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NAA: A1838, 453/2/1 PART 6

Series number: A1838

Control symbol: 453/2/1 PART 6

Barcode: 506517

Number of pages: 185

Thailand - Political - General

Secret

453/2/1

Part 6

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT. No.

SUBJECT:

Pacific Division.

South East Asia Section.

R.P.

THAILAND.

Political - General.

December 1950 - August 1951.

Next file: 399/1/1

Secret.

CANBERRA,

26/7/51

Confidential

With the Compliments

of the

Secretary, Department of

External Affairs.

D A D.

Memo no 306/51 from Bangkok
of 17/7/51

453/2/1/1

CONFIDENTIAL



DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
24 JUL 1951
453/2/1/1

File No. 100/5/2.

Memo. No. 306/51.

AUSTRALIAN CONSULATE-GENERAL,
BANGKOK, THAILAND.

17th July, 1951.

MEMORANDUM for:

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

POLITICAL SITUATION.

I refer to other correspondence concerning the recent disorders in Bangkok, and set out beneath for your information short biographical notes on some of the principal persons believed to have been involved on the side of the insurgents:-

Rear Admiral Luang Sangworn Yuthsakit.

Rear Admiral Thahara Khamhiran.

Rear Admiral Khalit Kulkamdhorn.

Rear Admiral Khali Sindhusophon.

Air Marshall Luang Thevasit Panluek.

Lt. General Luang Kach Songgram.

The contents of this memorandum will be found on the respective Who's Who files. (Numbers to be found by looking up Who's Who index, not "Burma - Who's Who")

File No. 100/5/2.

Memo. No. 309/51.

AUSTRALIAN CONSULATE-GENERAL,
BANGKOK, THAILAND.

18th July, 1951.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
24 JUL 1951
453/2/1/1

MEMORANDUM FOR:

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

I refer to my Departmental Despatches Nos. 12,13 and 14/1951 concerning the recent attempted coup d'etat in Bangkok and now enclose for your information copies of the Royal Decrees, dated 29th and 30th June, authorising the use of armed force to quell the rebellion and declaring martial law.

CONSUL-GENERAL.

N.B.
The file
24/7/51

ROYAL PROCLAMATION

Enforcing Martial Law

IN THE NAME OF HIS MAJESTY KING PHUMIPHOLADULYADEJ

DHARNINIVAT KROM MUEN BIDAYALABPRUTHIYAKORN

Regent

Whereas His Majesty the King is pleased to consider that necessity has arisen wherein the safety of the Realm must be safeguarded both against forces from outside and inside the Kingdom,

His Majesty the King, therefore, by virtue of Section 152 of the Constitution of the Thai Kingdom and Section 2 of the Act on Martial Law B.E. 2457 as amended by the Emergency Decree Amending Martial Law B.E. 2457, B.E. 2485 ratified by the Ratifying Act B.E. 2485 is pleased to enforce all provisions of Martial Law in Changvads Phra Nakorn and Dhonburi as from 10.00 hours of the 30th of June B.E. 2494.

Published on the 30th of June B.E. 2494, being the 6th year of the Present Reign.

Countersigned by;

VORAKARNBANCHA,

Minister.

NOTIFICATION

Issued by the Customs Department

Re Fixing the Average Market Price for Certain Merchandise for Collecting Export Duties

---

By virtue of the power given in Section 8 of the Customs Tariff Act B.E. 2478 as amended by Section 4 of the Customs Tariff Act (No. 3) B.E. 2481 the Director General of the Customs Department hereby fixes the average market price for the following merchandises to form the basis for collecting export duties as from the 1st of July 2494.

Remarks 1. The words "value last estimated" means the value under Section 65 bis (4) plus the cost for alteration and modification which improves the property deducted by depreciation for every period of account.

2. Deduction for the said deterioration and depreciation is for the whole year. If the period of account of any company or juristic partnership does not extend over the whole year deduction shall be made for such particular period of account.

ROYAL PROCLAMATION

IN THE NAME OF HIS MAJESTY KING PHUMIPHOLADULYADEJ

DHARNINIVAT KROM MUEN BIDAYALABPRUTHIYAKORN

Regent

As it appears that a rebellion has taken place in the Kingdom,

His Majesty the King, by virtue of Section 50 of the Constitution of the Thai Kingdom is pleased to command that the armed forces may be used to quel the rebellion as from now on.

Published on the 29th of June B.E. 2494, being the 6th year of the Present Reign.

Countersigned by;

VORAKARNBANCHA,

Minister.

DUPLICATE.

File No. 100/5/2.

Memo. No. 309/51.

Australian Consulate-General
Bangkok, Thailand.

18th July, 1951.

MEMORANDUM FOR:

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

I refer to my Departmental Despatches Nos. 12,13 and 14/1951 concerning the recent attempted coup d'etat in Bangkok and now enclose for your information copies of the Royal Decrees, dated 29th and 30th June, authorising the use of armed force to quell the rebellion and declaring martial law.

(Sgd.) A. H. Loomes

CONSUL-GENERAL.

T H A I L A N D

July 17, 1951

REORGANIZATION OF THAI NAVY DECREED

Bangkok, Thai Home Service, July 12, 1951, 1300 GMT--B

(The 1951 Decree for the Reorganization of the Royal Navy under the Ministry of Defense)

(Excerpts)

"In the name of His Majesty king Phumiphon Adundet, the Regent, Prince Thani Niwat, on July 12, 1951, issued the following proclamation: As it is deemed expedient to reorganize the Royal Navy under the Ministry of Defense, His Majesty the King, in accordance with Sec. 157 of the Constitution of Thailand and Sec. 15 and Sec. 25 of the 1948 Kingdom Defense Organization Act, has therefore approved the enactment of the following decree:

"Sec. 1--This decree shall be called the 1951 Decree for Reorganization of the Royal Navy under the Ministry of Defense.

"Sec. 2--This decree shall be in force on the day following its publication in the GOVERNMENT GAZETTE.

"Sec. 3--The 1948 Decree for Reorganization of the Royal Navy under the Ministry of Defense, which was last amended by the Third Decree for Reorganization of the Royal Navy under the Ministry of Defense of 1950, shall be repealed.

"Sec. 4--The administration in the Royal Navy is as follows: A. The Royal Navy command; B. the Naval General Staff Department; C. the Navy Inspector General Department; D the Royal Fleet; E. the Navy base at (Sattaheep); F. the Naval Dockyards Department; G. the Naval Quartermaster General Department; I. the Hydrographic Service Department; J. the Meteorological Department; K. the Naval Medical Department; and L. the Naval Finance Department.

"Sec. 5--The Royal Navy Command is in charge of the chief of the Royal Navy Command.

"Sec. 6--The Naval General Staff Department is in charge of the chief of the Naval General Staff Department. The administration in the Naval General Staff Department is as follows: A. The 1st Bureau; B. the 2d Bureau; C. the 3d Bureau; D. the 4th Bureau; E. the Naval Educational Department; F. the Naval Academy; G. (the Naval Historical Science Department); H. the Naval Signal Division; I. the Naval Science Department; and J. the Royal Navy Institute.

453/2/1/1

"Sec. 7--The Navy Inspector General Department is in charge of the chief of the Navy Inspector General Department.

"Sec. 8--The Royal Fleet is in charge of the Commander in Chief of the Royal Fleet.

"Sec. 9--The Navy Base at (Sattaheep) is in charge of the Commander in Chief of the Navy Base at (Sattaheep).

"Sec. 10--The Naval Dockyards Department is in charge of the Director General of the Naval Dockyards Department. The administration in the Naval Dockyards Department is as follows: A. The Technical Division; B. the (Construction and Repair) Division; C. the Machine Workshops Division; D. the Ship Construction Division; E. the Electrical Service Division; F. the Engine Division; G. the Battery and Paint Workshops Division; H. the Dockyards Division; and I. the Finance Division.

"Sec. 11--The Naval Ordnance Department is in charge of the Director General of the Naval Ordnance Department. The administration in the Naval Ordnance Department is as follows: A. The Guns Division; B. the Torpedoes Division; C. the Mines Division; D. the Explosive Powder Division; E. the Electrical Ordnance Division; F. the Arsenal Division; and G. the Sentry Division.

"Sec. 12--The Naval Quartermaster General Department is in charge of the Quartermaster General. The administration in the Naval Quartermaster General Department is as follows: A. The (Supply Division); B. the Stores Division; C. the Military Supplies Division; D. the Fuel Division; E. the Military Transport Division; and F. the Quartermaster General School.

"Sec. 13--The Hydrographic Service Department is in charge of the Director General of the Hydrographic Service Department. The administration in the Hydrographic Service Department is as follows: A. The Marine Survey Division; B. the (Navigation Devices) Division; C. the Navigation Signs Division; D. (the Machine Science) Division; and E. the Hydrographic Research Division.

"Sec. 14--The Meteorological Department is in charge of the Director General of the Meteorological Department. The administration of the Meteorological Department is as follows: A. The Weather Bureau; B. the Weather Forecasting Bureau; C. the Regional Weather Division; D. (the Sea Weather) Division; and E. the (Water Level and Floods) Division.

"Sec. 15--The Naval Medical Department is in charge of the Chief Medical Officer of the Naval Medical Department. The administration of the Naval Medical Department is as follows: A. The Naval Hospital; B. the Pharmaceutical Division; C. the Sanitation Division; and D. (the Medical Training School).

Finance Department

"Sec. 16--The Naval Finance Department is in charge of the Director General of the Naval Finance Department. The administration in the Naval Finance Department is as follows: A. The Salaries Division; B. the General and Extraordinary Expenditures Division; C. the Comptroller Division; D. the Budget Division.

"Sec. 17--(The Council of the Royal Navy) is the advisory party attached to the Naval Commander in Chief that deals with the following matters: A. The over-all reorganization of the Royal Navy; B. reinforcement of the Royal Navy for the defense of the Kingdom; C. mobilization of forces; D. (supplies of arms and weapons); E. education training and seminars; F. defense of the coastline of the Kingdom and air defense by the Navy; G. (promulgation) of acts, decrees, ministerial bylaws, rules and regulations concerning the Royal Navy; H. ....

"Sec. 18--(The Council of the Royal Navy) is composed of the Naval Commander in Chief as chairman and the Deputy Naval Commander in Chief as vice chairman. Members are the Naval Chief of Staff, the Deputy Naval Chief of Staff; the Director General of the Naval Inspector General's Department; the Director General of the Naval Dockyards Department; the Director General of the Naval Ordnance Department; the Quartermaster General; the Director General of the Hydrographic Service Department; the Director General of the Meteorological Department; the Chief Medical Officer of the Royal Naval Medical Department; the Director General of the Naval Finance Department; the Commander in Chief of the Royal Fleet, and the Commander in Chief of the Navy Base at (Sattaheep). The Chief of the Royal (Navy Command) is Secretary General.

"Sec. 19--The Minister of Defense is authorized to act on this decree. (Signed) Prime Minister Phibun Songgram, executor of His Majesty's order."

CONFIDENTIAL

Ref: 2/147/1



...MENT OF
...AL AFFAIRS

...UL 1951

453/2/1/1

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

With the compliments

of the

Official Secretary

16th July, 1951.

Office of the High Commissioner
for the United Kingdom.
Canberra, A.C.T.

CONFIDENTIAL. 10110/6/51.

S A V I N G R A M

FROM: MR. WHITTINGTON. TO: FOREIGN OFFICE.

EN CLAIR: DESPATCHED 4th JULY, 1951.

No: 44 SAVING of 4th July, 1951.

Addressed to Foreign Office Savingram No: 44 of 4th July, 1951 repeated for information to:-

		Singapore	51)
		Rangoon	44)
		Saigon	16)
U.K.H.C.		Ottawa	3) S
"	"	Pretoria	3) A
"	"	Canberra	3) V
"	"	Wellington	3) I
"	"	Delhi	8) N
		Karachi	10) G
		Colombo	4)
		Kuala Lumpur	5)

SIAM - POLITICAL SUMMARY FOR JUNE 1951.

Attempted coup d'état.

At a time when rumours of plot and intrigue had been rather fewer than is customary in Bangkok, Field Marshal Pibul, The Prime Minister was suddenly kidnapped at a public function by a small group of men in naval uniform. On the afternoon of June 29th, some hundreds of Government officials, represent[illegible] of the diplomatic corps and members of the American Technical and Economic Mission were attending a ceremony to mark the handing over by the United States Government of the dredger "Manhattan" to the Siamese Government as part of the E.C.A. aid programme. Pibul was, without a shot being fired, abducted from on board the dredger and escorted along the jetty to a landing craft and taken aboard the Siamese naval vessel Sri Ayudhya which lay at anchor nearby.

2. Radio announcements put out by the Naval Signals station proclaimed that the people were dissatisfied with Pibul's Government, and named a junta of officers of the armed services who were behind the revolt and a new skeleton cabinet. There followed two nights and a day of shooting between the Bangkok

/establishments..

establishments of the Navy on one side and the Army, Air Force and Police on the other, while the rival broadcasting stations of the four services maintained a flow of ultimatums and confused news bulletins. Eventually, when the Air Force successfully bombed the Sri Ayudhya, Pibul was able to swim ashore, and when it was known that he was safely back among his supporters, it was clear that the revolt would be put down.

3. This was the noisiest and bloodiest of the so-called "coups d'état" (or attempted "coups d'état") which have in recent years been characteristic of the Siamese political scene. The final count of dead and wounded has not yet been made, but it is clear that while the toll among the combatants has been light, because of the wildness of the firing, civilian casualties have for the same reason been heavier, amounting, it is believed, to some hundred dead and possibly two thousand wounded. Part of the battle took place in the quarter occupied by foreign residents and diplomatic missions (this Embassy was in the front line and under fire from dawn till dusk on July 30th). In the circumstances it is little short of miraculous that casualties among the non-Asian population were limited to one German civilian killed and a slight wounding of the Australian Consul-General.

4. The last considerable exchange of gunfire took place at 4a.m. on Sunday 1st July, since when outwardly normal conditions prevail, although martial law has not at the time of writing, been repealed. It is not yet clear exactly who were the ring-leaders - some of those announced over the Naval radio were certainly not implicated - but vigorous steps are being taken to seek them out, apprehend them and deal with them sternly. It is fairly clear, however, that a small section of the Navy, known to be disaffected but over which the Commander-in-Chief of the Navy claimed to have control, managed to break loose. The Commander-in-Chief himself surrendered unconditionally to the Government at the same time as the Premier returned to safety.

5. No communist or Chinese complicity was evident or has yet been discovered. There were no disturbances outside Bangkok.

Other events of the month.

6. The "coup" emphasised the ineffectiveness of the many little political parties whose doings and - more often - sayings, have figured prominently in the press in connexion with the General Election which is supposed to be held early next year. Their activities mean little in Siamese politics and arouse scant interest among the general public.

7. The local campaign in connexion with the Berlin Peace Pact has been in full swing, with a number of newspapers calling for signatures. Public interest is extremely limited and discouraging propaganda put out by the Government as well as that issued by the British and United States Information Services is probably more effective than that of the petition's local promoters. A body of students at the University of Moral and Political Sciences, which has always been a citadel of left wing thought since it was established by PRIDI after

/the..

the 1932 revolution, have called for support for the Petition, in consequence incurring the wrath of their Board of Directors. But the Board's efforts to suppress the student movement had not been entirely successful before the week-end's disturbances, since when the University was closed down.

8. Malik's broadcast appeal for peace in Korea was greeted with scepticism in Siamese official circles. The head of the Siamese diplomatic mission in Tokyo expressed his view that it was merely Soviet "delaying action", while the Minister of Foreign Affairs was of the opinion that jubilation would be premature before it was known what conditions the communists demanded.

WHITTINGTON.

JCB/RW/BMM.

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			" "	Delhi	2
				Karachi	2
				Colombo	2

Summary of Items of Gen. Interest.

11-17/7/51

Police investigators are reported to have stated on 14th July that the report on their investigations into charges currently laid against Lt.General Luang Kach Songkram would be submitted to the Public Prosecution Department on 16th July.

453/2/1/1

Summary of Items of General Interest.

11-17/7/51

Nai Samak Burawas, scientist and philosopher, a member of the Royal Institute of Thailand and a former lecturer at the Chulalongkorn University was arrested by Police on 13th July on suspicion of complicity in the June 29th 1951, disorders.

The results of the interrogation of Nai Samak are not yet known. (Refer to Departmental Dispatch No. 8/51 of 17th April, 1951).

453/2/1/1

~~453/6/2~~

Summary of Items of General Interest

11-17/7/51

A total of 16 papers have to date been placed under censorship. In one case censorship has, however, subsequently been lifted. They comprise the following:-

1. Prachartipartai (Le Democrat) Organ of the Democrat (parliamentary opposition) Party. Censorship was lifted on 11th July.

2. Kiartisak. Communist daily which generally reserves space for criticising government administration.

3. Siam Rath. A conservative daily which in recent months has subjected the government to considerable criticism. It is widely read amongst the educated classes and is reputed to be the best of the Thai language papers in Bangkok. Its owner and editor is M.R. Kukrit Pramoj brother of the Deputy leader of the Democrat Party.

4. Thai Mai. A relatively independent Bangkok daily which occasionally ventures criticism of governmental failings.

5. Loke Mai. A left wing paper with an unfortunate record with the authorities.

6. Rasdorn. Official organ of the Rasdorn Party which if it maintains a front of voting with the government gives every other indication of antagonism. Owned by Nai Pethai Chotinuchit who is long suspected of left wing inclinations.

7. Siam Samai. Second most popular weekly in Thailand. Of no known political inclination.

8. Muang Luang. Unknown.

9. Supharb Burus. A local daily closely associated with Prachamitr through its owner Nai Suchit Pattamchoti.

10. Prachamitr. A local daily with unknown political interest.

11. Varasab. Unknown. Although the police department have authorised its release from censorship it has not yet been released by the censorship board which operates under the Ministry of Defense.

12. Daily Mail. A pro Soviet paper with one of the biggest circulations of any Bangkok daily.

13. Chuan Min Pao. A pro Communist Chinese language daily with an unfortunate record at the hands of the authorities.

14. Chong Yen Wan Pao. Unknown.

15. Kong Hor Pao. Unknown.

16. Bangkok Post. An American owned and edited English language daily widely read amongst the European community. It has a reputation for attacking government corruption and maladministration. It was also placed under censorship after the disorders of February 1949. Its subjection to censorship recently was ordered on the most flimsy of pretexts.

453/2/1/1

DUPLICATE.

Rec'd 17/7/51

File No. 100/5/2.

Memo. No. 295/51.

Australian Consulate-General,
Bangkok, Thailand.

11th July, 1951.

MEMORANDUM for:

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

I refer to my memorandum No. 289/51 of 5th July, 1951, in which I referred to a meeting of members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps on 3rd July called to discuss the recent disorders in Bangkok.

4

2. I now enclose for your information copies of the following Notes:-

(1) Note from the Acting Dean dated 4th July concerning the question of compensation to be paid to foreign residents for personal injury and damage to property.

(2) Reply to this Note dated 7th July from the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

(3) Note from the Acting Dean dated 4th July conveying congratulations to the Prime Minister on his safety.

(4) Note dated 3rd July from the Minister of Foreign Affairs explaining the disorders.

3. A further Note has also been sent by the Acting Dean drawing attention to the lack of protection given to Foreign missions, the lack of information given during the course of the disorders and the impossibility in some cases of sending official telegrap/hic messages. I have not yet received a copy of the actual Note, but will forward it to you as soon as I receive it.

4. At the meeting called by the Burmese Ambassador as Acting Dean, some of the foreign representatives were not present. In particular, no invitations were issued to the Chinese (Nationalist) Charge d'Affaires, the Vietnamese Minister and the Cambodian Charge d'Affaires, apparently on the grounds that these states were not recognised by Burma. Protests were made by each of these to the Minister of Foreign Affairs against the breach of etiquette on the part of the Burmese Ambassador.

(Sgd.) A. H. Loomes

CONSUL-GENERAL.

Mr Hamer RLH
" Burbett
" McKeone JMC

Enquire DCP for attention

453/2/1/1

C O P Y.

No. MFA/94(N).

Burmese Embassy,
Bangkok.

4th July, 1951.

Monsieur le Ministre,

I have the honour to refer to my interview with Your Excellency on July 3, during which Your Excellency was kind enough to inform me that compensation would be paid to foreign residents for personal injury and damage to property as a result of the fighting during the recent disorders.

2. I have communicated this information to my colleagues of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps at a meeting held at my residence the same evening, the matter being of considerable interest to the whole Corps, and I have great pleasure to inform Your Excellency that the communication was received with unanimous approbation and appreciation.

3. I would therefore take this opportunity to request Your Excellency for information regarding the procedure to be followed and the machinery to be set up in respect of claims that may arise in connection with the matter.

4. I avail myself of this opportunity, Monsieur le Ministre, to re new to Your Excellency, the assurance of my highest consideration.

(Sd.) Hla Maung.

Acting Dean.

His Excellency
Nai Warakan Bancha,
Minister of Foreign Affairs,
Saranrom Palace,
Bangkok.

COPY.

No. 13347/2494.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Saranrom Palace,
7th July, 1951.

Monsieur l'Ambassadeur,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Your Excellency's Note No. MFA/94(N) of the 4th instant, regarding compensation for personal injury and damage to property suffered during the recent disorders, and hasten to inform you in reply, that the best procedure would be for each Embassy, Legation and Consulate to present its own claims to this Ministry, especially when I have learned that certain Embassy and Legations were not represented at the meeting held at Your Excellency's residen ce.

I shall therefore be grateful if Your Excellency will be so kind as to communicate the foregoing to your colleague of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps.

I avail myself of this opportunity, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, to renew to Your Excellency, the assurance of my highest consideration.

Sd. WARAKAN BANCHA

Minister of Foreign Affairs.

His Excellency
U Hla Maung,
Ambassador Extraordinary and
Plenipotentiary of the Union of Burma,
and Acting Dean of Diplomatic Corps,
Bangkok.

C O P Y.

No. 24BE(B) -N/51.

Burmese Embassy,
Bangkok.
4th July, 1951.

Monsieur le Prime Minister,

On behalf of myself and of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps, I have the honour to convey to Your Excellency, our sincere feelings of relief and thankfulness at Your personal well-being during recent disorders.

2. I further take great pleasure to express our deep sense of satisfaction that Your Excellency is now safe and well and discharging the great functions and responsibilities of the State.

3. In conveying this our heartiest congratulations, I avail myself of this opportunity, Monsieur le Prime Minister, to renew to Your Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

Sd. HLAMAUNG

Acting Dean.

His Excellency
Field-Marshal P. Pibulsonggram,
President of the Council
of Ministers,
Government House,
Bangkok.

COPY.

