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FROM : Amembassy BANGKOK

DATE: October 20, 1970

SUBJECT : American Media Understand Thailand Better, According to Thanat

REF :

After returning to Thailand from the United States, where he attended the 25th U.N. General Assembly session and addressed various American groups, Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman told Bangkok Post Executive Editor Theh Chongkhadikij that Americans, and the American mass media, are beginning to understand Thailand and Asia better. Even the New York Times, he said, is now "reporting with greater objectivity," and Thanat is reportedly working on an article on Vietnam policy requested by Times editor Harrison Salisbury. Theh reported that "the Philadelphia Bulletin, whose editorial policy has been biased against the U.S. policy in this part of the world, interviewed Dr. Thanat and published all questions and answers in full."

COMMENT. Thanat has for some time complained that Thailand has been unable to get its side of major issues published in the American media, especially in those papers whose editorial policy is opposed to the U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia. It would appear from his comments to Theh that he feels he has made some progress in this respect on his recent visit to the United States. END COMMENT

The full text of the Theh article is enclosed.

UNCLAS

Enclosure: all ltr
1. Newspaper article dated Oct. 19, 1970.

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THE BANGKOK POST MONDAY OCTOBER 19, 1970

US Press swings our way—Thanat

by THEH CHONGKHADIKIJ

AMERICAN mass media have come around to understanding Thailand and Asia better. US public opinion in this respect is also changing rapidly. This was reported by Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman in an interview with The Bangkok Post yesterday.

Even the New York Times, which had been highly critical of Thailand and of United States involvement in Asia, was now "reporting with greater objectivity."

Its editor, Mr Harrison Salisbury has requested Dr Thanat to contribute an article on Vietnam policy. The Foreign Minister is working on it now.

The Philadelphia Bulletin, whose editorial policy has been biased against the US policy in this part of the world, interviewed Dr Thanat and published all questions and answers in full.

Dr Thanat spoke to various opinion-forming organisations in the United States and found many Americans impressed with Thai sincerity in efforts to bring about peace and stability to this part of the world.

The Foreign Minister was the first to report on the rising sentiment among the US mass media and in US academic circles against US involvement in Asia before it became marked and unmistakable. He told The Bangkok Post then of his concern over the trend.

He said that the US mass media then did not present an accurate picture of the situation in Vietnam and Southeast Asia.

He found unqualified support by American mass media and political circles, including "dovish" Senators, for the five-point Nixon Vietnam proposal.

He said that the proposal showed that "we are on the side of peace" and the Communist rejection showed that "they are the only ones clinging to the idea of seeking a military victory."

With greater US public understanding of the situation, people trying to organise anti-Vietnam demonstrations were losing support and some planned demonstrations had been abortive.

This development was expected to strengthen the US Administration's hand in dealing with the communists over Vietnam.

A new era of close Thai-French co-operation has opened as the result of talks Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman had with top French officials in Paris.

Dr Thanat and Khunying Molee Khoman were guests in Paris of the French Foreign Minister and Mrs Maurice Schuman.