

Kra Canal Project Is Moving Ahead

Pakdee Tanapura is the international director and acting spokesman of the Board of Directors of the International Executive Committee for the Study of the Kra Canal Project in Bangkok.

Good morning. I'm Pakdee Tanapura from Bangkok, Thailand. I've been working on the Kra Canal for the past 30 years. We started to work on this megaproject, linking the canal across the south of Thailand, in 1983, and at that time, Lyndon LaRouche came to Bangkok and we organized a big conference. That big conference was with the participation of the Minister of Transport and Communications, Mr. Samak Sundaravej,



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along with other Thai elites, and many MPs, many senators, and other important participants.

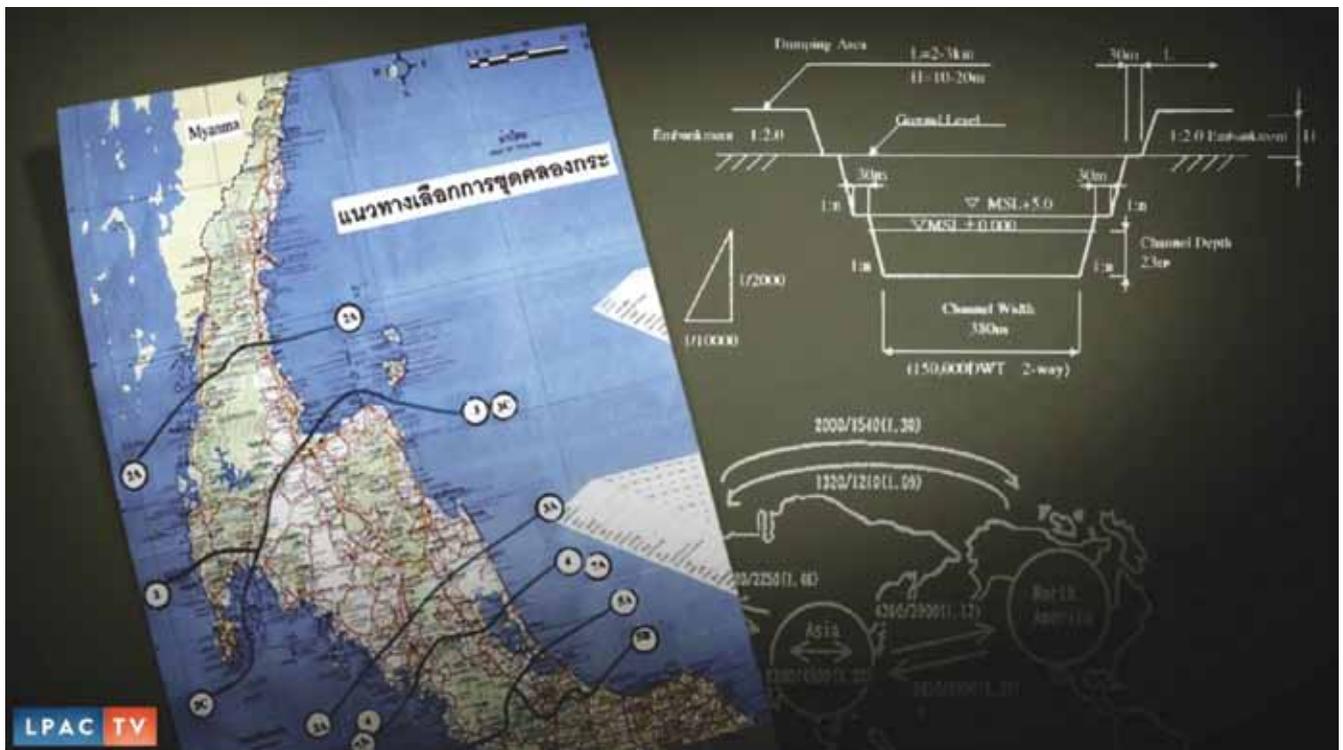
Also at that time, we had the participation of the GIF Japan, the Global Infrastructure Fund foundation, by Dr. [Masaki] Nakajima and Dr. [Norio] Yomomoto. Also we had the participation from the U.S. side, of some American scientists working on the utilization of nuclear explosives, that would help reduce the cost of the construction by about 40%.