No. 13026/2494.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs presents his compliments to H.E. the Acting Dean of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps and begs to communicate to the latter the following for information:-

1. In the afternoon of the 29th June at about 16.00 hours while officiating the ceremony of taking delivery of the dredger Manhattan from the U.S. Charge d'Affaires and the ECA officials at Rajawaradit Landing, the President of the Council of Ministers was arrested and taken away by boat up river by a group of naval officers and ratings.

2. It appears that some persons making use of the names of some innocent high ranking military and naval officers as well as civilians, qualified themselves as KANA KOO CHAT and attempted the overthrow of the present Government, and by holding the person of the President of the Council of Ministers as security demanded the Government to come to terms. It is most regrettable that a section of the Royal Navy has given cooperation with the movement.

3. His Majesty's Government was making all possible efforts to arrive at a peaceful settlement with this group who ignored all approaches by the Government, and armed resistance began since the night of the 29th June using the compound of the Royal Navy as their base of operation. ~~Martial~~ There had been no other course open to the Govern ment and they had to resort to repressive measures. Martial law was proclaimed for Bangkok and Dhonburi effective as from 10.00 hours on the 30th June and the royal sanction was obtained for the use of troops for the emergency. His Majesty's Government with the support of the Army, Air Force and the Police therefore took action to suppress the disturbance in order to bring about peaceful order as soon as possible.

4. At about 23.00 hours on the 30th June, the President of the Council of Ministers returned safely to Paruskawan Palace escorted by the Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Navy. The Minimster of Foreign Affairs is happy to state that order and tranquillity have since been restored and that normal condition now prevails.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Saranrom Palace,
3rd July, 1951.

SY.

Bangkok ~~MIN.~~ DEP. Despatch No. 14/51

Distribution The Disorders in Bangkok

{ Defence
~~Asst/AN Sec~~

Distributed

Divisional File Number 453/2/1/1

Pacific Section

DUPLICATE.

SECRET

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
Rec'd 17 JUL 1951
File No. 453/2/1/1

File No. 100/5/2.

AUSTRALIAN CONSULATE-GENERAL,
BANGKOK, THAILAND.
11th July, 1951.

DEPARTMENTAL DESPATCH NO. 14/51.

FROM: The Australian Consul-General, BANGKOK. THAILAND.

TO: The Secretary, Department of External Affairs, CANBERRA.

THE DISORDERS IN BANGKOK.

I refer to my Departmental Despatches Nos. 12 and 13 of 4th and 5th July, 1951.

2. The week following the disorders has been spent in the inevitable witch-hunt and purge of the Navy. This has been carried out principally by the Police directed by Lt. Gen. Phao Sriyanondh. Up to the present time, 1349 arrests have been made, and these have all been remanded in custody "pending further investigations". It is reported that about 300 naval men, mostly of lower rank, have been released after questioning. Those suspects held in custody include the Commander in Chief of the Navy and all of those senior officers reported in my earlier despatch as having been retired. Since the date of that despatch, Rear Admiral Chalit Kulkamdhorn and Rear Admiral Kanok Nophakhun were arrested. Included among those detained are also Lt. Gen. Luang Kach Songgram and Dr. Khun Sriyabhai of the Public Prosecutor's Department. The following, who are regarded as the principal suspects, however are still at large:-

W&W.

Rear Admiral Thaharn Khamhiran.
Captain Anondh Puntarikabha.
Air Marshal Luang Thevarit Panluck.
Rear Admiral Luang Sangworn Yuttrakit.
Commander Manas Charupha (who effected the actual abduction of Pibul).

3. The charges which are being laid against those who have been arrested are being preferred partly under the Criminal Code and partly under the Military Code. The charges include the following:-

(1) plotting disorders and high treason;
(2) persuading others to commit offences;
(3) using weapons for anti-government acts;
(4) seeking revenge against the government:
(5) broadcasting statements against the government;
(6) using strength and weapons to abduct the Prime Minister in front of soldiers, officials and foreign diplomats;
(7) urging the people to join in the revolt;
(8) urging the people to break laws;
(9) persuading the soldiers and police todesert and join in the destruction of the government;
(10) trying to force a change in the customs and economy of the country through the use of armed strength, and causing loss of lives and property of civilians and soldiers.

...../4. It is also believed

4. It is also believed that there are still a number of naval personnel, particularly marines, at large in Bangkok and in the vicinity of Sataheep and Cholburi. The police, however, are intensifying their search. Information has also been received that, when naval installations were taken over by the Army and Police, a large quantity of arms and ammunition was found to be missing. Meanwhile the term of service of conscripts in the Army has been further extended beyond 1st July, when a considerable number were to be discharged.

5. Other action taken by the Committee in Charge of the "reorganisation" of the Navy has been the compulsory retirement of three more naval officers, namely:-

Rear Admiral Sanguan Rujirabha, Chief Medical Officer of the Navy.
Senior Lieut. Sornchai Chuchati, Acting Chief Engineer of H.M.S. "Sri Ayuthia".
Junior Lieut. Vira Osathanondh, Acting Chief Engineer of H.M.S. "Ravi".

This brings to 12 the number of naval officers retired, and many more may be expected.

6. The continuance of martial law though organised resistance has ceased has given rise to some speculation and apprehension as to the Government's intention. Martial law, which was declared here at 10 a.m. on Saturday 30th June, was proclaimed by the Regent under Section 152 of the Constitution. Martial law has the following implications:-

(1) The military authorities may search houses, shops, companies, buildings and censor all letters, cables, and telegrams, if necessary.

(2) The military authorities may call on members of the public for aid, or help or services and to take over weapons, vehicles, installations and buildings belonging to private individuals, firms, shops, companies or associations, if required for military activities.

(3) Members of the public are forbidden to stand talking in groups of persons three or more in public to carry weapons or to print publications of any kind without their first being censored.

(4) All property belonging to private individuals will be taken over only for temporary use by the military authorities.

(5) The military authorities are empowered to take over privately - owned houses, buildings or premises, if necessary.

(6) The military authorities may pull down or make any changes necessary to privately-owned buildings or property, if considered necessary.

(7) The military authorities may order persons who are not registered as domiciled in a district, to leave that district and return to the district in which they are domiciled.

(8) No compensation will be given by military authorities or the government to owners of property taken over for military use, if any property is damaged. People must be willing to make personal sacrifices in the interest of the country, people as a whole, and for the sake of internal peace and order.

...../3. (9) If no military

Australian Consulate-General,
Bangkok, Thailand.

SECRET

(9) If no military tribunals have been set up, Section 7 to the Act governing martial law specifies that all cases will be tried by civil courts of law as in normal times.

(10) Civil officials, including the police, must give full cooperation and place themselves under orders issued by the military authorities.

7. The powers given by the proclamation of martial law have of course been freely used. In particular, the power to impose censorship has been used virtually to gag the press, particularly the opposition press. This group of papers, including "Prachatipatai", the principal organ of the Khuang Aphaiwongse opposition, have all been directed to submit copies of all issues to the Ministry of Defence for censorship before distribution and this naturally has the effect of preventing all comment which is not favourable to the Government. The English-language newspaper "Bangkok Post", edited by an American, has also been placed under censorship. The owners and editors of two Opposition papers, "Prachamitr" and "Supharb Burus" have already been arrested for failure to submit an issue for censorship. The Government has also threatened to impose censorship on any other newspaper which may print comment "which is detrimental to the country". Censorship of letters and cables is also being effected.

8. Apart from the advantages which the Government derives from censorship, the continuance of martial law virtually gives the Government a free hand in their rounding-up of suspects, in particular the right to enter and search buildings. The Govern ment could also set up special military courts to try the suspects in custody and so avoid the normal civilian courts. Up to the present time, however, the civil courts have been used to remand suspects in custody, but I understand that the establishment of a special military tribunal for the actual trials is now being considered and an accouncement is expected shortly.

9. The measures being taken by the Government indicates an intention to follow a somewhat vindictive policy. From the point of view of the arrest of suspects and reorganisation of the Navy, the power rests almost entirely in the hands of the Army and Police, and, apart from a few formal decisions, the Cabinet as such has not taken much part. My investigations have shown that General Phin Chunhawan, the Army Commander in Chief, Lt. Gen. Phao Sriyanondh, The Chief of Police, and Major General Sarit Thanarat, Commander of the First Army, seem to have taken over virtually the whole direction of the purge. The appearance of Major General Sarit is interesting. As Commander of the First (Bangkok) Army, he assumed command of the military action against the insurgents, and his success has greatly increased his prestige. He is known to have long been a personal rival, if not enemy, of Lt. Gen. Phao, and he recently refused promotion to the position of Deputy Chief of Staff since that would deprive him of the command of the First Army, which is intensely loyal to him. Both Sarit and Phao are however closely associated with General Phin, who appears to occupy the position of intermediary and thus preventing any clash of the two antagonists. The possibility of some differences of opinion arising between Sarit and Phao cannot of course be excluded.

10. The position of Field Marshal Pibul Songgram is somewhat obscure. He has made some public statements, but there have been rumours current that he has been eclipsed by the military group of Phin, Phao and Sarit and, possibly, Air Chief

...../Marshal Khun Ron

Marshal Khun Ron Nabhakas. These rumours have apparently had currency even outside Thailand, since it is reported in the local press that the Thai Ambassador to Washington has made a statement denying that a "military junta" has seized power in Thailand and asserting that Pibul is in fact in full charge and control of the Government. There is no evidence that Pibul has been or is likely to be replaced, but, in matters connected with the purge and reorganisation of the Navy and other matters intimately connected with the attempted coup d'etat, it is probable that the real power lies with the military group of Phin, Phao, Sarit and Ron Nabhakas.

11. The possibility of some Communist influences behind the attempted coup d'etat or of the exploiting of the disturbed situation by communist elements has naturally been in the minds of all foreign observers and of the Thais themselves. There is however no real evidence of communist intervention, but some factors in the situation indicate that the possibility cannot be completely excluded. When the first announcements were made by the Navy radio on the night of 29th June, the insurgents were termed "Kana Koo Chat" (Saviours of the Nation group), and many of the arguments then put forward seemed to indicate a Communist flavour. Since the failure of the coup, it is understood that a secret radio station is still broadcasting in Bangkok, continuing the same general line as that at first indicated.

12. It appears, on investigations, that a body known as the Kana Koo Chat was set up in 1947 under the leadership of Rear Admiral Sangworn Yuttrakit, and its tenets were clearly leftist in nature. The number of its adherents however is not known, and its activities have not been heard of for some years. A similar organisation under virtually the same name, I am informed, existed in Vietnam but it was later merged in the Vietminh organisation. Groups however under the same name still exist in Laos and Cambodia as Communist front organisations.

13. The fact that Sangworn seems clearly to have been involved in this attempt to seize power (and was also involved in the February 1949 disorders) seems to add some colour to the possibility of this group being concerned, either directly by planning the coup or indirectly by exploiting the situation created by a merely internal disturbance, although of course it is obviously not possible to draw this as a necessary conclusion.

(Sgd.) A. H. Loomes

CONSUL-GENERAL.

Mr. CUTTS

For inf. & retention
as

File No. 1515/2/6/3

CANBERRA, A. C. T.

Memo. No.

16th July, 1951

MEMORANDUM for :-

The Australian Consul-General,
BANGKOK.

I refer to paragraph 4 of your memorandum No. 288 of 5th July, 1951 concerning the damage done to the Consulate-General during the recent disturbances.

2. While it is agreed that a claim for compensation in respect of your own injuries and the damage to Commonwealth Government property should be submitted, the question arises as to the appropriateness of your claiming on behalf of the non-Australian owner of the premises. It is realised, of course, that in the broad sense the damage was done to consular property in which the Australian Government had an interest under the lease. Nevertheless, there would seem to be arguments that the Government to which the owner company "belongs" should more appropriately make the claim on the company's behalf, as the company appears to be responsible for the fabric of the building. On the other hand, it is noted from the terms of the lease that the lessee is liable to effect certain repairs.

3. It would appear that any claim by the Australain Government in respect of damages to the premises should be limited to the extent of its responsibilities under the lease, and that any claim in respect of damage to the fabric of the building should be sponsored by the Government to which the owner company "belongs".

Sgd (J. C. G. Kevin)
for Secretary.

W B[illegible] Asst Pol in Bangkok
Pls Give

453/1/1

DUPLICATE.

SEA file

Australian Consulate-General,
Bangkok, Thailand.

File No. 100/5/2.

Memo. 293/51.

11th July, 1951.

MEMORANDUM FOR:

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

SHELLING OF THE CONSULATE-GENERAL.

I refer to my memorandum No. 288/51 of 5th July, 1951, and now enclose for your information copy of a Note which I have presented to the Minister of Foreign Affairs protesting against the shelling of this Consulate-General. I shall inform you in due course of the reply.

2. I also enclose for your information copy of a medical certificate concerning my own injury which I shall in due course submit to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in connection with my own claim. The expenses I have already incurred amount to Tcs.150.

(Sgd.) A. H. Loomes

CONSUL-GENERAL.

Enquiries + Attachments
to C+P.

18/7/51

453/2/1/1

REVOLT CASUALTIES--The Government of Thailand announced that 58 persons were killed last week when members of the Thai Navy attempted to seize the Government. About 1,100 persons were wounded in the fighting that followed the abduction of the Prime Minister. (Melbourne, English, July 8, 1951, 2145 GMT--R) Thailand July 10

453/2/1/1

DUPLICATE.

SECRET

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
Rec'd 10 JUL 1951
File No. 453/2/1/1

File No. 100/5/1.

AUSTRALIAN CONSULATE-GENERAL,
BANGKOK, THAILAND.

5th July, 1951.

DEPARTMENTAL DESPATCH NO. 13/51.

FROM: Australian Consul-General, BANGKOK. THAILAND.

TO: Secretary, Department of External Affairs, CANBERRA. A.C.T.

DISORDERS IN BANGKOK (POLITICAL).

In my Departmental Despatch No. 12/51, I gave an account of the military aspects of the attempted coup d'etat which took place in Bangkok from 29th June, 1951.

2. From the information which has now become available, it appears that the coup was planned and carried out by a group of naval officers, the leaders of which appear to have been as follows:-

Rear Admiral Thaharn Khamhiran, former Commander of Marines, but now retired.
Captain Anondh Puntarikabha, Commander of the gunboat "Sri Ayuthia".
Rear Admiral Chalit Kulkamdhorn, Deputy Commander in Chief of the Royal Fleet.
Rear Admiral Chali Sindhusophon, Chief of the Naval Signals Division.
Captain Dit Chaitawat, Deputy Chief of the Naval Signals Division.
Rear Admiral Kanok Nophakhun.

Also believed to have been involved are the following:-

Lt. General Luang Kach Songgram.
Air Marshal Luang Thevavit Panluck, former Commander-in-Chief of the Air Force.
Admiral Luang Sindhu Songgramchai, Commander in Chief of the Navy.
Rear Admiral Luang Songwarn Yuttrakit, former Minister and follower of Pridi.

3. The armed forces on the side of the insurgents were entirely naval personnel, and, in fact, only a small part of the navy was engaged. The assistance which this group obviously expected from the rest of the navy, particularly those forces at Sataheep, Paknam and Cholburi, did not arrive, and it is probably to that factor that the military failure of the coup was due. The expected help, or at least neutrality of the Air Force also did not eventuate.

4. The failure of the coup was probably due in large measure to the following factors:-

(a) the effect on the Government of the seizure of Pibul was overestimated. The Commander in Chief of the Army, General Phin Chunhawan, and the Deputy Chief of Police (now Chief of Police) Lt.Gen. Phao Sriyanond, having control of the greater part of the Army and virtually the whole of the Police Force have in fact greater power than Pibul. If they had been seized as well the result may have been differer

W.S.W.

Distributed to Defence Aust/NZ Sec

J.P. another copy for Armed Servs

...../(b) Too much secrecy

(b) Too much secrecy was maintained and not enough preparation was made to ensure sufficient armed support. The insurgents seemed clearly to count on much more armed support than they in fact received.

5. The aftermath of the attempted coup has been a determination on the part of the Government virtually to disband the Navy. By Royal Proclamation issued on the night of 2nd July, the following naval officers were compulsorily retired:-

Admiral Luang Sindhu Songgramchai, Commander in Chief of the Navy.
Vice Admiral Luang Charoen Rachanava, Deputy Commander in Chief.
Vice Admiral Phan Navavichitr, Commander of the Royal Fleet.
Rear Admiral Chalit Kulkamdhorn, Deputy Commander of the Royal Fleet.
Rear Admiral Kanok Nophakhun, Commander of the First Naval District
Rear Admiral Pravit Sriphiphat, Director of Naval Education Department.
Rear Admiral Dad Bunnag, Director of the Naval Arsenal Department.
Rear Admiral Jan Pachusanondh, Deputy Naval Chief of Staff.
Rear Admiral Chali Sindhusophon, Commander of the Naval Signals Corps.

6. At the same time, the Cabinet council appointed a committee to draft plans for the reorganisation of Navy activities and personnel. The Committee consists entirely of military and police officers, except for the Commander in Chief of the Air Force, Air Chief Marshal Khun Ron Nabhakas, and Rear Admiral Luang Sunawin Vivadh (one of the few high naval officers supporting the Government). General Phin Chunhawan and Lt. Gen. Phao Sriyanond are of course included. The action so far taken by this Committee, apart from the retirement of the higher naval commanders by Royal Proclamation, indicates an intention virtually to liquidate, temporarily at least, the Royal Navy. It has decided immediately to suspend seventy-five percent of Navy personnel of all ranks for a period of at least six months, and it is not known how many will be reinstated.

W's W.

7. New appointments made are:-

Rear Admiral Luang Pholasindhu Dhavanat to be Commander in In Chief of the Navy.
Rear Admiral Luang Choldharn Pruthikrai to be Deputy Commander in Chief concurrently with his present position of Chief of the Naval Hydrographic Department.
Rear Admiral Luang Chamnan Arthayuth to be Admiral of the Royal Fleet concurre ntly with his present position of Chief of Staff of the Royal Fleet.

As the Navy is in fact under the control of the Committee referred to above, and therefore of the Army, these appointments have little practical significance.

8. The Police, directed by Lt. Gen. Phao Sriyanondh, who has replaced General Chartrakarn Kosol as Chief of Police (the latter being now appointed Director General of Customs!), has meanwhile continued to round up suspects, and about 400 naval personnel have so far been arrested. Also in custody are the following:-

Admiral Luang Sindhu Songgramchai.
Rear Admiral Phan Navavichitr.
Rear Admiral Chali Sindhusophon.
Lt.Gen. Luang Kach Songgram.

...../9. Other suspects

9. Other suspects are also being sought, the most important being the following:-

Rear Admiral Thaharn Khemhiran.
Rear Admiral Chalit Kulkamdhorn.
Air Marshal Luang Thevavit Panluck.
Rear Admiral Kanok Nophakhun.
Captain Anondh Phuntarikabha.
Captain Dit Chaitawat.

The suspects also include one police captain, Sati Malaiphandh, who has not previously been heard of. One of the suspects, Commander Phote Chittong, was shot dead "while attempting to escape."

10. Many of the suspects, including Admiral Luang Sindhu Songgramchai and Lt. Gen. Luang Kach Songgram, have denied any participation in the plot. It is just barely possible that these two may have had no prior knowledge of the attempt, but I have no doubt whatever that they would have made full use of the opportunity if the result had been the other way.

11. The result of the attempted coup has been satisfactory from the point of view of the Government, but, unless the situation as it now exists is handled carefully in the next few weeks, little would seem to have been proved by the result. The Navy, apart from a few officers who have always been loyal to the Government, will still constitute a potential menace to the Pibul regime. The lack of adequate preparation in this case will not mean that a future, more skilfully planned, attempt will not be successful.

12. Lt. Gen. Phao Sriyanond and General Phin Chunhawan, who have virtually taken over the conduct of investigations into the attempted coup, are known to favour a repressive and vindictive method of dealing with the Navy. They have, with, it is true, the approval of the Government, retired the Commander in Chief of the Navy and other senior naval officers before having a full enquiry. This can only build up more resentment amongst the Navy as a whole, whose loyalties cannot be expected to be transferred automatically with a mere change of command. The power, for instance, of Rear Admiral Thaharn Khamhiran, former commander of the marines, does not seem to have been affected by his retirement in January 1950. The existence of a resentful body of men could also provide a fruitful breeding-ground for communism.

13. The attempted coup was, also, clearly a renewal of the same feelings of opposition which were shown in the disorders of February, 1949, which also failed because of inadequate planning and support. The vindictive measures adopted after that attempt, in particular the killing of four former Pridi ministers, "While attempting to escape", undoubtedly influenced the present attempt at revenge on Pibul, Phao and Phin.

14. If, therefore, the Government should adopt (as appears to be their intention) a series of measures which are repressive and vindictive in character, the situation will still remain as it has been before. In this country, where force takes the place of popular support, it will be difficult for those in power to adopt a wise and restrained course of action, but it is to be hoped that some solution will be arrived at to save this unfortunate country from the domestic disorders which have characterised it ever since the coup of 1932. In a world where stability and moderation is essential for a country's continued survival as an independent community, the avoidance of internal disorders seems to be a patent essential.

(Sgd.) A. H. Loomes

CONSUL-GENERAL.

Bangkok ..... ~~MIN.~~ DEP. Despatch No. 15/51

Distribution The Disturbance in Bangkok

Defence

~~Aust/NZ Sec~~

Distributed 18/7

Divisional File Number 453/2/1/1

Pacific Section

DUPLICATE.

SECRET

J.P.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
Rec'd 10 JUL 1951
File No. 453/2/1/1

File No. 100/5/1.

AUSTRALIAN CONSULATE-GENERAL,
BANGKOK, THAILAND.

4th July, 1951.

DEPARTMENTAL DESPATCH NO. 12/51.

FROM: Australian Consul-General, BANGKOK. THAILAND.

TO: Secretary, Department of External Affairs, CANBERRA.ACT.

THE DISTURBANCE IN BANGKOK (MILITARY).

At a ceremony held to transfer the Dredge "Manhattan" to the Thai Government under the Economic Cooperation Administration programme held on 29th June, the Prime Minister was seized by a group of armed marines and taken forcibly away on a naval barge.

2. The ceremony was attended by members of the diplomatic corps, the staff of S.T.E.M. and the Military Aid Advisory Group, and high Government officials and Thai Ministers. The only naval representative present was Rear Admiral Thawan Thamrong Nawasawat, who however clearly had no connection with the abduction.

3. The ceremony began at 3 p.m., when speeches were made by the American Charge d'Affaires and by the Prime Minister. After the ceremony to transfer the ship to the Thai Government was over, the Prime Minister led the way to the ship, and after annointing it, led a tour of inspection around the deck. At almost exactly 3.30, a group of three marine officers with some ratings, some of whom may have been on the ship beforehand, surrounded Pibul and, threatening him with rifles and sub-machine guns, compelled him to walk down the gang-plank, cross the wharf and proceed along the shore to a small landing where a barge was conveniently waiting. This was done very quickly and only one shot was fired. At the same time as Pibul was seized, another group of marines on the shore covered the route taken by the Prime Minister and his captors, covering any possible move by the public and police and by the group on the deck of the "Manhattan", where I was at the time. The barge then proceeded upstream past the "Manhattan" and the Premier was placed with his two aides (who were also seized) on the gunboat "Sri Ayuthia" which was anchored near the other bank of the river and held under the control of Captain Anondh Puntarikabha, the commander of the ship. The group on the "Manhattan" and other guests were then ordered to leave and go home. The rest of the city was very quiet, and obviously, no prior preparation had been made by the Police and the Army.

