THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Bangkok, November 25, 1940.

No. 61

Subject: Transmitting Articles and Editorials which have Appeared Recently in Thai Newspapers in Regard to the Alleged Alliance Between Great Britain and the United States and Thailand, as Broadcast to the World by the Domei Japanese News Agency.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

BY AIR MAIL (See explanation below).

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to my telegram No. 169 of November 20, 3:00 pm., and to the Department's telegram No. 81, November 19, 5:00 pm., in regard to the sensational report broadcast by the Domei Japanese News Agency to the effect that the British Minister and I had proposed an alliance on behalf of our respective governments between Great Britian and the United States on the one hand and Thailand on the other, and to enclose for the Department's information copies in English translation of newspaper articles and editorials which have appeared in the Thai newspapers concerning this report.

The report was first called to my attention by a representative of the United Press Association who has been in Bangkok for several weeks. He showed me a telegram he had received from his Manila office and asked me to comment. I replied that it was the first news I had had of any such proposal and furthermore I was convinced that there was not a word of truth in it. The United Press representative wired my statement to his Manila office. He informed me that

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169

that he had been called to the Publicity Department of the Thai government following the broadcast of the Domei report and there an official of the Thai Publicity Department read to him a more complete report of the Domei article than he had received from His Manila office. He said the article was translated to him from the Siamese language and that the British Minister and I were charged with having plotted the proposed alliance.

I called my colleague the British Minister over the telephone. He said the report had just been called to his attention and it was a complete fabrication.

The next day practically all the Thai newspapers carried sensational articles concerning the alleged proposal. These articles are the ones enclosed herewith. My colleague the British Minister called me over the telephone and said he was giving a statement to the local press in Bangkok denying the report. I then communicated with the two English language newspapers and made a denial similar to the statement which I had given to the United Press representative.

In a subsequent conversation with the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs concerning the matter I was not materially enlightened as to the background of this Japanese propaganda. I have been informed today by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs that the Japanese Legation has expressed regret that the story was published and also it is anticipated that the representative of Domei Agency who wrote the story would likely leave Bangkok soon. It would appear however that the Thai government has made no formal protest or exerted any pressure to have the story corrected.

The motive back of the story is still somewhat obscure although I am of the opinion that it was a deliberate piece of propaganda to bring the Thai government out into the open and I would not be at all surprised if a party or parties connected directly or indirectly with the Thai government had a hand in the plot although there is no definite proof of this. An indication of the fact that the Thai government officials here have handled the matter with gloves is indicated in the article written by Prince Varnvaidya, Adviser to the Thai Foreign Ministry (quoted in the Bangkok Times of November 20, 1940) in which it was stated: "The writer believes, however, that it is excusable for reporters to send out such sensational news once in a while although there is no truth in it, but its nature is quite understandable." This statement, in my judgment, is pretty lame as I have indicated above. If the Thai government leaders had been very much upset over this report the Japanese propagandist who wrote it would likely have been given his walking papers immediately.

Respectfully yours,

Hugh G. Grant
American Minister

Enclosures:
1-~~16~~ 20. Newspaper articles.

891/800
HGG/tse

Distribution: Original and two copies sent in the British Legation's diplomatic pouch by Imperial Airways from Bangkok for delivery to the American Consul General at Singapore. Original to be forwarded by airmail from Singapore. Copies by pouch mail.

Source: Sahai Rasra Daily News,
November 20, 1940

(TRANSLATION)

TRANS-OCEAN SERVICE INSTRUCTED ITS REPRESENTATIVE TO INQUIRY FROM THAI GOVERNMENT ON THE SUBJECT OF THE PRIVATE PACT.

It being learnt that the Trans-Ocean Service had sent urgent instruction to its representative in Thailand to the effect that there had been rumor that Thai Government had made private pact with Britain and America, which is an important matter and will cause the Japanese to be dissatisfied. And according to news in Japan, if it is true that Thai had made the pact with the two countries, the Japanese will launch immediate attack. The Trans-Ocean representative made this urgent inquiry as to the state of the truth in the affair at the Foreign Office.

Since such news occured our representative immediately made inquiry from the closest Government quarter and received firm statement that Thai made no private pact with Britain or America whatsoever.

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jrc/

Assistant Editor.

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