chron

American Embassy,
Bangkok, Thailand,
June 5, 1959.

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TO: Army Attache
(in turn) JUSMAG

FROM: The Ambassador

For your background information only, there is attached a personal letter to me concerning the question of entry of Thai cadets into West Point.

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COM:UAJohnson:bln

#20,3) Thai Cadet Entry (Entry 6-5 → 350 Memo Communications Files)

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ADDRESS OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS TO
THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

May 27, 1959

5 JUN 1959

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Dear Alex:

With regard to your letter of May 18, Senator Green's proposed legislation (attached) to permit Thai cadets to enter West Point came to our attention out of the blue, and apparently resulted from direct approaches to congressmen by Thanat when he was Ambassador. We have learned that the Defense Department has opposed such entry because it is under injunction by Senator Russell, Chairman of the Armed Services Committee, against any further piecemeal legislation regarding the Academies. On the basis of his instructions the Defense Department has finally, over a period of several years, succeeded in writing a bill to amalgamate all proposed changes in procedures, quotas and staffing of the Academies. This bill has now been presented to the Budget Bureau. So much of the situation has been explained to the Chargé by General Erskine.

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Unfortunately, we understand that there is little likelihood of Budget's acceptance of this complex bill in time for presentation to this session of Congress. On the basis of informal advice from one of the Defense officers concerned, we are hoping that at the appropriate time (in about two weeks) an approach may be made to Senator Russell to point out the embarrassment we face in connection with the oft rejected requests from Thailand and other Governments for entry of their students into the Academies. If he will permit an exception to his instructions, we believe Defense may be willing to withdraw its objection to Senator Green's proposed legislation. This might permit Congressional action prior to the July 7 deadline for entry into the Academy. We understand that the two prospective candidates will have completed all possible procedures by that time so that, given the necessary legislation, they could enter the

Academy.

The Honorable U. Alexis Johnson,
American Ambassador,
The American Embassy,
Bangkok, Thailand.

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Academy. However, none of the information concerning the hoped for approach to the Senator can be passed on to the Thai at this time.

Meanwhile, the Bureau of the Budget, which by tradition coordinates the comments of the executive on legislative proposals, has passed to Senator Russell Defense's letter opposing the legislation as well as the Department's letter favoring the legislation (attached). Presentation of conflicting views is evidently acceptable under the Budget Bureau's procedures.

I hope this background information may be of some use to you, but I have no course of action to suggest to you to assist in a solution of the problem. Should the optimistic possibility outlined above not develop, we may suggest that you try to clarify this matter with the Thai authorities to avoid the misunderstandings foreseen by the Chargé (as well as the Army Attaché). It would certainly be unwise for the Thai Government to continue sending to this country cadets who will not be accepted into the Academy.

Sincerely yours,

Eric

Eric Kocher
Director, Office of
Southeast Asian Affairs

Attachments - as stated

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