4. At about 5 p.m. heavy gun fire began on the northern side of the city, and the marine group, advancing from the river, captured the Power Station, and, for a short time, the Publicity Department. Intermittent firing continued during the night in this area, in Thonburi, and from the Naval Signals Station, near the corner of Wireless road and Rama IV Road, not far from the Consulate-General. At the same time during the night, the wireless stations of the opposing forces began a verbal battle.

...../5. Late at night,

5. Late at night, the Police radio station announced that Police forces would attack the insurgents at dawn. This station also called on the air force to bomb naval troops and installations, but the air force, at first refused, but this refusal was later clarified as being a disinclination to bomb at night.

6. Also during the night a broadcast was made by Pibul, urging that the armed forces should act with restraint, and that they should consult together to settle the differences existing between them. This broadcast however was probably recorded under duress.

7. The main areas from which the naval group operated were Thonburi, on the west bank of the river, the Royal Landing, the Memorial Bridge and the Naval Signals Station. The intention seemed to be apparently to advance eastwards from the river and seize the more important Government buildings, particularly Paruskawan Palace, which is General Phao Sriyanond's headquarters, and at the same time to advance from the Naval Signals Station, seize the Police Criminal Investigation Division or Rama I Road, where police barracks are also located, and eventually link up with the other force. The base at Thonburi was to be maintained as the headquarters and naval vessels were to maintain control of the river and assist the naval ground forces by shelling army and police posts.

8. The insurgent naval group undoubtedly counted on the full participation by the rest of the navy, and some support from the dissident groups of the Army. They also apparently expected some support from the air force, or, at least, that the air force would remain neutral. The expected help was however not forthcoming and, by the morning of 30th June, the insurgent group was being actively opposed by the police, large army forces which had been reinforced overnight from nearby provincial army centres, and the whole air force. Their own naval comrades in Sataheep and Paknam also did not send reinforcements or ships which they had requested. The hope of a quick victory therefore faded, and the insurgents were compelled to adopt defensive rather than offensive measures against the attacks of the police, army and air force.

9. The Government side began their main attacks at dawn, on the 30th June. The police attacked the marine group, which had advanced during the night from the Royal Landing to the vicinity of the Publicity Department and the Phra Mane ground (near the Grand Palace), but this attack was repulsed with heavy casualties suffered by the police. Later in the day, however, the police with army support, attacked again and drove the marines back. The army attacked the Navy Signals Station with tanks, artillery, mortars and small-arms fire. The naval group at this point replied with heavy fire, and this battle went on all day withneither side giving ground until late afternoon when the Army was able to advance. During the day, another part of this group, with support from naval guns firing from Klong Toey, advanced along the railway line from the harbour towards Paknam Road and Bangkapi, apparently in an attempt to approach the Army from the flank and relieve pressure on the naval forces which were deployed on Rama IV Road and in Lumpini Park. The Air Force also began to attack naval groups with bombs, cannon and machine gun fire. During the morning, heavy bombing and strafing attacks were made on the Thonburi Naval Station, and the naval fuel dump was hit and set on fire. The naval administration buildings were also hit and badly damaged. Strafing and bombing attacks were made in the afternoon on the Naval Signals Station and the surrounding area.

...../10. By evening,

10. By evening, the Thonburi Naval Station had fallen, and the marines from the Royal Landing and the Memorial Bridge had been defeated, and the only resistance was that from the Naval Signals Station. The gunboat "Sri Ayuthia" and one other naval vessel had been sunk by bombing, and there was no longer any support from naval guns. During the night, the group at the Naval Signals Station were called upon to surrender, but they refused and continued with intermittent firing during the night.

11. Before dawn on the morning of 1st July, the Army began shelling this area, and it was during this bombardment that the Consulate-General was hit. After the shelling, Army and Police advanced from Sathorn Road, Wireless Road and Rama IV Road, and, after a short battle with small arms, the remainder of this group surrendered.

12. During the remainder of 1st July, there was isolated firing in various parts of the city where remnants of the naval insurgents were being suppressed. At the time of writing there are probably some small groups still at large and in hiding, particularly in the Thonburi area, where the naval forces dispersed amongst the houses.

13. Later in the same day, a force of Army took over the Paknam Naval Station, and a division of the Fourth Army was despatched to Sataheep, the principal Thai naval base. It is reported that the Sataheep base was taken over without resistance, but I am awaiting confirmation of this.

14. From the military viewpoint, therefore, it appears that the Government forces were completely victorious. It is however a matter of some interest that a relatively small group could have held out so long against forces vastly superior in numbers. The Police, in particular, did not acquit themselves, as a fighting unit, as well as one would expect.

15. Another matter of some importance was the irresponsibility of the fighting. The action took place in thickly populated areas, and little or no consideration was shown for civilian persons or property. The firing and bombing was inaccurate, and little control seems to have been exercised over the forces participating. In particular, private houses were from time to time taken over as machine gun or other posts, with the natural result that fire was drawn to these points. Frequently also, no provision was made for the evacuation of civilians from combat areas. Private houses taken over were also frequently looted by the forces when they vacated them.

16. It is difficult at this stage to assess accurately the number of casualties during the disorders, but by far the greater number were suffered by civilians. It is probable that the total number of casualties was about 5000 killed and wounded of which perhaps more than 3000 were civilians.

(Sgd) A. H. Loomes

CONSUL-GENERAL.

External Affairs, Melbourne,

External Affairs, Canberra.

Your message No. 1560.

You may inform Mrs. Smerasuta that, according to our information, the fighting in Bangkok is at an end. During the fighting the Bangkok postal authorities were not accepting or delivering telegrams. However our most recent telegram from the Consul-General came through the ordinary channels. Mrs. Smerasuta might therefore be well advised to send further cables.

Thai Visitor to Aust

TWC:UD 10/7/51

451/4/7

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. **SECRET.**

ACTION COPY

GG:NP

I.12306.

Dated: 9th July, 1951
1530.
Rec'd: 10th July, 1951
0830.

DECYPHERED FROM:

Australian Consul-General,
BANGKOK.

83. PRIORITY. SECRET.

Political situation.

1. Conditions in the City are now quiet, but with continuance of martial law, police and Army patrols and wholesale arrests the situation is far from reassuring and the people are still apprehensive. Sataheep Naval Base has now been taken over with little resistance. Principal suspects have not been taken. One alarming feature is that a large quantity of arms and ammunition was missing from naval installations subdivisions and these have not been found.

2. Possibility of a Communist participation in the plot cannot be discounted. In the first announcement by Navy radio on June 29th insurgents were called Kana Koo Chat (Save the Nation Group) which is identical with an Indo-China Communist front organisation now having branches in Laos and Cambodia. The Thai group was, I understand, formed by Sangworn in 1947 but has not been heard of for some time. I am informed that the secret radio is still broadcasting. However, no Chinese Communists in Bangkok are known to have taken part.

3. It seems possible that continuance of martial law is to permit the Government to deal with suspects by military rather than civil procedure.

Min. & Dept. E.A.
A/ Min. & Dept. Defence
P.M.'s

10th July, 1951 R/1400.

J.P.

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Sunday Herald 8/4/51

Siam-style Coup

From Our London Office

WESTERN EYES read last week-end's adventure story from Siam with anxiety.

IT sounded adventurous when Marshal Pibul Songgram, Premier of Siam, plunged into the river Choa at Bangkok in his underclothes to escape from kidnappers.

But there was more to it than that.

Siam has been one of the few stable sectors in the front against Communism in South East Asia. The attempted coup against the Government has aroused fears about that stability.

Though there is no evidence of direct Communist participation there is speculation whether a former Premier, Pridi Panomyong, who disappeared three years ago and whose followers have identified themselves with nationalistic movements in the Far East, has been at work.

Pridi's Friend

One of the dissident leaders, Admiral Taharn, has long been a friend of Pridi and has shown some sympathy for Communist organisations.

Coups d'etat are by no means unknown in Siam. It is almost the traditional way of changing governments.

One of the prime factors was to have either the Navy or the Army on your side, for each branch of the defence service in Siam is virtually autonomous, and has its own propaganda organisation and radio station.

Marshal Pibul Songgram has had the Army and Air Force with him.

But he has not—for fear of his life—been able to enter the naval base down the river from Bangkok.

In past coups, the forces were never actually used. This time they have been used—violently—and Western observers who have watched the Siamese play-acting in the past with indulgence now fear that the old pleasant coups, which did little harm, have gone for ever.

There will not, for instance, be again such a coup as the one in which troops sent to arrest the outgoing Premier made a noisy demonstration on the Premier's front door while leaving the back door conspicuously unguarded. The Premier knew what was expected of him, went out the back way and gracefully took a trip abroad for his health.

It has been more difficult to unseat Pibul Songgram, the 54-year-old Premier-Dictator, a dapper, gentle little man who is a supple and ingenious statesman and who has been notable for putting down any appearance of Communism with a very firm hand.

Power has see-sawed between Pibul and Pridi Panomyong for many years, but Pibul has been in since 1947.

These two have been prominent figures in Siamese life since 1932, when together they limited the absolute power of the Crown by a military coup.

They soon became rivals. Pibul headed the military wing of the new ruling class thrown up by the revolution. Pridi went over to the Left, to the intellectual wing.

During the war, Pibul as Premier collaborated with the Japanese and in 1942 declared war on the Allies. Pridi organised an anti-Japanese resistance.

It was Pridi, therefore, who was the logical top man in Siam after the war. Pibul was under arrest (he was never tried).

But in 1947 Pibul was back politically, leading a new party, "Right is Might."

Since then nothing reliable has been heard of Pridi.

A month ago a former commander of the Siamese marine corps, Lieutenant-General Luang Kach Songgram, returned to Siam.

Was Exiled

General Kach had been exiled there after his part in a minor insurrection.

General Kach is alleged to have been the leader in last week-end's attempt to seize power.

Behind him was aligned the Navy, the Marine Corps, and a few dissident soldiers.

The Navy has been hostile to the Government because its former control of customs and excise has gone to the police.

But the Marshal is still too strong. It is perhaps as well for the West that he is. He is uncompromising in his attitude to Communism, and has had no hesitation in associating himself firmly with the Western bloc.

453/M/1/1

Daily Monitoring Report

VICTIMS OF REVOLT IN THAILAND. In Bangkok the Government has announced that 58 persons were killed last week when members of the Thai Navy attempted to seize the government. About 1,100 persons were wounded in the fighting that followed Prime Minister Pibul Songgram's abduction by Thai marines.

Now back in Bangkok at the head of his Government, the Prime Minister told a New York Times correspondent that 800 navy men including 200 officers had been arrested. New York 8/7/51

18

453/7/11

D. M. R.

PIBUL SONGGRAM ON MARTIAL LAW The Thai Prime Minister, Marshal Pibul Songgram, has declared that martial law will not be (lifted) as long as the internal situation in Thailand as well as the situation in the neighbouring countries remains uncertain. The Prime Minister, who was addressing a news conference in Bangkok, said the situation in the neighbouring countries had profound influence on events in Thailand. He said that all high ranking naval officers who had been arrested in connection with the recent rebellion were now imprisoned pending the report of the committee set up to investigate the causes of the revolt. New Delhi. 6/7/57

See other report thereunder martial law

453/2/1/1

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. **SECRET.**

FEL/PN I.12043

DECODED FROM : Dated: 5th July, 1951
1900
Recvd: 6th July, 1951
1400

Australian Consul General,
BANGKOK.

ACTION COPY

79. IMMEDIATE. SECRET.

Political Situation.

1. Although on the surface conditions are quiet in Bangkok now, purging of Naval Officers continues. The Principal leaders of the coup group Thaharn Anondh and Thevarit still remain at large. One suspect, Commander Phote Chittong, was killed "while attempting to escape" and about 400 other suspects have been detained. Martial Law still exists.

2. (ø) There is an unconfirmed report that seizure by resistance particularly in view of current purging. This may be erroneous but I shall make enquiries and report further.

3. Reference your telegram 109. You will now have my telegram 77. Wound is of little consequence.

Min. & Dept. E.A. 6th July, 1951
A/" " " Defence
P.M.'s. (ø) - portion ommitted

Mr. Cutts.

W. B. P.

Security ✓

Aust rep ✓

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453/5/3/2

DUPLICATE.

Australian Consulate-General,
Bangkok, Thailand.

File No. 100/5/1.

Memo. No. 289/51.

5th July, 1951.

MEMORANDUM for:

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

A meeting was called on 3rd July by the Acting Dean of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps, who is the Burmese Ambassador, to discuss the recent disorders.

2. It was generally agreed that inadequate protection (in fact there was no protection) had been afforded to the members of the Diplomatic and Consular corps and the Acting Dean was requested to draw this fact to the attention of the Thai Government.

3. It was also agreed that the Acting Dean should point out that considerable damage had been caused to foreign-owned property and casualties had been suffered by foreign nationals, and that he should seek an assurance that the Thai Government will pay adequate compensation in such cases.

4. I shall inform you later of the reply which is receive d from the Government to these communications.

(Sgd.) A. H. Loomes

CONSUL-GENERAL.

Mr. Hasluck ALH
.. Burchett
.. Spicer Gore
file
Enquire B.C.P. Jurisdiction — J.P. noted
AC 10/7

453/2/11

Daily Telegraph July 5, 1951

SIAMESE NAVY PURGED

BANGKOK, Wed.—The Siamese Government yesterday punished almost all its Navy men for their rebellion last weekend.

The Government discharged the Navy Commander-in-Chief (Admiral Luang Singu Songramchai) and most high-ranking officers.

Admiral Singu and many other officers are under arrest.

The Government dropped 75 per cent. of other naval personnel from the payroll for at least six months.

The Army Commander-in-Chief (Lieut.-General Phin Chunhawan now controls the Navy, and Army troops are in charge of most Navy installations.

The Ministry of Defence said last night that naval units at Fort Chula Chom Klao still refused to surrender.

(From A.A.P.)

453/8/3/2

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. **SECRET.**

DBB/MG

I. 11903

Dated 4th July, 1951
1600
Rec'd 5th July, 1951
0830

DECYPHERED FROM:

Australian Consul General,
BANGKOK.

ACTION COPY

78. SECRET. IMMEDIATE.

Reference my telegram 76 and previous reports.

Political Situation.

1. All resistance has now ceased but martial law continues and is expected to remain so for one or two weeks. Army and police patrols also continue.

2. Royal proclamation was made 2nd July retiring Admiral Luang Sundhu, Commander in Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral Luang Charoen, Deputy Commander in Chief and seven other officers of Rear Admiral rank. Cabinet has also decided to "reorganize" the Navy.

3. Of those indicated previously as insurgent leaders the following only are still at large ; Rear Admiral Thaharn Khamhiran, Air Marshall Luang Thevarit Panluck, Rear Admirals (previously wrongly described as Captain) Chalit, Kalkamdhorn Ø and Captain Anond Phuntarikabha. Police are also searching for Rear Admiral Jan Pachusanon, Rear Admiral Pravis Sriphiphathana, who (as well as Chalit) have been retired and others of lower rank are being also sought. Others thought to have been involved, including Kach Songgram and General Vira Yotha, have stated that they had no part in it but it is yet impossible to judge. Doubtful is Phra Sarasas Praphansh,Ø, who was announced by the Navy radio as being designated Prime Minister by the Naval Group. Processing of accusations, denials and recantations can be expected to go on for some time. Meanwhile a 42 man committee has been set up with police Major General Phra Phinij Chonkadi as chairman to investigate the disorders.

4. Royal proclamation was made 2nd July appointing General Chartrakarn Kosol as Director General of Customs Department and General Phao Sriyanond as Chief of Police. Phra Phinij Chonkadi was appointed Deputy Chief of Police. This has apparently been done to give Phaos control, in the purge Ø and partly perhaps as a reward.

5. Telegraph communications are now restored and port and aerodrome reopened.

- - - - - -

Ø corrupt group.

MIN. & DEPT. E.A.
A/MIN. & DEPT. DEFENCE.
P.M.'S.

5th July, 1951.

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DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

INWARD TELEPRINTER MESSAGE.

91;?9MESSAGE NUMBER 1560 4.7.51.

TO MR, HARRY, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS CANBERRA

FROM EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MELBOURNE

1. YOUR MESSAGE PASSED TO MRS. HAMILTON.

2. DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES HAS BEEN APPROACHED BY MADAME XXXXXXXX MUETHIP SMERASUTA, CHIEF OF BUREAU OF CULTURE FOR WOMEN OF THE INSTITUTE OF NATIONAL THAI CULTURE AT BANGKOK, AND NOW WORKING IN XXXXXXXXA MELBOURNE UNDER A UNITEDD NATIONS FELLOWSHIP. MADAME SMERASUTA IS ANXIOUS TO OBTAIN RELIABLE INFORMATION REGARDING THE XXX SIAMESE ~~SITUATION/ 857-589~~, HER HUSBAND IS A DOCTOR IN A HOSPITAL LOCATED IN THE VICINITY OF THE AUSTRALIAN CONSULATE IN BANGKOK AND AS SHE SENT A CABLE TO HIM ON MONDAY SHE EXPECTED TO RECEIVE A REPLY BEFORE THIS. WE WOULD BE GLAD TO HAVE ANY INFORMATION WHICH HAS COME IN AND WHICH COULD BE PASSED TO HER.

MESSAGEE ENDS 15.20.

453/2/1/1

Summary of Items of Gen. Interest

26/6/51 - 4/7/51

At a Cabinet Meeting on 27th June the Prime Minister is reported to have proposed that the current conflict between Col.Prasert Sudbanthad (Dep Minister of Communications) and Col. Pramarn Adireksarn and their respective Parliamentary and Ministerial supporters should be resolved by the enlargement of Changwad Saraburi so that two instead of one M.'s P. might be returned from that province to the House of Representatives at the February 1952 general elections. The Prime Minister's proposal is reported to have involved the transfer of Amphur Ban Naa from Changwad Nakorn Nayok to Changwad Saraburi.

Maj.Gen. Banyad Thephasdin, Deputy Minister of the Interior and spokesman of the 1947 Coup group is reported to have strongly opposed the Premier's compromise proposal. Cabinet is then reported to have adopted a resolution opposing the Prime Minister's proposal. Reports indicate that no Ministers other than the Prime Minister and General Banyat spoke the motion. Col. Prasert is reported to have been present at the meeting, it being the first he had attended since tendering his resignation early in June 1951.

453/2/1/1

453/2/1/1

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. **SECRET.**

DBB:NP

I.11795.

Dated: 3rd July, 1951.
1759.

Rec'd: 4th July, 1951

DECYPHERED FROM:

Australian Consul-General,
BANGKOK.

ACTION COPY

76. IMMEDIATE. SECRET.

Reference my telegram 75.

Political Situation.

1. Regret inability to report further yesterday as position was not clear.

2. Organized resistance ceased yesterday morning with the capture of the Naval Signal Station and lighthouse in the Thonburi area. There may be a few naval groups at large but they can have nothing but nuisance value. From the military view-point therefore the result has been complete victory for the Government. Late yesterday one Division of the Army took over Sataheep Naval Base and Paknam Naval Station, the Commanders of which have disclaimed all knowledge or implication in the attempted coup de'etat.

3. Position so far as one can understand it therefore is that the coup de'etat was planned by Rear Admiral Taharn Khamhiran, Captain Chalit, Captain Anond and probably Luang Kach Songgram and Air Marshal Thevaracuhi Panluck. Some others, including Rear Admiral Songwarn Yottrakit, Admiral Sundhu (commander-in-chief of Navy) may also have been involved. Others mentioned in my earlier reports were probably not implicated. This group apparently counted on more support from the rest of the Navy from the Air Force and from dissident groups of the Army but in fact this was not forthcoming except for some negligible support from a small Army group. The Air Force under Air Marshal Fuen Naphakartø while refusing to bomb during the night of 29/30 June commenced operations against Naval Forces on the morning of 30th June and although their bombing was not very accurate, they had some success including the destruction of Naval fuel dumps at Thonburi (a doubtful success) and the sinking of the gun-boat Sri Aybariaø. The Army, Police and Air Force were therefore aligned against a fairly small but energetic group of Marines from Thonburi and a Naval Signal group (with Marines) from the wireless branch of the Naval Signal Station. The rest of the Navy probably sat on the fence. The forced seizure of Pibul was probably overestimated since Phao and Phin virtually took over direction of the Government side with Vorakarn Banchi as Titular Acting Premier. With armed support at their disposal and wide power given by martial law declaration Phao and Phin were able to overcome resistance but not without difficulties, considerable casualties and damage to property.

W.I.R.
J.M.C.

....2.

McCarthy

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

CABLEGRAM. **SECRET.**

The (word omitted) was irresponsible and little consideration was shown by either side for civilians, foreign or Thai. Civilian casualties were heavy and total casualties are estimated at about 5,000. Pibul was returned to Police Headquarters at 11 p.m. on June 30th by Admiral Sandhu personally, the latter surrendering but denying his participation in the plot. Last night Phao informed the British Charge d'Affaires that strong measures will be taken against those responsible including the execution of the leaders. Both the British and American Embassies have verbally advised the Government that their Governments while not condoning the action by the insurgents would view with disfavour wholesale punitive measures except in accordance with the law. These views will be communicated to the Premier whose attitude is reported to be somewhat less vindictive than Phao.

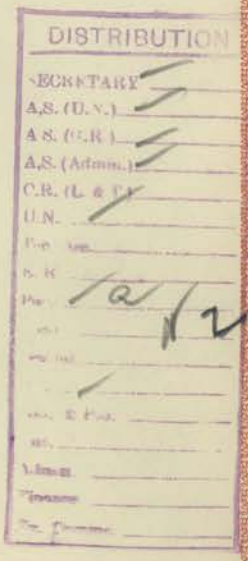
4. Martial law still exists in the city but the tension is lessening. No announcement has been made concerning the composition of the Government but it is not likely that any changes will be made. Meanwhile the suspects are being rounded up and all senior Naval Officers of all units have been ordered to appear for questioning. Orders for the immediate arrest of Taharn, Chalit, Anond and Songgram Ø have also been issued.

5. I shall report further developments later.

Min. & Dept. E.A.
A/Min. & Dept. Defence
P.M.'s

Ø corrupt group

4th July, 1951



E.A. SYDNEY

E.A. CANBERRA.

