-18 May censure debate.

Therefore you will find that my own column is actually running against the present trends by attempting to look at issues further into the future.

Perhaps people will read this column as a kind of 'coffee break' away from the more sensational items of news. And as you do so, perhaps you will find time to ask yourself, what with all these political games and manoeuvres going on, what kind of vision do our leaders have for the future of our 60 million people?

If the politicians' sole aim is for their own political survival, perhaps we should divide our society up between those who play the game of politics and benefit from it, those who dislike politics and are sick of hearing about it, and the many others who have no idea what is going on anyway.

In fact, the general mood of the people in Thailand, and particularly in Bangkok, is not very positive, especially with regard to the prospects for the long term development of democracy. I only hope that the political players will have an opportunity to read this column and ask themselves what they think they're up to. What do they think will be the effect of their current actions on the people?

Anyway, let's think about something else for a while. I had a very productive 2 day trip to Hong Kong last week. I was able to meet some of the young people who represent Hong Kong's future, who are attending an Ex-MBA at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Our discussions about Thailand lasted for a full five hours and it was very interesting to hear what they had to say about our country. It was clear that they understood a lot about the Thai economy, especially the rapid growth and accompanying weaknesses with regard to human resources and infrastructure. However, most of the students had not really grasped how Thailand is handling its strategic geographical advantage in relation to Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia and Southern China. To be fair though, many of us even in Thailand pay little attention to this facet of our international relations. At least the people of Hong Kong clearly understand that we are at an advantage, and they are curious to find out what kind of positive developments have resulted from it. However, I found I was unable to tell them anything definite because international economic policy is a very complex thing and it is hard to get to the bottom of it. I pointed out to the students that, despite our geographical advantage, Thailand's investment in Vietnam still ranks only 12th in terms of value, and is much lower even than Hong Kong.

I was also interested to listen to their concerns about political stability, and hear how impressed they were about the role of our King. Indeed, the world is changing more each day. But while foreigners pay increasing attention to Thailand, we have a long way to go to combine our efforts and work together in harmony.

Some of the Hong Kong students will be able to see for themselves next year when a group of EX-MBA's are coming to Bangkok to attend a one week residential program at HRI.

Anyway, at least the experience made me glad that I had chosen teaching as a profession, because of all the opportunities it provides to expand my understanding of international affairs.

My guest this week is one of Israel's foremost experts on education, Dr. Arie Shoal. I hope you will find his ideas challenging. As ever, the main point about education is not to debate endlessly about what to do, but to actually drastically improve the way we deliver our education 'product' to the people. Hopefully we can do it in a manner which meets their expectations.

The HRI/Post Cooperation Column has now embarked on a course of trying to encourage the organisations and individuals who read us to participate in our activities more directly. As such, we would like to invite you to share your human resources experiences with us, especially when you conduct your own training programs and workshops. And if you have some pictures to go with your descriptions, please send them in too, and we will certainly feature some of your activities on this page.

Finally, I would like to mention that HRI/Post is organising at least two more major seminars which will take place some time this year. Also in about a month's time we are launching an HRI/Post radio program, which I'll tell you more about later.

All of these developments have come about as we strive to achieve the highest possible level of customer satisfaction for the column.

See you next week!!

ATTITUDE ON BUREACRACY For Three Groups Observation.

Factors