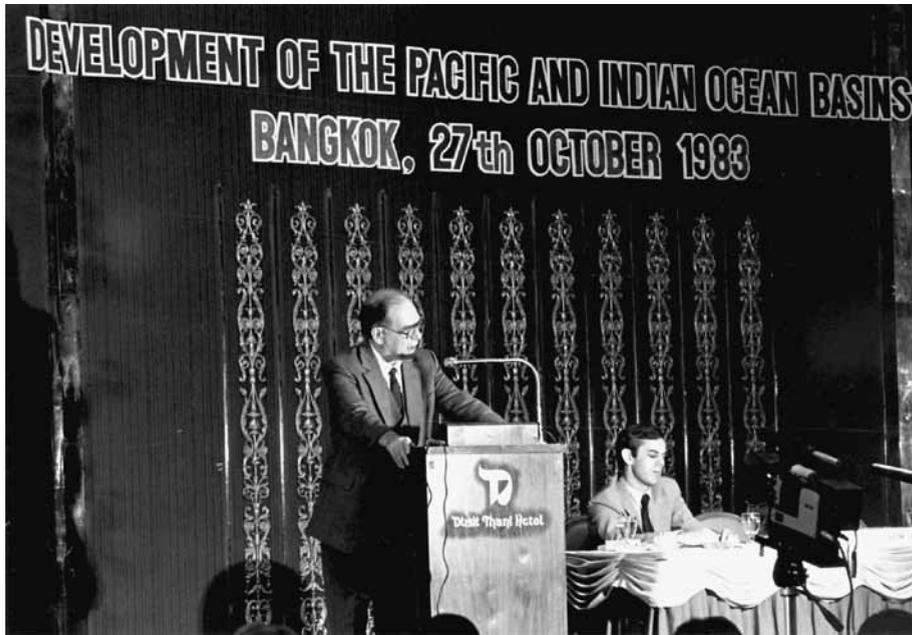
Also, we had the participation of many ASEAN country members, important persons like Dr. Roeslan Abdulgani, chairman of the advisory team to President Suharto of Indonesia, and Dr. Zainuddin Bahari of the Malaysian Institute for Strategic and International Studies.

We also had the participation of some former ambassadors from India, who had been stationed in Thailand for a while, and also were in support of the Kra Canal. So, it was a very big conference.

And with that, we also started to organize the Kra Canal, and we planned to have pre-feasibility studies; that means we wanted to revive the studies by TAMS,

FIGURE 1
Engineering Pre-Feasibility Study for the Kra Canal





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Lyndon LaRouche addresses the October 1983 conference in Bangkok on Pacific and Indian Ocean development.

the engineering firm from the United States. We picked that up, and we wanted to revive it and make a pre-feasibility study, with the participation of the Minister of Transport and Communications, Mr. Samak.

So that was done, but unfortunately, Mr. Samak did not stay in his position. After a while, he had to resign, so that the Kra Canal did not take off, because the funding which was supposed to be allocated by the GIF and some parts of the participants, did not come. They were not allocated properly, so we did not have enough funds to do the pre-feasibility studies.

The LaRouche participation and contribution was very important. He came and gave a speech on the importance of the Canal at that time, and his speech and his participation appeared in every major newspaper in Thailand. So, that's what happened at that time.

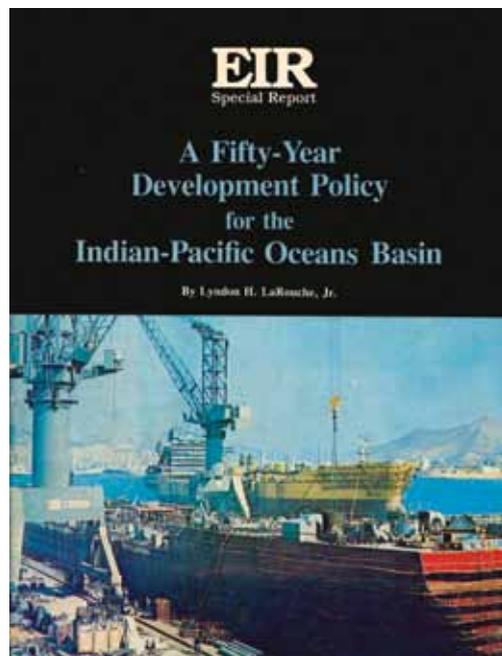
Since that time, we have developed many things to develop further the Kra Canal. In 2001, on exactly the same day as 9/11,

from all sides—from the royalty side, as from the Singapore side—so he said that Thailand did not need the Kra Canal. And that was the end of it.