The following passage appears in Loomes's latest report from Bangkok (3rd July):

Begins - I was in fact slightly wounded in the leg by shell fragments in the shelling of the Consulate-General but I do not expect to be out of action unless an operation becomes necessary. Appleton escaped without any injury except for a bad shaking. Ends.

Please inform Loomes's parents and father-in-law (Robert Jennings, Pymble).

It might be useful if you could let us have phone number of Loomes's parents, of which I understand you have a record.

SEA. 4/7/51

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. **RESTRICTED.**

I.11796

TP:HP

DECYPHER FROM:

Australian Commissioner,
BANGKOK.

Dated: 3rd July, 1951.
1800
Rec'd: 4th July, 1951.
8.30 a.m.

77. RESTRICTED. IMMEDIATE.

For Watt from Loomes.

Thank you for your telegram. I trust you have now received my telegram No.75 which I sent yesterday through the Post Office. My telegram No.76 will go via the British Embassy.

2. We have been very close to the fighting here and under heavy fire. I was in fact slightly wounded in in the leg by shell fragments in the shelling of the Consulate-General but I do not expect to be out of action unless an operation becomes necessary. Appleton escaped without any injury except for a bad shaking. I assume that I have the Government's full authority to protest against the irresponsible shelling and claim compensation.

3. All other Australians in Bangkok are safe and there has been no disturbances in the provinces.

4. You will appreciate that I can do nothing at present concerning your proposed visit with the Minister which I would have greatly welcomed and conditions here may be disturbed for some weeks. I shall, however, see how the situation develops and advise later.

Min. & Dept. of External Affairs.
P.M.'s.

4th July, 1951.

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Mr Watt
1. Please tell Loomes parent (through Lt Prentice) that
- Robert Temple, Bangkok, that
Doyle
Telle 6/7

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. **SECRET.**

DBB:NP

I.11795.

Dated: 3rd July, 1951.
1759.
Rec'd: 4th July, 1951
0830.

DECYPHERED FROM:

Australian Consul-General,
BANGKOK.

ACTION COPY

76. IMMEDIATE. SECRET.

Reference my telegram 75.

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2. Organized resistance ceased yesterday morning with the capture of the Naval Signal Station and lighthouse in the Thonburi area. There may be a few naval groups at large but they can have nothing but nuisance value. From the military view-point therefore the result has been complete victory for the Government. Late yesterday one Division of the Army took over Sataheep Naval Base and Paknam Naval Station, the Commanders of which have disclaimed all knowledge or implication in the attempted coup de'etat.

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....2.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. **SECRET.**

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4. Martial law still exists in the city but the tension is lessening. No announcement has been made concerning the composition of the Government but it is not likely that any changes will be made. Meanwhile the suspects are being rounded up and all senior Naval Officers of all units have been ordered to appear for questioning. Orders for the immediate arrest of Taharn, Chalit, Anond and Songgram Ø have also been issued.

5. I shall report further developments later.

Min. & Dept. E.A.
A/Min. & Dept. Defence
P.M.'s

Ø corrupt group

4th July, 1951

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DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

CABLEGRAM.

RESTRICTED.

::GM

O. 10884

Dated: 4th July, 1951
1205

ENCODED TO:

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Australian Consul-General,
BANGKOK.

109. RESTRICTED.

Your 75.

Press report that you "received minor shrapnel wounds in the leg". We have informed families that you received no injury. Please confirm.

2. Formal protest and request for compensation approved.

.....

E.A.
P.M.'s

4th July, 1951.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

Mr. McIntyre

This is a condensation of the suggested reply by the Minister re Thailand

RLH.

3/7

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

For the Minister :

EVENTS IN THAILAND.

1. On 29th June, 1951, Field Marshal Pibul Songgram, Prime Minister of Thailand, was abducted during an official ceremony, by a party of Marines of the Thai Navy.

2. The abduction appears to have been part of a plan for a coup d'etat by a group of Thai Service officers, principally from the Navy. Fighting subsequently broke out in Bangkok between the Government's forces and supporters of the coup, and continued throughout Saturday and Sunday. According to latest reports, casualties were fairly heavy, but Government forces now have the situation in hand and Pibul has been released.

3. The Australian Consul-General at Bangkok has reported that some heavy fighting took place in the vicinity of the Consulate-General. At 5 a.m. on Sunday morning, the Consulate came under fire and sustained one direct hit and one near miss from 3-inch shells. The direct hit exploded in a downstairs hall where the Consul-General and one of his staff were extremely fortunate to escape injury.

4. So far as is known there was no reason for the shelling of the Consulate-General except that it happened to be in the fighting zone. As soon as opportunity offers a formal approach will be made to the Siamese Government regarding the damage which resulted from the shelling.

South-East Asian Sub-Section
(TWC:UD)
3rd July, 1951.

453/8/3/2

For the Minister :

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1. On 29th June, 1951, Field Marshal Pibul Songgram, Prime Minister of Thailand, was abducted during an official ceremony, by a party of Marines of the Thai Navy.

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South-East Asian Sub-Section
(TWC:UD)
3rd July, 1951.

External Affairs Office, SYDNEY.

External Affairs, CANBERRA.

For Quarmby from Harry.

In telegram despatched from Bangkok Sunday afternoon Loomes reported after explosion of shell in Consulate-General that he and Appleton escaped any injury. Loomes asked that families be reassured. Glad if you would inform Loomes' parents, also Mrs. Loomes' father, Robert Jennings of Pymble. Mrs. Hamilton's mother, Mrs. I.G. Swindles of Hotel Keighery, Auburn, Sydney, should also be informed. You may tell all concerned that from official telegrams it is our understanding that no member of the staff or their families received any injury, but that in view of press report this morning that Loomes received minor shrapnel wounds in the leg we are cabling Bangkok for confirmation.

(1) Mr. Cutts to see

(2) Pass to Personnel.

RLH:MF. RLH Pacific 3/7/51.

Mr. R.A. APPLETON
3 LION STREET
CARLYSLE, W.A.

AUSTRALIAN	CONSUL	GENERAL	BANGKOK	IN
REPORT	DESPATCHED	FROM	BANGKOK	ON
SUNDAY	AFTERNOON	HAS	ASKED	US
TO	ADVISE	YOU	THAT	YOUR
SON	ESCAPED	ANY	INJURY	

SECRETARY, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

TELEGRAM sent 12.30 p.m. 3/7/51.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

OUTWARD TELEPRINTER MESSAGE.

MESSAGE NUMBER 1352 3.7.51 1410

TO - EXTERNAL AFFAIRS OFFICE MELBOURNE

FROM- EXTERNAL AFFAIRS CANBERRA

F RO MISS STEWART FROM HARRY.

PLEASE INFORM MTS. R.B. HAMILTON 2 LANDALE ROAD TOORAK, THAT THE AUSTRALIAN CONSUL GENERAL BANGKOK, REPORTED ON SUNDAY AFTERNOON THAT NO MEMBER OF THE STAFF OR THEIR FAMILIES RECEIVED ANY INJURIES.

MESSAGE ENDS

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

OUTWARD TELEPRINTER MESSAGE.

MESSAGE NUMBER 1638 1345 3.7.51

TO - EXTERNAL AFFAIRS OFFICE SYDNEY

FROM- EXTERNAL AFFAIRS CANBERRA

FOR QUARMBY FROM HARRY.

IN TELEGRAM DESPATCHED FROM BANGKOK SUNDAY AFTERNOON LOOMES REPORTED AFTER REPEAT AFTER EXPOLOSION OF SHELL IN CONSULATE GENERAL THAT HE AND APPLETON ESCAPED ANY INJURY. LOOMES ASKED THAT FAMILIES BE REASSURED. GLAD IF YOU WOULD INFORM LOOMES' PARENTS, ALSO MRS. LOOMES' FATHER ROBERT JENNINGS OF PYMBLE. MRS. HAMILTON'S MOTHER MTS I.G. SWINDLES, O F HOTEL KEIGHERY, AUBURN SYDNEY WHO SHOULD ALSO BE INFORMED. YOU MAY TELL ALL CONCERNED THAT FROM OFFICIAL TELEGRAMS IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT NO MEMBER OF THE STAFF OR THEIR FAMILIES RECEIVED ANY INJURY, BUT THAT IN VIEW OF PRESS REPORT THIS MORNING THAT M LOOMES RECEIVED MINOR SHRAPNEL WOUNDS IN THE LEG WE ARE CABLING BANGKOK FOR CONFIRMATION.

MESSAGE ENDS

McCuttis

File

For the Minister :

EVENTS IN THAILAND.

1. On 29th June, 1951, Field Marshal Pibul Songgram, Prime Minister of Thailand, was abducted during an official ceremony, by a party of Marines of the Thai Navy.

2. The abduction appears to have been part of a plan for a coup d'etat by a group of Thai Service officers, principally from the Navy. Fighting subsequently broke out in Bangkok between the Government's forces and supporters of the coup, and continued throughout Saturday and Sunday. According to latest reports, casualties were fairly heavy, but Government forces now have the situation in hand and Pibul has been released.

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4. So far as is known there was no reason for the shelling of the Consulate-General except that it happened to be in the fighting zone. As soon as opportunity offers a formal approach will be made to the Siamese Government regarding the damage which resulted from the shelling.

South-East Asian Sub-Section
(TWC:UD)
3rd July, 1951.

377/1/1

Sydney Morning Herald
3/7/51

Bangkok Back To Normal

SINGAPORE, July 2 (A.A.P.-Reuter). — Fighting between the Siamese army and navy petered out yesterday and Bangkok returned to normal to-day.

The Australian Consul-General, Mr. Alan Henry Loomes, who was reported unhurt yesterday when shells struck the consulate, suffered a minor shrapnel wound in the leg.

Political sources interpret the outbreak as the violent reopening of an old "running sore" originating from army and navy jockeying for political power.

In MANILA, a most reliable source said to-day: "The attempted coup was apparently started by a small group of junior naval officers. Later, most of the naval forces were involved.

"Civilians and, notably, the Chinese community, took no part in the trouble."

The Prime Minister, Field-Marshall Pibul Songgram, who was captured by the rebels at the start of the revolt, had been imprisoned on the Siamese flagship, Sri Aydya, the source said.

When this vessel was sunk by bombing, he escaped and swam ashore.

The Government, which is again in power in Bangkok, to-day allowed private cars and civilians to move freely in the streets, and shops began to reopen.

An armoured tank lying in a canal, buses wrecked by explosions and telephone wires strewn across the roads bore testimony to the hard fighting since the revolt began last Friday.

REBELS FLEE

The bulk of the rebels apparently retreated by boat to the sanctuary of Sata Heep, the naval base on the Gulf of Siam.

This base has previously been an invulnerable sanctuary for Navy-sponsored political refugees.

Other rebels surrendered in small groups or individually with white flags tied to guns or jeeps.

A few removed their uniforms and escaped in civilian dress, leaving arms and ammunition behind.

The Government has not indicated what action will be taken against the instigators of the plot.

The number of casualties is still not known, but is believed to be heavy.

A British Embassy spokesman said no reports have been received of British or other foreign residents being killed.

A52/5/3/2

Daily Telegraph 3/7/51

DIPLOMAT WOUNDED IN SIAM

BANGKOK, Mon. — The Australian Consul-General in Bangkok (Mr. Loomes) was wounded yesterday in fighting between the Siamese Army and Navy.

A splinter from a shell which hit the consulate hit Mr. Loomes in the leg.

The wound is not serious.

The fighting began on Friday, when navy rebels kidnapped the Prime Minister (Pibul Songgram) and attempted to seize power.

The Siamese Army, Air Force, and police opposed the rebels.

Yesterday they released Pibul Songgram.

Rebels retreat

Bangkok correspondents reported today that most of the rebels had retreated to the naval base of Sata Heep, on the Gulf of Siam.

The Navy previously had used the base as a sanctuary for political refugees it sponsored.

Some rebels surrendered and a few changed their uniforms for civilian clothes and escaped.

The Government does not know where the ringleaders of the revolt are hiding.

Casualties from the fighting are not yet known, but observers believe they were heavy.

(From A.A.P.)

453/8/3/~

Sydney Morning Herald.

3/7/51

Politics Have Been Lively For Siamese Premier

By A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHANGES of Government in Siam, it has been said, always begin with a coup d'etat.

This has certainly been true since the 1932 military revolt against the absolutist role of the late King Pradjadipok, and it has been largely true of Siamese politics throughout the career of Mr. Pibul Songgram.

His temporary kidnapping by a Siamese marine unit is clearly another episode in the long antagonism between the army and navy.

Mr. Pibul has been restored to office as Prime Minister, but the situation is obviously an unsettled one. It will be unfortunate, in view of the present state of South-East Asia, if this discord should lead to the end of his able rule.

Mr. Pibul's career has been distinctly theatrical.

Born in 1897, and trained as an artillery officer in France, where he has had his three children educated, he took part as a colonel in the coup d'etat of 1932.

He first came to the forefront of politics a year later by crushing the counter-revolution of King Pradjadipok's cousin, Prince Bovoradej.

Then he became Minister of Defence, but in 1938, under the pressure of the army, the Premier, Mr. Phya Phahol, resigned, and Mr. Pibul succeeded him.

There are stories that he saw himself as a Hitler or Mussolini, and they seemed to be confirmed when, after the fall of France, he invaded Indo-China



PIBUL SONGGRAM

to recover Siam's "lost provinces" in Cambodia. He had to give them back after the war.

In December, 1941, he made a treaty of alliance with Japan when she invaded Siam, and a month later he declared war on Great Britain.

The Siamese certainly disliked this breach with an old friend. They put Mr. Pibul in gaol after the war.

But he was never brought to trial and, after his release, gradually made his way back into politics.

Siam's first post-war Government under Mr. Pridi Panomyong, leader of the Resistance during the war, was not a success. Banditry was rife, prices soared, and rice, Siam's great source of wealth, got into the hands of Chinese black-marketeers. Official corruption was scandalous.

The still unexplained murder of young King Amanda in April, 1947, added to the Government's discredit.

In the following November there was another coup d'etat. The army and air force, led by Mr. Pibul (who termed himself "Marshal", seized Bangkok. Pridi Panomyong fled, and Pibul again became Prime Minister.

Since then Mr. Pibul has had to deal with three more attempted coups.

Mr. Pibul has unquestionably been an able ruler. He has stamped out banditry, stopped Chinese rice smuggling and raised the rice export figures to pre-war level. The rubber industry has made a remarkable recovery and more rice fields have been irrigated.

He has also closed a number of neo-Communist Chinese schools. Indeed, upon every manifestation of Communism, Mr. Pibul has sat heavily, imprisoning Chinese Communist plotters and ferreting out their secret radio transmitters.

Peking Radio has denounced him for "openly carrying out the bidding of American imperialism." It is said that he is not personally popular in Siam, yet he is a man of much personal charm and generosity in private life, who has frankly tried to align Siam with the Western democracies.

DRAFT TELEGRAM.

TO AUSTRALIAN CONSUL-GENERAL, BANGKOK

Date

No.

Your 75.

Press report that you "received minor shrapnel wounds in the leg". We have informed families that you received no injury. Please confirm.

2. Formal protest and request for compensation approved.

RLH/CG
3rd July, 1951.

Mrs R.B.H. 2 Landale Rd Toorak Vic.

Nan Leamas
Robt. Jennings Pymble.

Mrs I.G. Swindles Bob Hamilton Hotel Haighery Auburn, Sydney.

[Father R.A. Appleton 3 Lyon St, Carlyle WA]

THAI PREMIER NOW RESTORED

No Red influence in revolt

Herald 2/7/51

From DENIS WARNER Herald

SINGAPORE, Mon. — The Thai Navy's unsuccesful week-end revolt—Thailand's fourth since the end of the war—had only the remotest, if any connection with Communist move-ments.

The many local Communists and Chinese in Bangkok, the capital, took no part in instigating, organising or exploiting the attempted coup.

Admiral Taharn, former Deputy Chief of the Navy and the most powerful figure in the revolt, has been closely associated with former Prime Minister Nai Pride, but otherwise the revolt was non-ideological, if not non-political.

Nai Pride, who was deposed in a coup in 1947, is now popularly supposed to be in China.

Prime Minister Pibul Songgram, after 36 hours as a prisoner of his Navy, resumed control of the Thai Government early yesterday.

Long planning

Bangkok, after a week-end of bombing and shelling, was normal last night, although there was sporadic firing in isolated sections of the city where some rebels were holding out.

The revolt — obviously long - planned — failed largely because the leaders failed to carry Bangkok's police and army detachments with them.

It began on Friday afternoon when Pibul, with his usual bodyguard, was receiving a dredge presented by the U.S. Government.

Diplomats and Government officials, and their wives, were on the dredge.

Pibul, wearing a garland of flowers, was moving toward the bow of the dredge when marines, with rifles, surrounded him.

Pibul, according to diplomats present, shrugged his shoulders and put his hand in his pocket as he was marched off to a naval boat.

Surrender call

Soon afterward, Army and Navy detachments began fighting.

The Navy radio called on the rump of Pibul's Government to surrender.

It announed that the "Liberation" Army had established a new government, with Sarasas Prahad (a figurehead) as Prime Minister, and Taharn as Deputy Prime Minister.

The Army radio called on the populace to ignore the Navy, and, in turn, issued an ultimatum, calling on the Navy to surrender.

PM released

On Saturday, Air Force planes, led by Spitfires, began to bomb naval vessels —principally the gunboat Sriayudhaya, pride of the Thai fleet, which was reported to be sinking tonight.

The police and Army mortared Navy headquarters.

By nightfall on Saturday it was evident that the revolt had failed.

Pibul broadcast an appeal to both sides to cease fire, but the fighting went on. Then the rebels released him.

453/0/3/r

age

2/7/51

NAVY REVOLT IN SIAM

age 2/7

Australian Consulate in Bangkok Shelled

BANGKOK, July 1 (A.A.P.).—Two Australian Consular officials in Bangkok narrowly escaped death or injury today when two shells hit the Consulate building during pre-dawn fighting between the Thai army and navy.

The officials were the Consul-General (Mr. Alan Henry Loomes), of Sydney, and the consular clerk (Mr. K. Appleton), of Perth.

Messrs. Loomes and Appleton dived for cover in the consular hallway as one three-inch shell sprayed splinters through the roof.

A second three-inch shell burst 15 feet above them, but miraculously left them unscathed.

The Premier (Marshal Pibul Songgram) returned unharmed to Government headquarters at Paruskawan Palace last night.

An official communique said that the rebel headquarters had been completely destroyed and the leaders of the rebellion were fleeing.

Organised resistance against the Government ended with surrender today of the naval garrison at the signal station in Bangkok, the communique said.

On Friday the Premier was abducted by an armed naval group.

This was the beginning of a revolt by the Thai navy against the Government.

Bitter fighting took place in the streets of Bangkok all day Saturday between the Thai army and navy. The air force remained loyal to the Government and bombed rebel strongholds.

It was during this fighting that the Australian consulate was hit.

It is not thought that the tin mines in Siam will be affected by the uprising in Bangkok. The mines are some hundreds of miles from Bangkok.

The Australian Minister for External Affairs (Mr. Casey) said last night that he had had many inquiries from Australians with tin interests in Siam

A

A.C.

A53/8/3/7

Argus 2/7/51

Navy's revolt failed

Bangkok, Sunday

An attempt by the Siamese Navy to overthrow the Siamese Government by force has failed.

Pibul Songgram, the Prime Minister, who was kidnapped on Friday, is free again, and in control.

Rebel headquarters have been destroyed and the leaders have fled.

During heavy fighting before dawn yesterday, two stray shells hit the Australian Consulate-General building and caused damage. Mr. Alan Henry Coomes, of Sydney, the Consul-General, and Mr. R. K. Appleton, consular clerk, had narrow escapes. One 3-inch shell exploded within 15 feet of them.

Seized power

The revolt began on Friday, when an armed naval group seized Songgram at gun-point during a public ceremony for the handing over of an American dredge, the Manhattan, to Siam.

To the bewilderment of a large crowd of officials and guests, they hustled him on to a naval landing barge and disappeared up the river, Chao Phra.

Insurgents seized Bangkok's main power station and other strategic points, but police, army, and air force soon went into action.

Fighting was heavy all Friday night and until toward sunset yesterday.

Last evening there were rumors that parleys were taking place, and this morning the garrison at the naval signal station surrendered.

—U.P.-A.A.P.

A53/5/3/2

F.E. Wireless Bulletin.

1/7/51

FEB 106 -- U.S. HEARS THAI CONFLICT INTERNAL MATTER

Washington, June 30 -- The U.S. State Department was informed from Bangkok today that several naval officers, including one rear admiral, were reported to have gone over to the side of the government in the internal conflict underway in the Thailand capital.

The conflict was touched off Friday when Thailand Prime Minister Phibun Songgram reportedly was seized by a group of Thai marines during a ceremony in which the U.S. Economic Cooperation Administration was turning over to the Thai Government a dredge named "Manhattan."

State Department Press Officer White said that from all reports received to date from the embassy in Bangkok there is no evidence of any anti-U.S. intentions nor of any pro-communist elements involved in the attempted coup.

"It appears to be a matter of internal politics not external considerations," he added.

According to the State Department, the Secretary to the Prime Minister foresaw .....in a day or two." The Secretary made the remark to U.S. Charge D'Affaires William T. Turner at Bangkok, who cabled reports to the State Department.

The coup has been marked by considerable gunfire and bombing, according to reports reaching the State Department, with the Thai Army, Air Force and police fighting for the Prime Minister's government and the Navy opposing them.

In the absence of Edwin F. Stanton, U.S. Ambassador to Thailand, who is in Washington for consultation, Turner, Counselor of the Embassy, is serving as U.S. Charge d'Affaires there.

The acting foreign minister, Warakan Bancha, reported to Turner that the revolt would be suppressed.

The government radio said the commander-in-chief of the Army should meet with Navy leaders to discuss terms.

(Meanwhile, late press reports said the fighting was continuing.)

White said there were no reports of injury to U.S. personnel in Bangkok, although the embassy was hit by stray artillery and small-arms fire.

**** F.E. Wireless Bulletin no 158 1/7/51

453/2/1/1

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

ACTION COPY

AP:KC

O.10699

Sent: July 1 1951.
1145.

CABLEGRAM TO:

Australian Commissioner,
SINGAPORE.

467. IMMEDIATE. UNCLASSIFIED.

Please arrange for following message to be conveyed through British Embassy, Bangkok. Begins For Loomes from Watt. Many thanks for your two prompt and informative messages. Families have been informed that you are all well.

E.A.
P.M.'s

July 2 1951.

Mr. Cutts.

453/8/3/2

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

W:HP

I.11729

DECODE FROM:

Dated: 1st July, 1951.
1640

Australian Consul-General,
BANGKOK.

Rec'd: 2nd July, 1951.
1650

75. IMMEDIATE. UNCLASSIFIED.

Reference to my telegrams 73 and 74.

Political situation.

