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THAI AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED STATES

Bunchana Atthakor

Pronunciation: BOON-CHAH-NAH AH-TAH-KAWN

Should be addressed as: Your Excellency; or Mr. Ambassador

Should be referred to as: Ambassador Bunchana, or by full name and title as above.

Ambassador Bunchana Atthakor was accredited to the United States Government in January 1968, and had previously served as Deputy Minister of National Development since May 1963. Known as an unusually capable official and decidedly pro-West, he had been a key figure in Thai agencies dealing with economic planning, particularly in respect to American Aid programs. As Deputy Minister, he served as the link between the Thai Government and the International Peace Corps Secretariat and was also a member of the Fulbright Board in Thailand.

Bunchana was described by American academic contacts in 1961 as "a schemer who likes to work behind the scenes," and several subsequent reports have tended to confirm this characterization. He reportedly wrote anonymous letters to Bangkok newspapers during 1959 criticizing his colleagues at Thammasat University. Prior to his designation as Ambassador, he generated considerable friction with his superior, National Development Minister Pote Sarasin, and leaked derogatory statements about him to the press. Because of this friction, Bunchana's designation as Ambassador was reported by a Bangkok columnist to have been arranged to remove him from the Bangkok political scene. Since taking his present post, he has been going out of his way to boost the reputation of Pridi Panomyang, exiled Thai political leader who has been living in Canton since the early 1950's and would be definitely persona non grata to the present Government of Thailand. Because of the foregoing record for deviousness, it would be particularly advisable to be cautious in discussing controversial or sensitive matters with him.

Ambassador Bunchana was born on July 15, 1910, and graduated from the law school of Chulalongkorn University in 1933. He served in the Thai Customs Department until 1954, and

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BUNCHANA

received a master's degree in public administration from Indiana University in 1956. Bunchana has visited many European and Far Eastern countries to observe their economic policies, and has frequently represented Thailand at international conferences.

Both the Ambassador and his wife, Khunying Sae (pronounced Sehh), speak good English. They have two married daughters and a son, all of whom reside in Thailand.

April 1968

EA/TB:CJNelson

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