File

Office of the Air Attache
American Embassy
Bangkok, Thailand
25 June 1959

64 MIL

SUBJECT: Royal Thai Air Force Request for a Space in the USAF Air Academy or the USA Military Academy

TO: HQ USAF (AFCIN)

1. The following is quoted from a letter received by this office from the Royal Thai Air Force:

"The Royal Thai Air Force requests your kind consideration and further action in approaching your authorities concerned to grant a space in Cadet Corps of the Air Academy, USAF, or in the Military Academy at West Point in 1960-1961 scholastic year, for an RTAF scholarship student, Mr. Prabaddh Riddhagni. Between these two, the Air Academy is the first choice of enrollment, the second choice being the Military Academy.

"2. Mr. Prabaddh Riddhagni, a son of Marshal of the Royal Thai Air Force F.R. Riddhagni, will be sixteen years old this first of August. He is now studying in a high school in Switzerland. After completing the class in June 1959, he is to proceed to the United States in August to enter an American high school for a period of one year in order to prepare and adapt himself to the American environment. He will, if accepted, later join the Air Academy, USAF, or the Military Academy at West Point, as a cadet from Thailand.

"3. The Thai Ministry of Defense will also take up the matter officially with the United States authorities through diplomatic channel.

"4. Your kind cooperation in setting forth the matter will be appreciated."

2. Mr. Eric Kocher, Director, Office of Southeast Asian Affairs, Department of State has informed Ambassador U. Alexis Johnson of Senator Green's proposed legislation (S.J. Res. 24) to permit Thai students to enter the United States Military Academy and of the Defense Department's proposed legislation, which has been presented to the Budget Bureau. However, it is understood that there is little likelihood of the Defense bill being presented to this session of Congress.

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420.31 Thai. Entry into Military Academy 6-25-59

2. While it is realised that foreign students will not be accepted for entrance in the USAF Air Academy until approximately 1963, it is requested that the USAF attempt to secure a space in the U.S. Military Academy for the son of Marshal of the Royal Thai Air Force F.R. Riddhagni (Marshal Ronnie) provided the young man meets the necessary entrance requirements.

4. Marshal Riddhagni was Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Thai Air Force until the 20 September 1957 coup. At present, he is considered to be the "Grand Old Man of the RTAF." He is extremely "Pro-US," and it is conceivable that his children may become future leaders of Thailand even if he should not return to power.

PAUL A PETTIGREW
Colonel, USAF
Air Attache

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