After very heavy fighting all day yesterday the Navy troops after some initial successes driven back by the Army and Police. Air Force also bombed Navy. Fighting was particularly heavy in the vicinity of the Consultate General Ø where strong stand was made by the Navy at Naval Signals Station. Although I cannot yet obtain official confirmation of the announcement this morning by Publicity Department Radio Prime Minister Pibul has been returned to Police Headquarters and that Navy resistance has ceased. There are still (8 a.m.) some sporadic firing and I understand that there is some fighting also in Thonburi. Position is therefore probably reasonably well under control by Government forces but I shall confirm later today. Casualties yesterday were very heavy.

2. At 5 a.m. this morning the Consultate-General was shelled, one direct hit and one near miss by 3 inch shells. The direct hit exploded in the down-stairs hall where Appleton and I were, but we miraculously escaped any injury. The shells were fired apparently by the Army (pro Government) and considerable damage has been caused to the building. Apart from one table no Government property was damaged and records are all safe. I shall in due course lodge formal protest and seek compensation for the damage caused.

3. In viewof possible publicity in Australia, please reassure our families.

Min. & Dept. of External Affairs.
P.M.'s.

Ø Mutiliated.

2nd July, 1951.

Sunday Telegraph

1/7/51

REVOLUTION IN BANGKOK

Siamese P.M. kidnapped

BANGKOK, Sat.—Street fighting is raging in Bangkok, capital of Siam.

This follows yesterday's kidnapping of Prime Minister Pibul Songgram.

Siamese marines seized the Prime Minister at gunpoint during a public ceremony in Bangkok yesterday afternoon.

The marines boarded a dredge which the United States Charge d'Affaires in Bangkok was handing over to the Siamese Government.

Hundreds of people scattered as the Prime Minister was led at gunpoint aboard a naval landing barge, which disappeared up-river.

The Siamese Navy radio later announced that officers representing all three Services had taken over the Government, because they were dissatisfied with the Pibul regime.

The Army radio station told the Siamese people to ignore the Navy station's announcement.

It said that Foreign Minister Bancha had assumed control of the Government "in the absence of the Prime Minister."

Latest reports suggest that the Army and police are fighting the revolting Navy forces, who are defending the Navy signal station.

Air bombing

Airline passengers who reached Singapore from Bangkok today said that Siamese Army planes bombed the Navy signal station this morning.

Lieutenant Edward Glaser, a Royal Netherlands Navy officer, said:

"Bangkok airport officials told me that the Siamese Air Force had issued an ultimatum at midnight that the area where Pibul Songgram was held prisoner would be bombed unless he was released by dawn.

"Bombing started right on schedule.

"I heard a dozen or more explosions and saw some ack-ack bursts in the air north of the city."

Thomas Reid, of Niagara Falls, said:

"Power was shut off at 4 p.m. yesterday, and shop shutters went up as if by general order.

"Road-blocks sprang up along all roads leading out of the city."

Marines seize premier

Coup in Thailand

Australian Associated Press

SINGAPORE, Sat.

FIELD-MARSHAL Pibul Songgram, Premier of Thailand, was kidnapped in a Thai Navy coup in Bangkok today.

Navy marines seized him at gunpoint at the official handing over of a US Marshall Aid dredge to Thailand.

Hundreds of foreign diplomats, Government leaders and members of the armed services scattered as the marines, with machine-guns and rifles, rushed from the crowd and seized Pibul.

Pibul was taken on board a naval landing barge which disappeared up river.

The Thai Army and Air Force are reported to be bombing and shelling Navy installations.

Many killed

One report says seven planes bombed the Navy dock near Bangkok, killing and wounding many people, 60 pc of them civilians.

A Navy gunboat is shelling Don Muang airport where the planes are based.

Unidentified planes are reported to have bombed the airfield.

The Army and police force are using tanks, self-propelled guns, mortars, incendiary and high explosive shells and machine guns against the rebels.

Shells hit the American Embassy and the residence of the US Commercial Attache in Bangkok but no one is reported injured.

The Army has set up road blocks in the city.



Songgram

Power off

All power was shut off in Bangkok at 4 pm today, shops were closed and Bangkok's radio went off the air.

Thai army radio announced today that Foreign Affairs Minister Nai Warakarn Bancha had assumed control of the Government.

The Thai navy radio station announced that Pibul Songgram was a prisoner aboard a warship in Bangkok harbor.

July 1, 1951

Sunday Sun

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. SECRET.

MG:NP

I.11703.

Dated: 30th June, 1951
0206
Rec'd: 1st July, 1951
0900.

DECYPHERED FROM:

Australian Embassy,
WASHINGTON.

1153. SECRETT.

In conversation reported in our 1152 Merchant informed us that there had been a coup in Thailand. During the ceremony of handing over of a barge by SCA to the Thai Government, Pibul Songram had been abducted by a naval barge.

2. Merchant requested that we regard this information as strictly confidential since he expected that a strict censorship would be imposed on information connected with this event.

Min. & Dept. E.A.
P.M.'s

1st July, 1951

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E.R
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Finance
Ec. Offic

453/5/3/4

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

Events in Bangkok.

After receiving Loomis's emergency telegram I telephoned Harold Cox of Melbourne Herald to ask whether there had been any press report of events in Bangkok.

He checked with his office in Melbourne but They had had no report. Subsequently about 11.15 a.m. Cox called again — & read report from Washington to the effect that the State Dept. had received a report from their Embassy in Bankok dated 24th June that the Prime Minister of Thailand Phibun Songkram had been taken away by a Thai marine unit during a ceremony for handing over the U.S. dredge "Manhattan" at the royal landing.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

Gunfire was subsequently heard in the northern part of the city.

~~The~~ It was not yet clear what the significance of the incident was. The Secretary of State expressed concern for P.M. Phibun's health and safety.

Russell Harrison
30/6/51

Mr. Pritchett

Paper prepared for Minister

Please prepare brief background note on the Thai political situation — anything which may throw light on the significance of this incident RLH 30/6

Daily Mirror 30/6/51

BATTLE IN BANGKOK AS SAILORS SEIZE PREMIER

(D.M. World Cables)

MANILA, Sat. (A.P.).—Bangkok police are using tanks and self-propelled guns in a battle with Siamese sailors who today captured the Siamese Premier (Mr. Songgram).

The rebels have been warned that unless Mr. Songgram is released immediately, they will be bombed.

The sailors have forced Mr. Songgram to broadcast a plea for a cease-fire, reports the American Embassy at Bangkok.

Earlier, the embassy cabled the U.S. State Department that Mr. Songgram had been taken prisoner by a Siamese Marine unit.

The cable added that shortly after the Premier was taken captive, gunfire was heard in the northern part of Bangkok.

It was reported that the Premier was seized during a ceremony in which he accepted the transfer of the dredge ship Manhattan from the United States.

In February, Associated Press and United Press reported that suspicion of a Communist coup d'etat in Siam was growing.

Premier Songgram is an anti-Communist.

June 30. Daily Mirror

Melbourne Herald

30/6/51

THAI REVOLT: PREMIER SEIZED

30/6

Melbourne Herald



PIBUL SONGGRAM
Seized by his own Navy

This Australian Associated Press cable was received from Washington today—

"The Prime Minister of Thailand, Field Marshal Pibul Songgram, has been taken captive by a Thai marine unit."

Then the following series of dramatic messages came from Singapore:

1—"The Thai NAVY Radio says Pibul is a prisoner in a warship in Bangkok Harbor. Action was taken by officers of all three services who were dissatisfied with his regime."

2.—"The ARMY radio denied that all three services are involved in the uprising."

3. — "Bangkok OFFICIAL Radio has gone off the air because gunfire has come near."

4. "A Dutch naval lieutenant who has reached Singapore by air said that the Thai Air Force had issued an ultimatum at midnight that the area where Pibul was held prisoner would be bombed unless he was released by dawn. The bombing started right on schedule."

"Cloak & Dagger"

Then from Bangkok, the Thai capital, came a delayed cable telling the story of the kidnapping of the Prime Minister. It read like a cloak and dagger romance.

"The Premier was going up the gangplank of the United States dredge Manhattan, which had just been handed over to the Thai Government by the American Charge d'Affaires.

"Suddenly a group of naval men, armed with rifles and machineguns, rushed from out of the crowd and seized him.

"Hundreds of foreign diplomats, Government leaders and members of the armed forces scattered in bewilderment as the Premier was led at gunpoint across the Royal landing and aboard a naval landing barge. They were still gaping as the barge disappeared up-river.

"At 4 p.m. the city suddenly took on a martial air. Power was shut off, shop shutters went up, and police suddenly appeared with rifles and strapping on ammunition belts. Road blocks sprang up along roads leading out of the city.

"Aircraft have been advised not to land at Bangkok."

Street Fighting

Manila then came in with this report to the U.S. Embassy:

"Fighting is raging in the streets of Bangkok. Apparently the police are fighting rebel forces who are reported to be defending the navy signal station.

"Thai police are attacking the navy signal station with explosive and incendiary shells. Some shells hit the U.S. Embassy buildings and the residence of the American commercial attache.

The capture of Pibul was reported to Washington by the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

../MG

I. 11680

Dated 30th June, 1951
1757
Rec'd 30th June, 1951
2000

TELEGRAM FROM:

Australian Consul General,
BANGKOK.

IMMEDIATE. UNCLASSIFIED.

Addressed to Singapore Telegram No. 261 dated 30th June, please pass to External Affairs Canberra begins.

No. 74.

My No. 73 Political Situation.

1. Attempted coupd'etat begun yesterday by seizure of Pibul is now well under way. Fighting broke out yesterday about 5 p.m. near Grand Palace and intermittant but heavy gunfire continued during the night. At dawn today heavy fighting commenced in and around Lumbin Park near the Consulate General and is still continuing (10 a.m.). Martial Law was proclaimed by Regent last night.

2. Although precise situation is still far from clear announcements from the service radio stations during the night have indicated main instigators. At about 6 p.m. an announcement was made from Publicity Department Radio (which had been seized by Marines) that a five man provisional committee of the "Liberation Army" has been appointed consisting of Rear Admiral Taharn Kamhiran, Luang Kach Songgram, Air Marshall Devarit Phanluk (Commander in Chief Air Force) Captain Chalit (Navy) and Virayotha (Commander third Army). This group indicates Navy and to some extent at least Air and Military support. In early fighting two antagonists were Marines and Army.

3. At 7 p.m. Police radio announced ultimatum to insurgents to return Pibul and surrender within six hours. Information received indicated that Police who had not previously intervened attempted to attack at dawn today which seems to have been done. The Police Radio also called upon the Air Force to bomb the Navy but the Air Force Station refused. I have however just heard that the Post Office was bombed this morning but cannot confirm this.

4. A complicating feature was an apparent broadcast by Pibul on the Navy Radio indicating that he had come to terms with the insurgents but general consensus is that Broadcast was made under Duress. Another broadcast indicated that Pibul, Phao, Sriyanond and Phin Chanhawin and Chartrakarn Kosol are finished but there is no confirmation of seizure of last three. One Navy radio report stated that Seni Pramoj would be Foreign Minister.

5. Progress of the fighting is difficult to discover but it is known that insurgents have seized power station. Water Supply installation and Publicity Department. The Post Office is held by the police but no cables will be accepted. I am sending this by the British Embassy.

6. There is no evidence that there are any Communist elements amongst insurgents and Chinese Charge D'Affaires informs

453/8/3/2

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

I. 11680

me that no Chinese are involved. There is also no evidence of any anti-European feeling.

7. I shall report further as situation develops. Grateful if you would inform our families that we are all well. Loomes. Ends.

- - - - -

MIN. & DEPT. E.A.
P.M.'S.

1st July, 1951.

J P



DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

RESTRICTED.

FEL:ER

I.11597

DECODED FROM:

Dated:30th June, 1951

Rec'd: 30th June, 1951
0830

Australian Consul-General,
BANGKOK.

73 RESTRICTED EMERGENCY.

Political.

During the ceremony for the transfer of E.C.A. equipment to the Thailand Government at about 1530 today the Prime Minister Pibul was seized by Ø barge by group of armed marines, probably to Naval Depot. Abduction carried out in presence of large gathering including the whole Diplomatic Corps.

2. Implications are not yet clear and I shall repeat further

Min. & Dept. E.A.
P.M's

30th June, 1951

J.P.

Security

453/8/3/2

Canberra Times
2/9/51

Siamese Premier Released After Seizure by Rebels

C.T 1/9

(A.A.P.-Reuter)

SINGAPORE, Sunday

Siamese Premier, Field Marshal Luang Pibuh Songgram, was returned unharmed to Government headquarter at Paruskawan Palace just before midnight last night, according to an official communique issued today.

The communique added that the rebel naval headquarters had been completely destroyed and the leaders of the revolt were fleeing.

Organised resistance against the Government ended with the surrender today of the Naval garrison at the signal station in Bangkok, the communique said.

Civil war broke out after a spectacular public abduction at gunpoint of Field Marshal Luang Pibul Songgram by armed Naval men on Friday.

It was rumoured that the Premier had escaped but this could not be confirmed because of the blackout of official news.

Airforce and Spitfire trainer planes, fighting with the Army, bombed and strafed Navy installations on the Bangkok waterfront.

Fighting mainly centred on the River Chao Phra which flows through the city and which was the scene of the abduction.

Bombs fell near the Australian consulate. Consul General A. Loemes, his wife and children, were evacuated to a safer area. The consulate was shaken by explosives but no damage was done.

In an uncertain political and military situation, it has become clear that the object of the abduction was the overthrow of the Government.

Pibul Songgram has been Premier since November 1947 when an army-sponsored group seized power in a bloodless coup d'etat.

Siamese Army forces yesterday were reported to have captured the headquarters of the rebels.

During the furious fight, a number of stray shells hit the United States Embassy.

Mr. William Turner, American charge d'affaires, said that Army troops were reported to have seized the only bridge across the river. They stormed across it into the Naval headquarters building which the rebel force had turned into a fortress.

Mr. Turner said that several Navy officers involved in the revolt had gone over to the Government's side.

One Government official predicted that a settlement of the conflict would be worked out 'in a day or two.'

Mr. Turner's report contained no evidence of pro-communist or anti-American involvement.

The Navy announced that a group called the Liberation Army proposed to set up a new Government with Sarasas Praphad as Prime Minister.

Admiral Tharan, who has been named by the 'Liberation' Party as the Deputy Prime Minister, is thought, in diplomatic circles in Bangkok, to be the most influential figure in the new 'Cabinet.'

Sarasas Praphad is comparatively unknown and is believed to be merely a figure head.

The line-up for hostilities appears to be the army, police, and air force versus the navy and marines.

Although army and police radios warned public to stay indoors, foreigners and civilians were not considered to be in danger because the fighting was only between service groups and police in areas closed off to the civilian population.

Prince Dhani Nivat, president of the Regency Council of Siam, was reported by the Navy Radio last night as having declared martial law.

Two Royal Navy minesweepers were ordered yesterday to sail from Singapore in the direction of Bangkok in case they were needed there to safeguard British nationals.

It was later disclosed that one vessel was already at sea off the east coast of Malaya while the other sailed from Singapore naval base at two hour's notice.

The minesweepers could reach Bangkok within 48 hours.

Sydney Morning Herald
2/7/51

COUP FAILS IN SIAM

S.M.H. July 2

Australians Shelled

BANGKOK, July 1 (A.A.P.-Reuter). —Two three-inch shells hit the Australian Consulate here early to-day during fighting between the Siamese Army and Navy. One exploded 15 feet above the Consul-General, Mr. Alan Henry Loomes, of Sydney, and another Australian, but did not injure them.

The attempted coup d'etat by the Siamese Navy appears to have failed. Navy Headquarters fell to the army last night, but some rebels are still holding out at other strongpoints.

The Prime Minister, Mr. Pibul Songgram, kidnapped by marines at the start of the revolt on Friday, has been released unconditionally and is again in charge of the Government.

FIGHTING DYING DOWN

The two shells hit the Australian consulate just before dawn.

Mr. Loomes and a consular clerk, Mr. R. K. Appleton, of Perth, took cover in a hallway.

Bombs from air force planes exploded near the Consulate throughout yesterday afternoon, and Mr. Loomes's wife and children were evacuated to a safer area.

Mr. Loomes, 34, was posted to Bangkok two years ago.

He entered the Diplomatic Corps six years ago after serving in the R.A.A.F.

He is a B.A. and LL.B. of Sydney University.

His wife was formerly Miss Nancy Jennings, of Pymble. Their two children are aged eight and six.

TURNCOATS

The U.S. Charge d'Affaires, Mr. William Turner, last night reported to Washington that fighting was dying down and he expected it to end soon.

He said several Navy officers involved in the revolt had gone over to the Government's side.

One high Siamese Government official predicted that a settlement would be worked out in a day or two, he said.



MR. LOOMES

Mr. Turner's report contained no evidence of pro-Communist or anti-American elements being involved.

He said that a number of stray shells hit the U.S. Embassy during the furious fight for Navy Headquarters, which the rebels had turned into a fortress.

A Government communique issued this evening said organised resistance ended with the surrender to-day of the naval garrison at the signal station in Bangkok.

Leaders of the revolt are fleeing, it said.

Casualties, including civilians, have been heavy, but no assessment is possible yet.

Summary of Items of Gen. Interest.

13-19/6/51

Lt.Col. Prasert Sudbhantad, Deputy Minister of Communications, is reliably reported to have withdrawn his resignation. Col. Prasert is understood to have taken this action following an interview with the Prime Minister on 15th June. The nature of the agreement presumed to have been made in this connection between the Prime Minister and Col. Prasert is not revealed. It is known however that a group of members of the pro-Government Independent Party, of which Col. Prasert is a member, were advocating on 11th June that the Prime Minister be requested to convince Col. Prasert that his resignation was not desired.

~~443/2/1~~ ----------

453/2/1/1

INWARD SAVING TELEGRAM

By Confidential Bag *Foreign Office and Whitehall Distribution*

SIAM: POLITICAL SUMMARY

Period May 1951

From Bangkok to Foreign Office

Mr. Whittington
(No. 30. Saving. Confidential)
6th June, 1951 Received 3·25 p.m., 9th June, 1951

(Addressed to Foreign Office, telegram No. 30, Saving, of 6th June, 1951. Repeated for information, Saving, to Singapore, Rangoon, Saigon, Karachi, Colombo, Kuala Lumpur, and United Kingdom High Commissioners at Ottawa, Pretoria, Canberra, Wellington and Delhi.)

Parliament was prorogued on 31st May after a session lasting eight months. During the last month on several occasions the Lower House was again unable to proceed to business owing to the lack of quorum and the belief was strengthened that the Prime Minister, in order to discredit the Lower House, was deliberately discouraging attendance. The only business of interest was the passing of Bills establishing the Port Authority of Bangkok and the Royal State Railways as independent State organisations in accordance with recommendations of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, which is providing substantial loans for their rehabilitation. These two organisations had previously been Departments of the Ministry of Communications. An effort was also made by the Opposition to abolish the practice of allowing block voting facilities in Parliamentary elections to the armed forces; by this system troops, &c., recorded their votes in their barracks and were thus clearly subject to pressure from their commanding officers. This proposed amendment of the electoral law was defeated and intellectual and Opposition circles bewailed the failure of an effort to strengthen democratic practice in the Constitution.

2. Much hot air was produced in the Bangkok press about the preparations for the Parliamentary elections which are to take place about the end of February next. While little importance can be attached to this manifestation, it is interesting to note that discussion had already started on how the system of political parties in Siam can be improved and strengthened with a view either to overthrowing the Pibul Government or at least exerting greater effective pressure upon it.

3. May Day passed quietly in Siam. The small Communist and fellow-travelling press on 1st May announced a rally for 3rd May, at which the speakers were to have been the promoters of the new "International Peace Association," just inaugurated in order to launch an appeal in Siam based upon the resolutions of the Warsaw World Peace Congress. A prime mover was said to be Nai Charoen Suebsang, former lieutenant of Nai Pridi and presently proprietor of the Russian Communist-inspired *Karn Muang Weekly*. In the event not more than 800 or so persons attended this rally and it attracted very little attention.

4. Lieut.-General Luang Kach (see paragraph 5 of my report for April) was released on bail in the middle of the month. Some publicity was given early in the month to the fact that he was being charged not only for corrupt practices but also for plotting to overthrow the Government. From reliable information, however, it appears that, as stated previously, a political charge is not to be made. However, there has been a peculiar silence in the last fortnight about developments in this case and the feeling is growing that some arrangement will be made to allow the ex-Deputy Commander-in-chief to return to public life.

5. Although the Government in Bangkok had received the United Nations request to member nations to ban certain warlike exports to Communist China and North Korea no action had been taken by the end of the month. As far as is known there is little or no direct export of "war materials" from Siam to Communist China at the present time and the imposition of any controls is not likely to have much immediate effect.

6. A good impression was made in Bangkok by the visit to Singapore, at the invitation of General Harding, of the Deputy Commander-in-chief of the Siamese Army, Lieut.-General Dej Dejpradiyudh, and a number of his staff officers, and

13222—3469 40680—18

453/2/1/1

later in the month by the visit to Singapore and the Federation of Malaya of the Deputy-Director General of Police, Police Lieut.-General Phao Sriyanon. Both these distinguished visitors returned to Bangkok delighted with the reception they had received and much impressed with what they had seen. The visit of the Deputy Commander-in-chief of the Army took place immediately before the Tripartite Talks in Singapore and there was some comment in Bangkok that the visit was connected with those talks.

7. Comments on Britain's difficulties with Persia over oil have been, in general, sympathetic, although newspapers have been unable to resist the temptation of pointing out that it is difficult for Britain to oppose nationalisation in Persia after pursuing similar aims in the United Kingdom with such determination.

CONFIDENTIAL

Ref: 2/147/1



DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
Rec'd 19 JUN 1951
File No. 453/M/1/1

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA.

With the compliments

of the

Official Secretary

Mr. Hasluck
- Mr Burchett
- Mr Crocker

Office of the High Commissioner
for the United Kingdom.
Canberra, A.C.T.

19th June, ~~1951~~ 51

2/647/1

CONFIDENTIAL. 10110/5/51.

S A V I N G R A M

FROM: MR. WHITTINGTON TO: FOREIGN OFFICE.

EN CLAIR: DESPATCHED: 6th JUNE, 1951.

No: 30 SAVING of 6th June, 1951.

Addressed to Foreign Office Savingram No:30 of 6th June 1951, repeated for information to:-

	Singapore	43	
	Rangoon	23	
	Saigon	11	S
U.K.H.C.	Ottawa	2	A
" "	Pretoria	2	V
" "	Canberra	2	I
" "	Wellington	2	N
" "	Delhi	5	G
	Karachi	6	
	Colombo	3	
	Kuala Lumpur	4	

SIAM - POLITICAL SUMMARY FOR MAY 1951.

