AIR PRIORITY

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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : American Embassy, BANGKOK — Despatch No. 244

TO : Department of State, WASHINGTON — October 23, 1959

SUBJECT: Possible Establishment of Russian Trade Center in Bangkok

Enclosed is a memorandum of conversation between Minoru Yoshida, Second Secretary of the Japanese Embassy, and the reporting officer, on the subject topic. The Embassy will attempt to investigate further the reliability of the Soviet's plans to establish a trade center in Thailand.

For the Ambassador:

Floyd L. Whittington
Counselor of Embassy
for Economic Affairs

Enclosure:

Memorandum of Conversation between Messrs. Yoshida and Weintraub, dated October 22, 1959.

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510 Trade (Russian Trade Center in Thailand) 10-23-59

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

DATE: October 22, 1959

SUBJECT: Possible Establishment of Russian Trade Center in Bangkok

PARTICIPANTS: Minoru Yoshida, Second Secretary, Japanese Embassy
Sidney Weintraub, Second Secretary, American Embassy

In a conversation at my house yesterday evening, Mr. Yoshida told me he had been informed by a commercial officer of the Soviet Embassy (whose name I did not catch) that the USSR is looking for a site in Bangkok to establish a trade center here. According to Mr. Yoshida, the Soviet commercial officer stated that the budget for the establishment of a trade center already has been allocated, and the proposed timing for its inauguration is in the not too distant future. Mr. Yoshida said the proposed trade center was described to him as likely to be similar in nature to the Japan Trade Center on New Road.

When I commented to Mr. Yoshida that the Japan Trade Center appeared to be an effective device in promoting Japanese exports to Thailand, Mr. Yoshida agreed, but added that it was an expensive device. He said that the Trade Center must pay Thai import duties on all goods it brings to the Center for exhibition purposes, despite the fact that practically all the merchandise is not sold here but eventually returned to Japan. He said he believed the Thai situation is unique, in that most nations have a system of bonded imports and that goods brought to the country for exhibition only are not subject to import duties.

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