General Chavalit quit the government, and the coup d'état of 2006 overthrew Thaksin from his prime ministership.

the cabinet ministry during the time of [Prime Minister] Thaksin [Shinawatra] adopted a resolution to create a national committee for the study of the Kra Canal. I'm part of that national committee. That national committee still exists, so I'm part of it, and am actually the international director of the national committee.

Then, that was proposed by Gen. Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, who at that time was deputy prime minister, and also minister of defense. He was involved very much on the Kra Canal, and also he had asked China to participate in the study, and also Japan, of course. Some money was allocated from the Japanese side, to start with, but then, unfortunately, Thaksin, was pressured



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Two Camps

Since then, our country is in big turmoil. There is street fighting, lots of conflicts, a lot of clashes between the pro-Thaksin group, as well as the pro-royalty [camp]. So the country is somewhat, until now, divided into two camps. But the Thaksin camp is more in favor of development. For example, right now the pro-Thaksin government is pushing for high-speed rail, an investment of about \$80 billion. With that we will develop high-speed rail all over the country, all over Thailand, and joining to the Silk Road rail in China, in the southern part of China. Also, with Myanmar and with Laos.

The other part of the high-speed rail would join Cambodia and Vietnam. So, the plan was well done. Of course, that upset the oligarchy in Thailand—the oligarchies are really upset, and they are trying to shut down that project, as well as trying to shut down all kinds of projects, including nuclear energy. They want to go for “soft energy,” global warming, these types of things. But I think the Thai people, right now, are pretty much aware of the need that Thailand has to be developed, as rapidly as possible, because we see China as an example of development.

So we are moving now. I’m involved in the preparations for a conference on nuclear energy, which should take place by the end of November.

Lately, Thaksin has put in his Facebook about his reflections when he visited Port Klang in Malaysia, in the Malacca Strait. He said that Thailand could develop a Kra Canal, that would undermine shipping in the Malacca Strait—which is wrong, anyway, since we think that by the year 2020, if we construct the Kra Canal, there would be something like 144,000 ships going through the Malacca Strait every year, which is an average of 3.6 minutes per ship. I mean, that’s massive. So, we are in need of the Kra Canal, as well as the Malacca Strait, to allow the flow of maritime transport in this area.

Recently I went to China to make a presentation on the Kra Canal. It was very well-received, and the dean of the faculty of Southeast Asian Studies of Xiamen University on the coast of China said that the Kra Canal is a top priority for the next development in the relations between China and Southeast Asia.

I also went to South Korea, to give a presentation on the maritime Silk Road, and the Kra Canal was very well received, and well considered, that it should be the next project for the coming decade.

So, all these somehow positive attitudes of Thaksin, and also the attitude of Southeast Asian countries, as well as China, Korea, and Japan, of course—because I was invited there by Dr. Yamamoto from GIF-Japan. So, everything is set to move ahead with the Kra Canal, and hopefully, nuclear energy, because we are in the mood for development. As you know, we are in big trouble in Europe and the United States, and I think Asian countries, the Pacific Rim countries, as well as India, are looking for development to counter the crisis that we are facing.

We hope that this will be successful, and we will move forward for the development of the new Maritime Silk Road, which is the Kra Canal.

So, that’s more or less what was done during our time, now three decades. We think that it’s time Asia should move for big infrastructure, and we are aware that there’s a deficit of infrastructure in Asia and India—all over the world actually. But in Asia, to cover the deficit in infrastructure in Asia. So, everything moves quite well, and hopefully that will be successful in the upcoming years.

India: Ramtanu Maitra

The Alliance of India-Russia-China

Ramtanu Maitra is the New Delhi correspondent for EIR. This is a transcript of his video presentation to the Schiller Conference of Nov. 2 in Los Angeles.



Schiller Institute

I will first tell you what the situation is. The situation is not where we expected it to be, but recently the Indian Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, visited Moscow, and then flew directly to Beijing, altogether a five-day trip, Oct. 20-24—two days in Russia, three in China. And during his visit to Russia, there were a number of agreements signed, the most important of which concerned the Russian interest in building four more nuclear power plants, in a cluster, where they have already built one, and the second one is now being built.

The second thing that happened, is that India also got from Russia an agreement to jointly do exploration for oil in the Arctic area.

And on the strategic side, what they discussed in Russia is basically the importance of keeping Central Asia stable, in light of the fact that the American and NATO troops will be leaving Afghanistan in 2014, and the place is now infested with terrorists and drug traf-