1. Parliament was prorogued on 31st May after a session lasting eight months. During the last month on several occasions the Lower House was again unable to proceed to business owing to the lack of quorum and the belief was strengthened that the Prime Minister, in order to discredit the Lower House, was deliberately discouraging attendance. The only business of interest was the passing of Bills establishing the Port Authority of Bangkok and the Royal State Railways as independent State organisations in accordance with recommendations of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, which is providing substantial loans for their rehabilitation. These two organisations had previously been Departments of the Ministry of Communications. An effort was also made by the Opposition to abolish the practice of allowing block voting facilities in Parliamentary elections to the Armed Forces; by this system troops etc., recorded their votes in their barracks and were thus clearly subject to pressure from their Commanding Officers. This proposed amendment of the electoral Law was defeated and intellectual and Opposition circles bewailed the failure of an effort to strengthen democratic practice in the Constitution.

note on Elections

2. Much hot air was produced in the Bangkok press about the preparations for the Parliamentary elections which are to take

/place...

place about the end of February next. While little importance can be attached to this manifestation, it is interesting to note that discussion has already started on how the system of political parties in Siam can be improved and strengthened with a view either to overthrowing the Pibul Government or at least exerting greater effective pressure upon it.

3. May Day passed quietly in Siam. The small communist and fellow-travelling press on May 1st announced a rally for May 3rd, at which the speakers were to have been the promoters of the new "International Peace Association" just inaugurated in order to launch an appeal in Siam based upon the Resolutions of the Warsaw World's Peace Congress. A prime mover was said to be Nai Charoen Suebsang, former lieutenant of Nai Pridi and presently proprietor of the Russian communist-inspired "Karn Muang Weekly". In the event not more that 800 or so persons attended this rally and it attracted very little attention.

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7. Comments on Britain's difficulties with Iran over oil have been in general, sympathetic, although newspapers have been unable to resist the temptation of pointing out that it is difficult for Britain to oppose nationalisation in Iran after pursuing similar aims in the United Kingdom with such determination.

WHITTINGTON.

RW/BMM.
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		" " New Delhi	-do-
		Karachi	2 copies
		Colombo	2 copies.

348/51

INWARD SAVING TELEGRAM

By Confidential Bag *Foreign Office and Whitehall Distribution*

SIAM: POLITICAL SUMMARY

Period May 1951

From Bangkok to Foreign Office

Mr. Whittington
(No. 30. Saving. Confidential)
6th June, 1951 Received 3·25 p.m., 9th June, 1951

(Addressed to Foreign Office, telegram No. 30, Saving, of 6th June, 1951. Repeated for information, Saving, to Singapore, Rangoon, Saigon, Karachi, Colombo, Kuala Lumpur, and United Kingdom High Commissioners at Ottawa, Pretoria, Canberra, Wellington and Delhi.)

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13222—3469 40680—18

453/4/1/C

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Summary of Items of Gen. Interest

6-12/6/51

Lt. Col. Prasert Sudbanthat, Deputy Minister of Communications has tendered his resignation to the Prime Minister. He has explained that his action constitutes a protest against interference by the Nov.1947 Coup Party in the appointment of senior governmental executive officers.

The occasion for Col. Prasert's resignation has been the appointment of the Board of Directors of the newly independent Railways Organisation. The Board was originally envisaged to comprise six members, but for reasons not yet entirely clear was recently enlarged to include seven. The seventh seat, was, on the initiative of representatives of the Coup Party in the government, with the concurrence of the Minister of Communications and the approval of the Cabinet reserved for Col. Pramarn Adireksorn, present manager of the Express Transportation Bureau (Railway Freight Organisation). Col. Pramarn's appointment was vigorously opposed in Cabinet by Col. Prasert primarily on grounds of Col. Pramarn's inexperience and incapacity. Col. Prasert's objections were however overridden and his resignation has followed. His views are reported to have been supported by some five members of the Cabinet.

Since the announcement of Col. Prasert's resignation the Coup Party have reaffirmed their support for Col. Pramarn and are reported to have rejected an offer by the latter to withdraw his candidacy for a seat on the Board.

The Minister for Communications, Nai Pathom Phokaew who is the leader of the pro-Government Independent group of M's.P. of which Col. Prasert is also a member has signified his concurrence with the Cabinet's decision.

(It will be recalled that Col. Pramarn, a son in law of the C in C of the Army and influential Coup Party Leader, General Phin Chunhavan has announced recently his candidacy for the February 1952 elections for the province of Saraburi. This province, which returns only one member to the House of Representative, is at present represented in that House by Col. Prasert. Col. Pramarn's decision to stand in the province was reported to have been taken with the support of General Phin and against the advice of the Prime Minister).

453/2/1/

SUMMARY OF ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST
PERIOD 30th May to 5th June, 1951.

Nai Pethai Chotinuchit announced prior to the rising of Parliament on 31st May that he had cancelled his plans to open a debate in Parliament on the subject of the education program of the present government. He explained that while he was able to gain sufficient Opposition support to table a motion in this connection the Opposition M.P.s were insistent that the debate should be concluded with a vote. Nai Pethai stated that he was withholding his motion since it was not his wish that the debate should be held with a view to unseating the government.

Parliament concluded its eight months session on 31st ~~June.~~ May. It is scheduled to meet again early in September of this year. Its final days were marked by expression of apprehension from several quarters and particularly from the Opposition parties that the Government may take the opportunity of the recess to arrest certain M.P. on charges which have long been outstanding against them or on other pretexts. In consequence of these fears, the Secretary General of the Democratic Party has commenced to collect support for a petition to hold a special session of Parliament. The petition would according to reports be presented to the President of the Senate in the event of the police arresting M.P.s during the Parliamentary recess. 453|2|1|1

Ref: 2/147/1

A.S. Watt, Esq.,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A. C. T.

JMcC

With the compliments

of the

Official Secretary

Mr Cutts
Mr. Hynes
See Secretary's note

Office of the High Commissioner
for the United Kingdom.
Canberra, A.C.T.

25th May, 1954.

278/51

INWARD SAVING TELEGRAM

By Confidential Bag — *Foreign Office and Whitehall Distribution*

SIAM: POLITICAL SUMMARY

Period April 1951

From Bangkok to Foreign Office

Mr. Whittington
(No. 24. Saving. Confidential)
4th May, 1951

Received 11·35 a.m. 9th May, 1951

(Addressed to Foreign Office, telegram No. 24, Saving, of 4th May, 1951. Repeated for information, Saving, to Singapore, Rangoon, Saigon, Delhi, Karachi, Colombo, Kuala Lumpur, and United Kingdom High Commissioners at Ottawa, Pretoria, Canberra and Wellington.)

April is the month of heat and holidays. This year there was no relief to the hot weather throughout the month and those Government officials and others who were not sufficiently fortunate to escape to the seaside kept their activities to a minimum. On five occasions meetings of the Lower House of Parliament were abandoned for lack of a quorum. This apathy was not entirely due to the weather for, although Prime Minister Pibul publicly deplored it and at the end of the month told the House that, as it had not completed its job, it could not go into recess in May, there are grounds for believing that the Prime Minister was quietly pursuing his aim of discrediting the elected Assembly, for which despite all he may say he has scant respect. Some flurry was caused by a new Pensions Bill for Government officials, to which the Senate objected; the Senate were successfully by-passed when the measure was declared to be a Finance Bill, and the incident served to show the numerical strength of the Opposition in the Senate and to emphasise at the same time that body's lack of power.

2. The Government's anti-Communist publicity campaign has continued at full blast. A rather interesting new twist to his anti-Communist efforts was provided when the Prime Minister, in an interview with his officially sponsored English-language newspaper, promised that he would do all he could to enable cultivators to own their own land. A Bill has been introduced into Parliament by the Government proposing a progressive tax on large estates with the object of encouraging big owners to sell to farmers whose small holdings will be free of tax.

3. On the last day of the month Lieutenant-General Luang Kach Kachsongram, who was exiled at the end of 1949 for plotting against the Government, and who has since been living in Hong Kong, returned to Siam. On his arrival he was met by a group of senior police officials who took him off into custody where he is to be detained pending trial for alleged extortion from Chinese rice millers. At the moment it appears that political charges will not be prosecuted against him. Although the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, General Phin Chunhavan, has publicly announced that Lunang Kach cannot be received back again into the fold of the privileged *coup* party, of which he had formerly been a prominent (but unpopular) member, and although the Government has indicated its intention to deal firmly with Kach and prevent any further political activity on his part, there are many who regard this as window dressing and who will not be surprised to see the ex-Deputy Commander-in-Chief reinstated in due course to a position of influence.

4. Some uneasiness in Government circles at the beginning of the month in regard to the early possibility of a Chinese Communist attack on Indo-China and to a clash between Chinese Communist and Kuomintang troops in Yunnan or the Southern Shan States, was subsequently allayed and the Prime Minister made a reassuring statement about Government preparedness for an emergency.

5. The situation in Korea has continued to attract attention. The Prime Minister commented favourably in public on the statement made by General Bradley in Chicago on 18th April in which he stated that resistance to aggression in Korea had prevented the outbreak of war in other parts of Asia, including Siam. Pibul took the opportunity to reiterate his country's support of the United Nations and the Western Powers. Nevertheless, the Prime Minister and many others have

13222—3421 40510—23

453/2/1

indicated privately their belief that attacks on Manchuria and from Formosa on to the Chinese mainland would have served a useful purpose in keeping Chinese Communist eyes away from South-East Asia.

6. The month has seen the establishment in Bangkok of diplomatic missions from Vietnam, Cambodia and Switzerland (which has hitherto been represented here by a career consul), and the formal opening of a Japanese Government Overseas Agency. It is hoped that the advent of Vietnam and Cambodia representatives will help in convincing the majority of Siamese of the reality of the independence of the Associate States of Indo-China, and will assist in dealing with the difficult problem of the large colony of Annamite refugees (in North-East Siam) which has hitherto been under strong Vietminh influence.

1012/41/51.

CONFIDENTIAL.

S A V I N G R A M

FROM: MR. WHITTINGTON. TO: FOREIGN OFFICE.

EN CLAIR: DESPATCHED 4th May, 1951.

No: 24 SAVING of 4th May, 1951.

Addressed to Foreign Office Savingram No:24 of 4th May 1951, repeated for information to:-

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		Rangoon 19	
		Saigon 7	S
U.K.H.C.		Ottawa 1	A
"	"	Pretoria 1	V
"	"	Canberra 1	I
"	"	Wellington 1	N
"	"	Delhi 1	G
		Karachi 2	
		Colombo 2	
		Kuala Lumpur 3	

SIAM - POLITICAL SUMMARY FOR APRIL, 1951.

1. April is the month of heat and holidays. This year there was no relief to the hot weather throughout the month and those Government officials and others who were not sufficiently fortunate to escape to the sea-side kept their activities to a minimum. On five occasions meetings of the Lower House of Parliament were abandoned for lack of a quorum. This apathy was not entirely due to the weather for, although Prime Minister Pibul publicly deplored it and at the end of the month told the House that, as it had not completed its job, it could not go into recess in May, there are grounds for believing that the Prime Minister was quietly pursuing his aim of discrediting the elected Assembly, for which despite all he may say he has scant respect. Some flurry was caused by a new Pensions Bill for Government officials, to which the Senate objected; the Senate were successfully by-passed when the measure was declared to be a Finance Bill, and the incident served to show the numerical strength of the Opposition in the Senate and to emphasise at the same time that body's lack of power.

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/progressive..

poli gen. 453/2/1

progressive tax on large estates with the object of encouraging big owners to sell to farmers whose small-holdings will be free of tax.

3. On the last day of the month Lt.-General Luang Kach Kachsonggram who was exiled at the end of 1949 for plotting against the Government, and who has since been living in Hong Kong, returned to Siam. On his arrival he was met by a group of senior police officials who took him off into custody where he is to be detained pending trial for alleged extortion from Chinese rice millers. At the moment it appears that political charges will not be prosecuted against him. Although the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, General Phin Chunhavan, has publicly announced that Luang Kach cannot be received back again into the fold of the privileged coup party, of which he had formerly been a prominent (but unpopular) member, and although the Government has indicated its intention to deal firmly with Kach and prevent any further political activity on his part, there are many who regard this as window dressing and who will not be surprised to see the ex-Deputy-Commander-in-Chief re-instated in due course to a position of influence.

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WHITTINGTON.

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DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
Rec'd 7 MAY 1951
No. 453/2/1

File No. 100/5/1.

AUSTRALIAN CONSULATE-GENERAL,
BANGKOK, THAILAND.

2nd May, 1951.

DEPARTMENTAL DESPATCH NO. 9/51.

FROM: Australian Consul-General, BANGKOK. THAILAND.

TO: Secretary, Department of External Affairs, CANBERRA.A.C.T

JAPANESE MISSION IN THAILAND.

On 29th April, 1951, there was opened in Bangkok a Japanese Government Overseas Agency. The agency is in the charge of Mr. Koichi Suzuki, who is called the Japanese Overseas Representative. On his staff are three other officials, Mr. Yamamoto, Mr. Hiroshi Ando and Mr. Endo.

2. The aim of the Agency is reported to be to promote trade relations between Thailand and Japan, and also to take charge of Japanese civilian interests in Thailand.

3. Trade with Japan has been governed by yearly barter arrangements, with occasional additional imports permitted outside these arrangements. The agreement now in force for 1951 provides for barter of goods, of the same type as in 1950, to a total value of U.S. $110,000,000 (U.S. $55,000,000 each way). In view of the greatly increased trade between the two countries, several official and private trade delegations visited Thailand during 1950, and, in November, a request was made to the Thai Government by the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers on behalf of the Japanese Government for the establishment of a permanent trade representative's office in Bangkok. The setting up of the present Agency is the outcome of this request.

4. The inclusion in the reported functions of the Agency of the protection of Japanese civilian interests in Thailand is of interest and, it seems clear that the Overseas Representative regards himself for all practical purposes as a Consular representative of Japan. The representative himself, Mr. Suzuki, is understood to have previously been a member of the Japanese Foreign Service. One of his principal assistants, Mr. Hiroshi Ando, was before and during the war a prominent Japanese business man in Bangkok. From the Thai Government's point of view, however, the Agency is regarded purely as a permanent trade mission.

Mr Hardy RLH d/s
Mr A B Jamieson
" Burchett
" of Economic Section
file

5. At present there are about 300 to 400 Japanese residing in Thailand, principally consisting of those who were permitted to remain here after the war. There are, amongst these, many business-man, some acting on their own account and others employed by local firms to handle Japanese imports. Prominent amongst these are Mr. G. Hirata, ex Japanese Consul in Chiengmai (who is referred to in my Departmental Despatch No. 3/50 of 6th February, 1950), and also a recent arrival, Mr. Ishii, who is in charge of a Japanese-controlled, but nominally Thai owned firm known as S.K. Limited. I have made

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Aust/NZ Sec.

...../some enquiries

some enquiries concerning Mr. Ishii, and find that his real name is Hanada Mashio, and that during the war, under a further name of Watanabe, he was Chief of the Political Section of the Kempei Tai Headquarters in Singapore until early 1944, and then moved in a similar capacity to Saigon and later to Haiphong. He has apparently a considerable knowledge of Thailand, including the language, and was recently a leading figure in the re-establishment of the Old Japan Students Association, which is a place of reunion for Japanese, and Thais who were educated in Japan. In this connection it is interesting to note that Colonel Chamras Mantukanond, Chief of the Special Branch of the Criminal Investigation Division, who has virtually complete control over aliens in Thailand, is also a prominent member of this Association, at present being Vice-President.

(Sgd.) A. H. Loomes

CONSUL-GENERAL.

WBP:MF

453/2/1.

3rd May, 1951.

MEMORANDUM for:

The Secretary,
Department of Defence,
Victoria Barracks,
MELBOURNE, Victoria.

I forward herewith for your information copy of memorandum No. 140/51 of 3rd April, 1951, from the Australian Consul-General in Bangkok.

(R.L. Harry)
for Secretary.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

ACTION COPY

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I.7972.

DECODE FROM:

Dated: 1st May, 1951
1230.

Australian Consul General,
BANGKOK.

Rec'd: 2nd May, 1951

57. UNCLASSIFIED.

Political Situation.

Luang Kach Songgram returned yesterday to Bangkok and is being detained for questioning by police pending laying of charge on him. Kach stated that he has returned voluntarily and is willing to face any charges which may be brought against him.

I shall report further when position becomes clearer.

MIN. & DEPT. EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.
P.M.'S DEPT.

2nd May, 1951.

J4ec - P.I. ✓

J.P. - file

453/2/1

CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
No. 25 APR 1951
File No. 453/5/1

AUSTRALIAN CONSULATE-GENERAL,
BANGKOK, THAILAND.

File No. 100/5/1.

Memo. No; 181/51.

24th April, 1951.

CONFIDENTIAL.

MEMORANDUM FOR:

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

I acknowledge receipt of your memorandum No. 96 of 13th April, 1951, enclosing a letter dated 11th April, 1951, from the Office of the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom in Canberra, on which you request my comments.

2. The principal item mentioned by the United Kingdom Charge d'Affaires in Bangkok is the retention of conscripts beyond their normal term which would have expired on 1st April last. This information was conveyed to you in my weekly summary forwarded with my memorandum No. 153/51 of 11th April, 1951. Since that time I have made further enquiries concerning the reasons for the extension of the term of service, and it appears that this decision was made as a purely precautionary measure in view of the world situation, and also because the absence of a Thai military force in Korea, with the possible necessity or desirability of sending replacements or reinforcements, makes it necessary to maintain an adequate force at home in their place. The rumours mentioned by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and referred to in paragraph 1 of the letter of 11th April, have from time to time found some prominence in the press and undoubtedly have influenced the decision. I am unable however to obtain confirmation of these rumours from American, British or other sources. With regard to the reports of Chinese intervention in Indo-China, it has long been apparent that a fairly large force of Chinese has been maintained in the south of China near the Indo-Chinese frontier, and the possibility of intervention cannot be ruled out.

3. It has been reported in the last few days that a few Chinese have crossed the border, and have engaged in military activities. I have checked this report with the Chinese Charge d'Affaires here, Mr. P.P. Sun, whose information on such matters is usually reliable. He stated that he has received a report that some followers of Ho Chi Minh (about 500) had received training in Communist China, and, on their return, brought with them a few Chinese "advisers", who were made available to Ho for the purpose of assisting in the training of his forces, and also no doubt to swell the ranks of the Chinese "liaison mission". Mr. Sun's information is that, although the possibility of any substantial intervention by Chinese Communists nor of any immediate move to do so. The danger however of a sudden intervention certainly still exists.

4. The rumour of Chinese Communists activity in the Shan States of Burma has had some currency in Bangkok, but I have not been able to confirm it from Burmese or other sources. Indeed, I was informed by General Ne Win, Commander-in-Chief of the Burmese Army, a few days ago, when he paid a very brief visit to Bangkok, that the Shan States were quiet, and there was no danger of disturbances. This may have been an over-optimistic statement, but certainly no reliable information of any agreement between the Shan States rulers or people and the Chinese has been received. The possibility, however, again cannot be

...../excluded, and

excluded, and I shall try to obtain further information on the subject.

5. As the British Charge d'Affaires has stated there exists in Thailand a sense of uneasiness, which is induced as much by the great number of rumours of impending disaster as by the factual situation in Asia, which is none too reassuring. The feeling of insecurity is a natural one, and the action of the Thai Government in endeavouring to maintain and strengthen their armed forces seems certainly to be both a normal and reasonable precaution.

CONSUL-GENERAL.

TRIPLICATE.

CONFIDENTIAL

File No. 100/5/1.

Memo. No; 181/51.

Australian Consulate-General,
Bangkok, Thailand.

24th April, 1951.

CONFIDENTIAL.

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The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

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(Sgd.) A. E. Lloyd

CONSUL-GENERAL.

Summary of Items of Gen. Interest

18-24/4/51

The Secretary General to the Prime Minister, Maj.General Mom Luang Karb has informed representatives of the press that the Prime Minister has now decided to permit the return to Thailand of Lt.General Luang Kach Songgram. The Secretary General added however that Luang Kach must, if he returns, submit to investigation in respect of charges of plotting against the government and misappropriation of public funds at present outstanding against him.

453/2/1

Bangkok ~~MIN.~~ DEP. Despatch No. 6/51 T.D.

Distribution Lt/Gen Phao Sriyanondh.

Reference
Aust - N. 2 - See ✓

Distributed 18/6.

Divisional File Number 453/2/1/1

Pacific Section.

DUPLICATE.

CONFIDENTIAL

File No. 100/5/1.

AUSTRALIAN CONSULATE-GENERAL,
BANGKOK, THAILAND.

CONFIDENTIAL. 17th April, 1951.

DEPARTMENTAL DESPATCH NO. 6/51.

FROM: Australian Consul-General, BANGKOK. THAILAND.

TO: Secretary, Department of External Affairs, CANBERRA.A.C.T.

LIEUT. GENERAL PHAO SRIYANONDH.

The importance of the Deputy Chief of Police, General Phao Sriyanondh, in the political scene in Thailand will have been clear from previous reports. His power goes far beyond the authority which would normally be implicit in holding the position of Deputy Chief of Police, and he is generally considered to be the second most influential man in Thailand.

2. His recent appointment as Assistant Under-Secretary of State for the Interior is a matter of special significance. The post on the face of it is not a particularly high one, but the administration of the Ministry of the Interior, which nominally controls the Police Department (which includes Immigration) as well as other instrumentalities, is most important. Phao has never attempted, so far as I am aware, to obtain high positions in the Kingdom, although I have no doubt whatever that he could do so if he wished. He has been content up to the present to fill the position of Deputy Chief of Police, nominally under the control of the Chief of Police, General Chartrakarn Kosol, At the same time, however, he has had a completely free hand in the reorganisation of the Police Force, and, in particular, in the setting up of a strong crime suppression unit, which includes counter-espionage activities and the control of aliens, especially the Chinese. At the same time, he is a member of practically every important Government committee in any way concerned with internal security.

3. His appointment as Assistant Under Secretary of State of the Ministry of the Interior will not alter his present position as Deputy Chief of Police, and he will perform both functions. The reason for his appointment given in an official statement is that he will be able now to coordinate administrative and police activities to the greatest extent possible. His control of aliens, directed partly through the Police Department and partly through the provincial and local administrative officials, will now be complete and it is felt that he will be better able to suppress subversive activities by aliens (and, no doubt to suppress local political agitation against the Government!).

4. It is quite clear that Phao will be given complete independence in carrying out his additional functions just as he already has had in his capacity as Deputy Chief of Police. The position does of course create an illogical situation in that his new capacity will probably place him above General Chart, but, in view of the actual position and the previous history, this anomaly is of no importance.

5. The new situation created by this appointment will certainly put Phao into a position where his political power will further increase, and his career should, I think, be watched very closely.

(Sgd.) A. H. Loomes

CONSUL-GENERAL.

45 3/2/1/1

(Copy)

SECRET

OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER
FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM,
CANBERRA, A.C.T.

