FILE COPY

LEGATION OF
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Bangkok, November 26, 1940.

No. 67

Subject: Transmitting Copy of Editorial from the Bangkok Times entitled "Neighbors' Problems" in which Reference is made to the Territorial Aspirations of Thailand in Indochina.

CONFIDENTIAL

BY AIR MAIL

711

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

1/ Referring to my telegram No. 175 November 26-12:00 am., I have the honor to enclose for the Department's information the editorial entitled "Neighbors' Problems" in the Bangkok Times, British controlled newspaper, in which reference is made to Thailand's territorial aspirations in Indochina.

I wish to call particular attention to the statements which I have underlined.

Respectfully yours,

Hugh G. Grant
American Minister

Enclosure:
1. Editorial.

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HGG/tse

Distribution: Original to Department by airmail. Two copies by pouch mail. (Singapore)

A true copy of the signed original

Enclosure No. 1 to despatch No. 67 dated November 26, 1940 from the American Legation at Bangkok, Thailand, on the subject of an editorial entitled "Neighbours' Problems".

Source

NEIGHBOURS' PROBLEMS

About the middle of September *The Times* devoted an article, reproduced on another page, to the subject of French Indochina. It was an interesting summary of the position then, but did not make the slightest reference to the relations between Indochina and Thailand. Despite all that is said in the Thai newspapers these days, we would still fain hope that the outside world is finding nothing really alarming in those relations; and that hope is supported by the emphatic denial that has been given to the report of a Thai invasion of Indochina. As the London paper saw the position in September, the situation was obscure but interesting, the relations of importance to Indochina then being those with Japan and China.

The loss of the home market had placed the colony in a difficult position; and it is still of much importance to Indochina that the best economic relations should be established with Japan. On the other hand *The Times* felt some doubt whether the interest of the Japanese imperialists was mainly economic or mainly military. The Japanese no doubt see, or saw, in Chungking an important means of exercising further pressure on the Chinese Government that has its capital in Chungking. Their demands comprised the passage of troops and air and naval bases, but did not constitute an ultimatum. We read further that Indochina must hope that the United States and the British Government have both declared their interest in the maintenance of both the political and the territorial *status quo* in Indochina. That, we assume, would not apply to Thailand's modest request to Indochina in regard to territory that was formerly Thai territory.

The recent purge of Japan's diplomatic service gave *The Times* some cause for anxiety, being taken to indicate a serious change in that country's foreign policy, especially in the South Seas. A good deal has happened since the article referred to was written; but the latest message we have seen would seem to show that Japan and Indochina are on very friendly terms, and would provide an example for Thailand and Indochina to follow. A Japanese theatrical company has attracted much attention in Hanoi, all notables receiving invitations to attend with their families. We presume the company did not confine themselves to Hanoi. Altogether there seems to be no really good reason for incidents on the Thailand frontier. Disputes can be settled in a friendly spirit on both sides.