Ref: 2/147.

11th April, 1951.

Dear Sir,

With reference to recent communications on the subject of the situation in Thailand, ending with your letter No. 154/64 of the 30th January, I am directed by the High Commissioner to inform you that the United Kingdom Charge d'Affaires has enquired of the Thai Minister for Foreign Affairs whether he could give any information in regard to recent reports that orders had been issued by the Thai Government for the retention in the Service, of conscripts due for release on 1st April for a further three or four months. The reports added that this action was taken because trouble was expected in Thailand in mid-April. The Thai Minister for Foreign Affairs informed the United Kingdom Charge d'Affaires that these reports were correct. The Thai Government had, from various reports that it had received, concluded that an intervention by the Chinese Forces on behalf of Ho Chi Minh in Indo-China might take place towards the middle of this month and as such an intervention would probably completely change the external picture, the Thai Government had decided, as a first step, not to release these conscripts on 1st April, but to keep them in Service. The Thai Government was also apprehensive of coming events in South Yunan and the Shan States. It was thought that the Kuomintang Troops in that area were about to launch important guerilla attacks on the Chinese Communists. It was also suspected that the Chinese Communists had come to terms with various Shan States who had been won-over by the Chinese promises of independence and it was consequently feared that a Communist incursion into that area might be imminent. Two Chinese divisions were, indeed, reported to be stationed on the Burma Road for this purpose.

2. As regards the internal situation, the Minister for Foreign Affairs said that no trouble was expected either from the Chinese or the Thai Communist elements. He denied that the Government were worried about South Thailand and dismissed, as groundless, a report in the local newspaper that the Chinese were thought to be plotting to seize Kra Isthmus. The Viet Minh refugees in North East Thailand might possibly be a source of trouble but they were quiet for the present and were being carefully watched. He finally emphasised that the Government's main preoccupation was to prepare for a possible Chinese attack on Indo-China which might be followed :

(a) By a French appeal to the United Nations for assistance, and

(b) By a direct threat to Thailand itself.

3. In regard to (a) above, His Excellency intimated that the Government had reached no decision as to whether or not to send aid to Indo-China in the event of a call from the United Nations.

4. In reply to an inquiry as to whether further preparations could be contemplated, the Minister for Foreign Affairs replied that further steps might be considered at the meetings of the Central Security Council and that the United Kingdom Charge d'Affaires would be promptly informed. The latter impressed upon the Minister for Foreign Affairs that he was vitally interested

453/2/1/1

in being kept informed of these measures, in view of British interests generally and of the proximity of Malaya in particular.

5. From the general tone of the Minister for Foreign Affairs' conversation, the United Kingdom Charge d'Affaires gathered that he was himself not particularly perturbed about the situation. The Prime Minister himself was indeed stated to be "most optimistic". The Commander-in-Chief of the Thai Air Force, on the other hand, was in some apprehension when he warned a member of the United Kingdom Embassy Staff to be "on the lookout" for trouble in the near future and said he feared the Chinese Communists, finding themselves foiled in Korea, would attack in the direction of Thailand. The Prime Minister and the Commander-in-Chief of the Thai Navy were, however, apparently unperturbed by this prospect.

6. The United Kingdom Charge d'Affaires reported that from general conversation with a variety of knowledgeable persons and from the tone of certain organs of the local press he does, however, detect a growing sense of uneasiness. He anticipated that when the news about conscripts was made public a fast flow of alarmist rumours could be expected. He saw no reason, however, for anticipating immediate or serious internal trouble in Thailand.

7. In communicating the above information to the Commonwealth authorities I am to emphasise that the action of the Thai Government is merely a reasonable precaution, that, as stated by the United Kingdom Charge d'Affaires, no serious internal trouble is anticipated in Thailand and that the rumours referred to in paragraph 1 above may well be without foundation.

8. I am sending two copies of this letter to the Secretary, Department of External Affairs.

Yours faithfully,

Sgd. J. Marjoribanks.

Official Secretary.

317/51

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(18242)

SIAM
23rd April, 1951
Section 1

FS 1011/1

SIAM: ANNUAL REVIEW FOR 1950

Mr. Whittington to Mr. Morrison. (*Received* 23*rd April*)

(No. 111. Confidential) *Bangkok,*
Sir, 16*th April,* 1951.

I have the honour to transmit herewith the annual review of Siamese affairs in 1950. I am indebted to Mr. C. M. Anderson, first secretary, for drafting the sections on internal and external affairs, and to Mr. B. J. Garnett for drafting the economic and financial section.

2. I am copying this despatch, with its enclosure, to the Commissioner-General at Singapore.

I have, &c.
R. WHITTINGTON.

Enclosure

Review of Siam in 1950

Introduction

The main trend in the Siamese internal situation throughout 1950 has been the steady strengthening of effective control by the administration of Field-Marshal Pibulsonggram. The deterioration in the international situation has promoted unity at home, and although there were some rumours of *coups d'état* they were few in comparison with previous years and nothing came of them. The stability of the Government is unshaken. During the whole period there was peace and security throughout the kingdom in striking contrast to the internal convulsions of greater or lesser strength which shook neighbouring territories in South-East Asia without exception.

2. Abroad, the field-marshal has departed from the country's traditional foreign policy of pursuing a middle course by avoiding entanglements with major Powers, and has unequivocally aligned Siam with the Western democracies, within the framework of the United Nations. He has, more particularly, sought to place Siam under the protection of the United States.

Part I.—Internal Affairs

3. *The Monarchy.*—The 1932 *coup d'état* marked the end of absolutism in Siam, and its promoters split up into the two rival groups of Pibul and Pridi supporters. Both were of the people, and said they were for the people. Pibul was the exponent of strong-armed nationalism, while Pridi (now in exile) was the democratic (some say Communist-inspired) theorist. Neither had any time for the monarchy, though it survived in constitutional form.

4. The war, virtual occupation of the country by the Japanese and a general atmosphere of disillusionment followed, and it became evident to the promoters of the new régime that they were unable permanently to fill the place in the hearts and imagination of the people of what they had destroyed. One of the best methods of getting the country behind them again would be to rebuild, if not the real power of the monarchy, then at least its glory.

5. Such was Pridi's object in bringing back King Ananda. This King's tragic death in 1946 ultimately caused the downfall of the Pridi Administration, but left no doubt of the strength of public feeling for the monarchy. Pibul therefore picked up the trump which had dropped from Pridi's hand, and although by reason of personal antagonisms his alliance with the Royalist Party is an uneasy one, members of the Royal family who would have been debarred from office or relegated to obscurity in Pibul's pre-war Administration have found their way back to important positions and have received promotion in the Civil Service and the armed forces.

6. To ensure continuity in the history of the monarchy, King Prajadhipok, whose abdication was provoked by *coup* promoters of 1932, has been officially whitewashed. His ashes were brought home from England in 1949 with pomp and ceremony, and in the year under review his widowed Queen, now reinstated in the dignity of a Queen of Siam,

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has been in uneasy prominence at many official and social functions.

7. At the beginning of 1950 Pibul was able to announce that arrangements had been made for the return to Siam from Switzerland of King Bhumibol Aduldej, the late King Ananda's brother, and to the general public the events which followed established Pibul and his Administration as the authentic protectors of the monarchy. Tremendous public interest and enthusiasm were aroused by the three ceremonies of the cremation of King Ananda's remains, the Royal wedding of King Bhumibol and the Coronation, which took place in March, April and May, and which were carried through with the greatest solemnity and traditional pageantry (marred only by the ubiquity of newshawks with ciné-cameras).

8. Unfortunately, the good effects of the Royal visit on public morale have to some extent been dissipated by the King's insistence on leaving the country. The jazz strains of His Majesty's musical compositions, which are heard everywhere, form but a tenuous link with Lausanne, and the country would greatly benefit if King Bhumibol and his attractive and popular Queen were to return to live among their people. Pibul's " royalism " is largely a matter of convenience, and if his support of the present King does not soon yield better dividends he may be tempted to engineer some dynastic changes.

9. *Coups d'État and " Counter Coups."*—As was indicated in the annual report for 1949 Pibul's real power is that of the armed forces and the police. He must always be prepared, therefore, to deal with challenges to his authority which might spring from internal dissension within the services.

10. The army and navy appear to have sunk their differences. The war in Korea and mounting international tension have kept the minds of their senior officers occupied. It would be untrue to say that rival cliques no longer exist in the armed services, but by a policy of careful husbandry—promotions here, heads lopped off there—and a judicious use of the police force, the Government has succeeded in obtaining the allegiance, perhaps uneasy in parts, of all the armed forces of the country.

11. Despite scare stories about plots and rebellions, which I suspect were deliberately put about by Communist covert propaganda, confidence in the Government has grown very markedly. The gradual disappearance from the streets of Bangkok of the road blocks, police barriers and other obstacles for the motorist with which they had been studded eighteen months ago are the visible signs of relaxation of internal tension. Their replacement by an efficient system of police patrols in jeeps has helped to restore public confidence.

12. Though the Government are now in a much better position and much better equipped than they were a year ago to deal with an emergency—for instance riots that might be fomented by the large Chinese minority in Bangkok—there are still some weak links in their security precautions. In Bangkok, which is all-important because whoever controls the capital controls the country, the fire-fighting services are embryonic and incendiarism would be difficult to combat. The other public services are also inadequate, the capacity of the Bangkok electricity and water works having been far out-stripped by building development. As a result light failures and water shortages (which are always round the corner) are capable of further dislocating the life of the city.

13. *Party Politics.*—There are still a few, probably about ten, members of the Siamese Parliament whose allegiance is to the exiled Pridi; nominally, however, they belong to parties with differing labels or call themselves " Independents." A few of these men are fellow travellers and Communist sympathisers as is known from their connexion with the publication of Communist literature and with the appearance in October of the Stockholm Peace Appeal.

14. But the most powerful " Independent," Nai Tiang Sirikhand, is still a dark horse. He cannot be described as a Communist or Communist sympathiser. He was always a staunch supporter of Pridi, but in the last two years he has frequently sided with Pibul in the Assembly. On the other hand he represents a north-eastern constituency, bordering on Indo-China and is strongly opposed to the Government's Indo-China policy. Two years ago Nai Tiang was charged with sedition and accused of having formed a " separatist " movement in the north-east. At that time he apparently succeeded in coming to terms with the field-marshal and the case petered out. Now Nai Tiang is reported to be in touch with the Vietminh, who would seem to be the natural allies of troublemakers in the north-east. He has probably not a sufficiently strong following to do much by himself but could be expected to achieve prominence in a " quisling " Government.

15. The official parliamentary opposition to Field-Marshal Pibul's Government continues to be led by Nai Khuang, whose Democrat Party is about thirty strong in the Lower House. Though having some honest and able men this party is hampered by the knowledge that, even in the event of a parliamentary victory they would be unable to wield power. In consequence their criticism is not usually constructive. The most that can be said (and perhaps the most that would be claimed by the Opposition) is that they have from time to time focused public attention on abuses or mismanagement with which the Government would otherwise have got away. As the year closed Nai Khuang's Democrat Party was further than ever from power, having lost a number of members to other parties.

16. Parliamentary support for the Government rests with the "United Parties," a coalition of the "Right is Might," "National Socialist Democratic" and "People's" Groups, all of which support the field-marshal, but which otherwise are guided by different personal allegiances and have no clearly defined ideological basis. The personal ambitions and rivalries of the leaders of these groups, from which are not excluded considerations of financial gain, have from time to time found expression in virulent criticism of one or other of Pibul's Ministers. In consequence there have been during the year a number of Cabinet reshuffles.

17. *Corruption.*—Pibul no more than Pridi has been able to check this disease. Corruption is rampant in political circles, in the higher command of the armed forces and among senior civil servants and the disease spreads far down the ladder. From time to time the Government has professed its intention of taking energetic measures against this evil, but there are no signs of effective action.

18. An example of corruption in the army, which is also an example of the effectiveness—or ineffectiveness—of the parliamentary opposition and the press, was furnished in May by the now famous case of the Bren gun carriers. After an enquiry had been forced upon the Government, 210 out of 250 of these vehicles which had been ordered by the army through a local firm from surplus stocks in Ceylon were stated to be useless. They had been purchased for a handsome figure from official funds, a large proportion of which was misappropriated. It is characteristic that the culprits in this case should not yet have been brought to book; though they have been prosecuted, the case against them drags on and is now well nigh bogged to a standstill by the intrigues of the influential ones involved.

19. It may be a hopeful sign that the Prime Minister made a private enquiry of a member of this embassy concerning the measures which are taken in the United Kingdom to prevent corruption among Government servants, in reply to which he was furnished with various documents, including the proceedings of the Lynskey Tribunal. It remains to be seen what kind of inspiration the field-marshal will derive from their study. It is unlikely that he will derive much. With continuing economic prosperity and easy profits for everyone, the temptation to corrupt practices is too great and too profitable for all from the highest to the lowest.

20. *Communism.*—Apart from the spread of communism to the Chinese minority, which constitutes a separate problem, it is generally considered that conditions in Siam are unfavourable to the spread of Communist ideology. There are certainly no signs yet that the Siamese peasant has become infected nor that the small minority of urban dwellers have much sympathy with communism. But this is not a time for complacency, and the general rise in the cost of living, the low salaries still paid to all functionaries and universal corruption are causes of discontent, particularly in urban areas, which can be exploited by Communist propaganda, and which, in the event of an economic slump, would prove highly dangerous.

21. Throughout the year the volume of Left-wing propaganda increased and it was noticeable that several of the daily newspapers (most of which are unsympathetic to the Government) had gone very far to the left. The local version of the Stockholm Peace Appeal (already referred to in paragraph 13 above) was launched through the columns of a Communist weekly. The very small minority of Siamese Communists and sympathisers are, therefore, active through the Bangkok press. The Bangkok newspapers, though greater in number than those of any other capital city, are for the most part discredited and dishonest and their low standard is a handicap to their political influence. Their influence should, however, not be under-estimated, for it should be remembered that the average reader does not know what to expect in the way of high standards from his newspaper, and what he sees in his paper is all that he ever learns of the local political scene.

22. The counter-measures taken by the Government include energetic action against the dissemination of printed Communist propaganda, and, in the long term, the promise of the improvement of the conditions of the people by large-scale development projects financed by the World Bank loan, American aid and by United Nations Specialised Agencies, such as the World Health Organisation and U.N.E.S.C.O.

23. A general deterrent to communism is the knoweldge of most Siamese that it is synonymous with Chinese domination and to combat it the Government are able to rely on native patriotism and the instinct of the Siamese for self-preservation. Some sort of puppet Communist régime could no doubt be patched up if the country were overwhelmed by force, or if American and British support were withdrawn or withheld at a critical moment. In this last resort there would be no lack of volunteers for guerilla activities or other forms of resistance which could be worked up against the tyranny.

24. *Relations with Chinese in Siam.*—Thanks to the fact that Chinese representation in Siam has been limited to the ineffectual activities of the Kuo Min-tang Chargé d'Affaires, the Government relations with the Chinese minority of over 3 million have been comparatively easy during the year. Active Chinese Communists have been arrested in larger numbers, stricter—though still by no means completely effective—control has been placed on Chinese immigration and the activities of Chinese schools have been curtailed. But Pibul has been too clever to goad this large community into open resentment. He has known full well that it is intent on its business activities, with little regard for politics, and he has allowed the Chinese merchant to draw full benefit from the country's economic prosperity, so long as the Chinese merchant has been willing—as he always has—to pay a goodly toll in the way of bribes to officialdom. The strength of militant Chinese communism in Siam remains of unknown quantity. If the strength is considerable, it has never shown itself to be so. The official view is that the Government, with its regenerated and alert police force, could contain any internal disturbance which might occur.

Part II.—External Affairs

25. The greatest threat to Siam's existence as a nation at the present time comes from China. Communism is identified with China and is seen for what it is: an aggressive doctrine under cover of which China (and Russia) hope to achieve expansionist aims. As a result Siamese relations both with neighbouring territories and with the Great Powers during the past year have been wholly determined by opposition to communism.

26. *Relations with the Neighbouring Territories, Malaya.*—Both we and the Siamese have good reason to wish to see the end of bandit activities in Malaya, and adequate food supplies are an essential prerequisite. The need for a stable central Government in Siam, safeguarding the flow of rice supplies to Malaya, remains, therefore, of paramount importance.

27. Locally, there has been a steady improvement in the arrangements for border police co-operation between the two territories. The year opened with a visit by the Siamese Chief of Police to his counterpart in Malaya, which Colonel Gray returned in October. In May the Border Police Agreement, concluded in 1949, which enables Malay and Siamese police patrols to operate on either side of the border, was extended to the whole of the State of Kelantan, and the Siamese Province of Naradhivas, thus covering the entire length of the common frontier.

28. It is reliably reported that Communist bandits engaged in operations in Malaya have established camps in some very difficult country in a portion of Siamese territory known as the " Betong Salient," which juts out into the State of Perak. Combined operations against them have so far met with little success, but more ambitious operations against them are planned in 1951.

29. *Indo-China.*—There are in North-Eastern Siam some Annamite refugees (variously estimated from 40,000 to 70,000). They are by no means all necessarily Communists. Indeed, 10,000 are known to be Roman Catholics. Their presence in Siam has for the last two or three years conditioned Siamese public and official opinion towards the problems of Indo-China. As I have reported separately at different times, there is in this country a legacy of mistrust of and hostility towards the French, which the Vietminh refugees have exploited. They have no need to bring Communist propaganda into play. Tales of straightforward nationalism pitted against brutal French oppression have been accepted without question and are widespread.

30. It was, therefore, an act of considerable political courage on the part of Field-Marshal Pibul when, on 28th

February, he announced recognition of the Governments of Vietnam (Bao Dai), Cambodia and Laos, within the French Union. There was no doubt of the unpopularity of this move, which was made against the advice of his officials, and which was the immediate cause of the resignation of his Minister of Foreign Affairs.

31. Pibul was no doubt acting for immediate advantages in the shape of increased American aid, which he expected this unequivocal alignment with the Western Powers to bring, but he should also be credited with the wisdom of having risen above the level of petty local antagonisms. Pibul did not allow these to distract him from the implications for Siam of a Viet-Minh victory in Indo-China. This would undoubtedly engulf Cambodia and Laos as well as Annam, and if the whole of Indo-China were under Viet-Minh control this would, in effect, bring the might of Communist China rolling down to Siam's border. Even without open intervention there would be boundless scope for the planning of subversive movements in Siam, from bases in Cambodia or Laos, and the likelihood of the large Annamite community in Siam being roused to active rebellion.

32. Following the recognition of Vietnam and the other French-sponsored Governments of Indo-China a number of administrative measures were taken by the Siamese Government aimed at driving the Annamite refugees back over the border, or restricting their residence in certain specified areas away from the border, where their movements could be more easily controlled. The Annamite refugees themselves, rapacious and hardworking people for the most part, were in any case beginning to outstay their welcome and the measures against them appear to have been fairly strictly enforced. Protests read over Peking Radio and petitions from the Burmese Buddhist clergy about their treatment have hardened Siamese opinion against this Annamite minority group, because of resentment against what was regarded as interference in Siam's internal affairs.

33. The Siamese Government have cooperated over the prevention of arms smuggling through Siamese territory to the Viet-Minh forces, and information on the subject is exchanged at an inter-departmental committee. As a result of the decision of the British, French and United States Foreign Ministers in London in May, this committee was set up in Bangkok in July, and the French, British and American Embassies are also represented. There has also been a considerable improvement in the attitude of Siamese local officials in the north-east border areas towards the French or French-sponsored civilian and military authorities on the other side.

34. *Burma.*—The Siamese are finding the Burmese rather prickly in their official dealings. This may have been due to the weakness of the Central Burmese Government. Now that their position has improved, relations are correspondingly easier. But the Siamese are worried by the strength of Communist activities in Burma. Having at the best of times very little idea of the difference between socialism and communism, the Siamese Government does not distinguish clearly between the various shades of red in the Burmese scene, of which they are puzzled, and alarmed spectators with a ringside seat.

35. In July the Siamese Government sent a battalion of police to the north to be in readiness for any trouble that might be caused by Chinese nationalist troops who had come down from Yunnan into the Shan State of Kengtung, and had encamped on the banks of the river which marks the border with Siam. The Burmese Government are understood to have protested to the Siamese Government for allowing these Chinese units to revictual in Siam, as they claimed that it interfered with their plans for driving out of Burmese territory the uninvited alien soldiery.

36. At the time of writing Chinese nationalist troops are still in Kengtung, but have moved further inland, away from the Siamese border. There is no doubt that their senior officers have been in touch with the military attaché of the Chinese Embassy at Bangkok, and although at first the Siamese viewed with alarm activities which they thought might bring down the thunder of Chinese Communist retaliation, by the end of the year Field-Marshal Pibul appears to have felt sufficiently protected by American aid to connive at the setting up at Mesai on the northern Siamese border of a Kuo Min-tang office to act as a clearing house for the exchange of information and instructions between the Government of Chiang Kai-shek, his followers cut off in Kengtung and possibly underground supporters active in Yunnan. The policy is not to the liking of some senior Siamese military and civilian officers, who still consider it needless provocation of the Chinese People's Government.

Relations with the United Nations and with the Major Powers

37. *The Korean Crisis.*—First Siamese official reactions to the United Nations were that Siam could do little to help at a time when all the country's efforts needed to be bent to the improvement of its own defences. But in this, as in the case of the policy towards Indo-China, the Prime Minister adopted a more imaginative approach and, despite strong Opposition criticism in the Assembly and much misgiving among his officials and the ranks of his supporters, Field-Marshal Pibul rapidly made an offer of 4,000 men, the first by any Asian country. Subsequently, he also agreed to supply 40,000 tons of rice.

38. The greatly increased goodwill which this move has earned him with the United States and the very considerable enthusiasm with which it was greeted inside the country, thus strengthening the Government's position, both appear to have justified the field-marshal's initiative. The Thai Expeditionary Force at present consists of only about 1,500 men (the American military authorities were loath to spare sufficient modern equipment for the whole force) and their part must perforce be small. Three units of the Royal Thai Navy (corvettes) convoyed the troops and have seen some action in Korean waters. Whatever the realities of the situation thousands in Siam are experiencing vicarious thrills from the exploits of the Siamese troops, which they take for granted. Recruiting for the Thai Expeditionary Force went with a swing and was rapidly oversubscribed.

39. At the end of the year there was in Japan a Siamese Military Mission, under the command of General Prince Phisit Diskul, and a diplomatic mission headed by an able career diplomat formerly stationed in China, Nai Sanga Nilkamhaeng. Whatever other results the Korean venture may have it will have provided the Americans and others with some practical experience of collaboration with the Siamese in the field and in matters of administration.

Economic, Technical and Cultural Assistance from United Nations Agencies

40. About 100 years ago King Mongkut and his successor, King Chulalongkorn, adopted the policy of hiring European advisers for a number of departments of the Siamese Administration. They did this, not so much from economic necessity, as for political reasons. It was realised by these absolute monarchs that Western civilisation was inevitable and that they ran serious risks of foreign interference unless they took steps to introduce it into Siam themselves. The Siamese were on the whole lucky in their choice of men, and the policy paid very good dividends.

41. Once the danger from encroachment by imperialist Western Powers waned, the advisers went into a decline. Already by 1932 their hey-day was past, and the promoters of the *coup d'état* got rid of most of those who were left. (The British Financial Adviser—the last of whom is due to retire in March 1951—and the American Foreign Affairs Adviser—the last one terminated his connexion with the Siamese Government in 1949—were survivals.)

42. The advent of numbers of foreign experts of all kinds on short-term contracts or on loan from other Governments in connexion with development projects is comparable to what happened in the days of the absolute monarchy. Economically speaking, Siam is a sound country. There is a favourable balance of trade and no unemployment. Nevertheless, for reasons which have been touched on under the heading of "Communism" in paragraphs 20–23 above, it is essential to the country's survival that it shall not be left behind in the race for the development of backward areas which is going on in the world at the moment.

43. Mention is made in the economic section of this report of the loan from the World Bank obtained by the Siamese Government for various projects. Lesser, but nevertheless important projects, have been sponsored by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund and the World Health Organisation (*e.g.*, an anti-malarial campaign, a scheme for the improvement of maternity and child welfare services, a campaign against venereal disease and yaws, nutrition advice campaign, &c.). A far-reaching reorganisation of the educational system is being investigated with the assistance of an expert (from New Zealand) supplied by U.N.E.S.C.O.

44. Though of less immediate practical value, the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East, whose secretariat is in Bangkok, may have given some slight impetus to irrigation and transport development, and the Food and Agriculture Organisation have encouraged forestry and agricultural experiments. The presence at Bangkok of the experts of various nations and their activities have served to focus the attention of the Siamese Government and public on

the practical workings of the United Nations agencies.

45. *Siamese Relations with the United States.*—The Korean war heightened enthusiasm for the United Nations, and, for a time at least, it seemed that the Government would take advantage of United Nations propaganda to counter accusations that the Siamese Government were " selling out " to foreigners, such as inevitably arise from the acceptance of foreign aid. But, in the closing months of the year there was such an increase in the volume of purely American aid and in the numbers of American personnel that prudence was thrown to the winds. Instead, all forms of external aid have come to be thought of as mainly United States aid. From many points of view this is a pity. In particular I feel that United States aid would be more effective in the long term if it remained masked behind the United Nations. It is easier for a single nation to make itself unpopular than for a group, and the Americans by themselves will have to bear the full brunt of any failures or mistakes that may occur. It is admittedly impossible to make an omelette without breaking any eggs, but for all the good that may come to Siam from American interest in the country, some symptoms of anti-American feeling are already appearing and must be recorded.

46. The following are the main sources of American aid. In July an educational and cultural agreement was signed between the United States and Siam, providing for the expenditure of 1 million dollars on research work and cultural exchanges between America and Siamese research students. In September a large-scale economic and technical co-operation agreement, on the usual Economic Co-operation Act lines, was concluded and its provisions are being implemented. Funds and technicians have already been made available for a number of projects. In October, following recommendations made by the Melby–Erskine Mission which toured the Far East and South-East Asia earlier in the year, a military aid agreement was signed providing *inter alia* for the equipment of nine Siamese battalions over a period of two years, the supply of coast-guard vessels and some land transport for the navy as well as some armament for the air force. Under the impetus of an American Military Aid Group established at Bangkok (which amounts to a full-scale military mission) this programme is being implemented more speedily and more fully than was at first anticipated.

47. *Siamese Relations with the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth.*—Sir Geoffrey Thompson reported in 1949 a certain cooling-off in Anglo-Siamese relations. The ambassador himself left for the United Kingdom on leave in June. Neither in the first part of the year nor since his departure has the trend been reversed. The reasons are not far to seek. On the one hand, a host of other pre-occupations have prevented the United Kingdom from according to Siam that individual attention which is needed; secondly, agreement over Commonwealth war claims remained outstanding until the end of the year, and this question continued to be an unpleasant reminder to the Siamese of our war settlement with them; thirdly, as has been seen above, the Siamese are leaning increasingly heavily on American support. We have the less reason for complaint since the Siamese have co-operated satisfactorily with us on all matters of importance. One positive ultimate gain for British influence can be recorded, thanks to the availability of sterling exchange and to the marked preference of the Siamese for the " old-fashioned " characteristics of English education: there were, by the end of 1950, more (over 400) Siamese students in the United Kingdom than ever before.

48. *Supply of Arms from British Sources.*—From the point of view of general security of the area American aid is for the common good. But it is imperative that our plans for this area should be closely co-ordinated with those of the Americans, otherwise this country may fall between two stools. Although there is no written agreement about it, the general theory appears to be that the Americans are equipping Siamese forces for the defence principally of the north and north-east, while the equipment of Siamese forces for the defence of the south is left to the British.

49. During June 1949 a small quantity of arms and equipment were supplied from the United Kingdom (against repayment) for the use of Siamese infantry battalions in South Siam. But this consignment had been talked of for too long, and was marred by its meagreness and by an impression that it made grudgingly. A British offer of further arms and equipment for three Siamese infantry divisions was made in February 1950, but Siamese interest in arms from Britain suddenly dropped, and despite assurances from the American Embassy that any American aid would be complementary, and not alternative to British, it soon became

apparent that the Siamese (not unnaturally) preferred to rely wholly on free deliveries from the United States than to purchase what we had to offer. (It may be noted here in passing that in July the Siamese are suspected of having received, but turned down, a Soviet offer of some Yak fighter aircraft and other equipment.) The Siamese forces continued to send officers to the United Kingdom for training.

50. Some Spitfire aircraft are being made available to the Siamese through Messrs. Vickers Armstrong, but, owing to the Western rearmament programme, Vampire jet aircraft which the Royal Thai Air Force had also hoped to obtain may not now be forthcoming. Chipmunk training aircraft are on order from the United Kingdom. Each of these contracts has been one long struggle, and it is not surprising that the Siamese should have derived from their negotiations the impression that when it comes to the point we either do not want or are not in a position to help them. If so much of their national income was not sterling derived from the sale of rice, they would have gone elsewhere for their requirements much sooner. As it is the Royal Thai Air Force is one of the services in which by the close of the year there was a swing away from reliance on the British to co-operation with the Americans, and a section of the American Military Aid Group is now firmly entrenched at Don Muang, the Royal Thai Air Force Base.

51. The Service which has received the most help from Britain is the police force, whose requirements were in any case smaller than those of the other three Services, and for whom the American aid programme made no initial provision. Siamese police officers have been sent for specialised training courses to Malaya and the United Kingdom, and a large variety of orders, including transport, wireless equipment, guns and ammunition, has been made by the police force in the United Kingdom.

52. *The Colombo Plan.*—The invitation to Siam to participate in the plan was issued at the very time that confidential negotiations were in progress between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the American Embassy for the conclusion of an economic aid agreement. Not only did the Siamese regard it originally as a belated effort on our part to " gate-crash " the party, but it may be conjectured that because the invitation was conveyed to them (on 19th June) by the Australian Consul-General they suspected that for some reason of their own His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom were half-ashamed to be associated with it.

53. The Australian Consul-General received no reply for several weeks despite supporting *démarches* made by myself and by the Indian Minister. A team of experts from His Majesty's Treasury, the Government of Australia and the Government of India visited Bangkok in July to explain the plan, but had difficulty in finding anyone on the Siamese side sufficiently interested to listen. It was partly as a result of their efforts, however, that the Siamese agreed to send a delegate to the London meeting in August, without committing themselves to full participation in the plan. Despite the favourable report put in by their delegate on his return, the Siamese Government were inclined to refuse to participate further in the Colombo Plan because they considered that they had already accepted sufficient commitments with the Americans and with the World Bank, and that they had not sufficient trained personnel available to follow up all these development plans simultaneously. As a result of representations made by me to the Prime Minister, and also, it may be assumed of American persuasion, this Siamese attitude was modified and, although they have not yet said " yes " to the plan, the Siamese Government were represented as observers at the meeting in Colombo in September.

54. *Civil Air Agreements.*—Civil air agreements were signed at Bangkok between the Government of Ceylon and the Government of Siam, and between the Government of Siam and the United Kingdom. For the first of these, which was concluded in half a day—surely a record for this type of negotiation—the Government of Ceylon sent a delegation led by the Minister of Transport, the Hon. Sir John Kotelawala, assisted by his Director of Civil Aviation. The signature took place on 24th February, 1950.

55. Negotiations for the agreement with the United Kingdom were initiated in May, and with the assistance of Mr. D. Muir of the Ministry of Civil Aviation, an agreement was initialled *ad referendum* on 17th July after some strenuous bargaining. It was signed by Field-Marshal Pibul, at that time acting for the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and myself on 10th November, 1950.

56. The Anglo-Siamese civil air agreement puts on a regular basis the *ad hoc* arrangements under which British civil airlines (which at present include B.O.A.C. and commercial companies based on Hong Kong

and Singapore) had been operating through Bangkok. With its greatly improved facilities, and the excellent technical services afforded there, Don Muang, the airport for Bangkok, has become the most important turn-table for air traffic in South-East Asia. It was, therefore, important that British rights and facilities there should be safeguarded. (Negotiations for a civil air agreement were to have taken place in 1947 but were frustrated by the *coup d'état* which put Field-Marshal Pibul back in power and the ensuing period during which His Majesty's Government was only in *de facto* relations with the Siamese Government.)

Economic and Financial

57. The continued development of the main economic trends of 1949 brought to Siam in 1950 a further substantial increase in prosperity. Her total foreign trade ran at nearly 25 per cent. by value above the rate for 1949, when there had been a similar increase over 1948, and she ended the year once again with a favourable trade balance.

58. Rice exports increased by some 300,000 tons over the previous year to a figure of nearly 1½ million tons and Siam remained the largest single exporter in the world. Some 630,000 tons, representing over 40 per cent. of the total, went to British territories in South-East Asia which depend very largely on this country for their vital food supplies. This quantity included 439,500 tons under Government contracts for 1950, which the Siamese Government conscientiously fulfilled, albeit with some difficulty, during the closing months of the year. Negotiations, which began in September, for new contracts for the supply of 415,000 tons during 1951 to the British South-East Asian territories were still continuing at the end of the year.

59. It is estimated that the above and other sterling sales of rice in 1950 brought Siam some £37 million, that sales to Japan under an open account agreement brought a credit of some United States $34 million and that sales to other destinations accounted for approximately United States $28 million. Alongside this increase in her income from rice, which is traditionally the mainstay of her economy, Siam registered substantial gains in her other major exports, rubber, tin and timber, mainly teak. This was particularly the case in the latter part of the year when, as a consequence of the international situation, world demand for rubber and tin increased and prices soared to record heights. A large share in the earnings from tin went to British Commonwealth-owned mining companies, most of which had completed their post-war rehabilitation. Some 70 per cent. of the total exports of tin ore was sold to Malaya for smelting and added appreciably to the dollar earnings of the sterling area. Rubber exports were almost entirely direct to the United States.

60. The United Kingdom benefited from the accompanying rise in Siamese imports. Direct exports to Siam from the United Kingdom were valued at £6,850,000 as against £4,690,000 in 1949, which latter was already an increase of nearly 70 per cent. over the preceding year. The absolute increase in 1950 represented also a slight increase in our share of the overall trade. Statistics are not yet available, but there is reason to believe that a higher share was also taken by indirect exports from the United Kingdom through the entrepôt ports of Singapore, Hong Kong and Penang. There is also, however, reason to believe that direct imports from the United States increased substantially and that Japan enjoyed a larger share of the total trade than in 1949, despite reductions in shipments via Hong Kong and Singapore. The open account trade agreement for 1950 provided for a direct exchange of goods of United States $45 million either way, and it is probable that these figures were nearly reached, with a small balance in Siam's favour, as against exchange of only some United States $20 million either way in 1949. Imports consisted chiefly of textiles and consumer goods, but there was a fair percentage of rolling-stock and machinery; exports were mainly the rice mentioned above. Thanks largely to the increase in Siam's overall rice exports, these shipments did not interfere seriously with supplies to British territories.

61. With the general rise in trade, local branches of British banks and locally-established British merchant houses have enjoyed growing prosperity There have been indications that a greater proportion of the import business is passing back into the hands of the larger firms, mainly British, and that a number of the local mushroom concerns which sprang up in the few years after the war are losing ground.

62. Complete figures for Government revenue and expenditure have not yet been issued, but by the end of October actual revenue was running above estimates and exceeded actual expenditure, including items

for which budgetary provision had been based on loans. Progress on major development projects, however, awaited the outcome of negotiations for assistance from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. These negotiations resulted at the end of October in the grant of loans totalling the equivalent of United States $25·4 million for a major irrigation scheme, which in a few years' time is expected to increase substantially the production of rice, and for the development of the railways and of the port of Bangkok, including the dredging of the river bar to permit larger vessels to come upstream. Arrangements are now going ahead for the early implementation of these projects, which should benefit considerably the economy of the country.

63. Negotiations for the settlement of Commonwealth war claims against Siam, which dragged tiresomely on through the year, were finally concluded by agreement on 3rd January, 1951, for the payment of a lump sum of £5,224,220 in settlement of all outstanding obligations. This represents virtually full payment of claims considered valid by the Commonwealth Governments concerned, who have since received payment and are arranging for early distribution to individual claimants. It is an eminently satisfactory settlement, as it removes the only major difficulty in Anglo-Siamese relations since the end of the war.

Conclusion

64. In his last review, Sir Geoffrey Thompson paid tribute to the political sagacity of Field-Marshal Pibul. There is every reason to repeat and emphasise this tribute in the light of his leadership of Siam in 1950.

65. As far as British interests are concerned, we have reason to be grateful to the field-marshal for having maintained peace and order in this country (in contrast to what has happened in neighbouring countries) so that British territories in South-East Asia obtained their vitally needed rice supplies, and so that active bandit insurrection was not allowed to spread into South Siam to the detriment of our efforts against the Communist bandits of Malaya. In addition British commercial interests in Siam have flourished. If American influence has increased in Siam so very largely, it has been to our real benefit that it should do so.

66. At the opening of the year, faced with the Chinese threat from the north, Pibul boldly threw in his lot with the Western Powers and with the United Nations. Maintaining and strengthening his position at home, he answered the call of the United Nations for action in Korea, accepted with both hands the aid of the United States, the International Bank and other international agencies. When, at the end of the year, with the reversals in Korea and strong rumours of imminent collapse in Indo-China, the prospect looked distinctly bleak, he may and almost certainly had in mind that he had established a sufficient credit with the Western Powers to enable him to call justifiably for immediate and effective help in the event of a Communist military threat at Siam's frontiers, which Siam's own military strength could not be expected to contain. He also almost equally certainly had in mind that, if such a call were not answered promptly, he could rightly and for the immediate safety of his country, arrange terms with the aggressor. But the first crisis passed and in the early months of 1951 the promises of United States and international aid began to turn into reality with the arrival of American arms and the signing of contracts for economic development projects, so that at the time of writing the prospects are better. If Chinese communism is contained north of Indo-China, then not only can British interests look forward to a continuation of the same benefits from Siam which they received in 1950, but to a useful strengthening of this country's military position and economy which cannot but increase those benefits and enhance the country's great value as a stabilising and, therefore, anti-Communist element in the society of the nations of South-East Asia. It should continue to be British policy to take every possible practical step to strengthen Siam in this position.

U.K. Pol. S.E.A.

Thailand
24/4/51

NEW APPOINTMENTS--The Premier's office announces the following appointments: Civil Court Chief Judge (Phra Bunyakan Kovit) appointed Supreme Court Judge; LUANG CHAKKRAPANI, Justice Commissioner, 4th Region, appointed Civil Court Chief Judge; Nai SANYA THAMMASAK, Appeal Court Judge, appointed Justice Commissioner, 4th Region; Phra SINLAPASIT WINITCHAI, Appeal Court Division Chief Judge, appointed Supreme Court Judge; Phra NITITHAMMA PRAKORN, Justice Commissioner, 3d Region, appointed Appeal Court Division Chief Judge; Phra (Bunyaphat Pattipan), Appeal Court Division Chief Judge, appointed Justice Commissioner, 3d Region; Phra PHIBUN AISAWAN, Justice Commissioner, 3d Region, appointed Appeal Court Division Chief Judge; Nai CHAICHAREON SANTASIRI, Appeal Court Judge, appointed Justice Commissioner, 5th Region. All appointments effective Apr. 2. (Bangkok, Apr. 20, 1951--B)

453/2/1

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SECRET

OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER
FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

Ref: 2/147.

11th April, 1951.

Dear Sir,

With reference to recent communications on the subject of the situation in Thailand, ending with your letter No. 154/64 of the 30th January, I am directed by the High Commissioner to inform you that the United Kingdom Charge d'Affaires has enquired of the Thai Minister for Foreign Affairs whether he could give any information in regard to recent reports that orders had been issued by the Thai Government for the retention in the Service, of conscripts due for release on 1st April for a further three or four months. The reports added that this action was taken because trouble was expected in Thailand in mid-April. The Thai Minister for Foreign Affairs informed the United Kingdom Charge d'Affaires that these reports were correct. The Thai Government had, from various reports that it had received, concluded that an intervention by the Chinese Forces on behalf of Ho Chi Minh in Indo-China might take place towards the middle of this month and as such an intervention would probably completely change the external picture, the Thai Government had decided, as a first step, not to release these conscripts on 1st April, but to keep them in Service. The Thai Government was also apprehensive of coming events in South Yunan and the Shan States. It was thought that the Kuomintang Troops in that area were about to launch important guerilla attacks on the Chinese Communists. It was also suspected that the Chinese Communists had come to terms with various Shan States who had been won-over by the Chinese promises of independence and it was consequently feared that a Communist incursion into that area might be imminent. Two Chinese divisions were, indeed, reported to be stationed on the Burma Road for this purpose.

2. As regards the internal situation, the Minister for Foreign Affairs said that no trouble was expected either from the Chinese or the Thai Communist elements. He denied that the Government were worried about South Thailand and dismissed, as groundless, a report in the local newspaper that the Chinese were thought to be plotting to seize Kra Isthmus. The Viet Minh refugees in North East Thailand might possibly be a source of trouble but they were quiet for the present and were being carefully watched. He finally emphasised that the Government's main preoccupation was to prepare for a possible Chinese attack on Indo-China which might be followed :

(a) By a French appeal to the United Nations for assistance, and

(b) By a direct threat to Thailand itself.

3. In regard to (a) above, His Excellency intimated that the Government had reached no decision as to whether or not to send aid to Indo-China in the event of a call from the United Nations.

4. In reply to an inquiry as to whether further preparations could be contemplated, the Minister for Foreign Affairs replied that further steps might be considered at the meetings of the Central Security Council and that the United Kingdom Charge d'Affaires would be promptly informed. The latter impressed upon the Minister for Foreign Affairs that he was vitally interested

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in being kept informed of these measures, in view of British interests generally and of the proximity of Malaya in particular.

5. From the general tone of the Minister for Foreign Affairs' conversation, the United Kingdom Charge d'Affaires gathered that he was himself not particularly perturbed about the situation. The Prime Minister himself was indeed stated to be "most optimistic". The Commander-in-Chief of the Thai Air Force, on the other hand, was in some apprehension when he warned a member of the United Kingdom Embassy Staff to be "on the lookout" for trouble in the near future and said he feared the Chinese Communists, finding themselves foiled in Korea, would attack in the direction of Thailand. The Prime Minister and the Commander-in-Chief of the Thai Navy were, however, apparently unperturbed by this prospect.

6. The United Kingdom Charge d'Affaires reported that from general conversation with a variety of knowledgeable persons and from the tone of certain organs of the local press he does, however, detect a growing sense of uneasiness. He anticipated that when the news about conscripts was made public a fast flow of alarmist rumours could be expected. He saw no reason, however, for anticipating immediate or serious internal trouble in Thailand.

7. In communicating the above information to the Commonwealth authorities I am to emphasise that the action of the Thai Government is merely a reasonable precaution, that, as stated by the United Kingdom Charge d'Affaires, no serious internal trouble is anticipated in Thailand and that the rumours referred to in paragraph 1 above may well be without foundation.

8. I am sending two copies of this letter to the Secretary, Department of External Affairs.

Yours faithfully,

Sgd. J. Marjoribanks.

Official Secretary.

File No. 100/5/1.

Memo. No. 140 /51.

AUSTRALIAN CONSULATE-GENERAL,
BANGKOK, THAILAND.

3rd April, 1951.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
9 APR 1951
453/2/1

MEMORANDUM FOR:

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

I refer to your memorandum No. 75 of 20th March, 1951 (File 453/2/1) in which you quote a report by New Delhi Radio of 3rd March, 1951.

2. You will recall that the incident to which the report refers was mentioned in the summary of items of general interest for the period 7th to 13th March, 1951, forwarded with my memorandum No, 104/51 of 14th March.

3. I have been making further enquiries concerning this incident, but it seems that the evidence against Rear Admiral Thaharn Kamhiran is rather thin, and, in fact, not much importance is attached to the incident. Rear Admiral Thaharn has long been recognised as an opponent of the Government. He was suspected of complicity in the abortive coup of February, 1949, and was also concerned in the confused situation in December, 1949 and January, 1950 (See my Departmental Despatch No. 1/50 of 18th January, 1950). He has openly voiced his dissatisfaction with the Pibul regime, and I understand that he has recently been seen in the company of some other naval officers who are known to oppose the government. Some police officers were also involved.

4. Although Police and other officials to whom I have mentioned the incident are very reticent, it seems that certain remarks were made by Thaharn which indicated an embryonic plot to overthrow the government with naval and some police support. The extent of the support, however, was doubtful. It was on this evidence that a warrant was issued for the arrest of Thaharn, who so far has eva/ded capture.

1. W. Hardy Seen RLH 13/4 to see.

2. W.B.K. Copy to Defence (J.I.B.)

5. The only interesting feature of this incident was the apparent complicity of a few police officers, none of whom were of any high rank. The Police are for most part loyal to the Government, and, in fact, as I have reported earlier, the increase in the numbers and the efficiency of the Police force has principally been brought about as a Government counter to the other armed forces of Thailand. In spite of the complicity of a few police officers with Thaharn's designs, there is no evidence of any split in the police force which could alter the present position.

CONSUL-GENERAL.

F.J. / Ms with paper 10/4/51

File No. 20/1/2.

Memo No. 147/51.

6th April, 1951

CONFIDENTIAL.

MEMORANDUM for:

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

ANNUAL REPORT - 1950.

I refer to my memorandum No. 141/51 of 29th March, 1951 forwarding the Annual Report for this post for the year 1950.

2. The report erroneously omitted two matters which ought to to have been included, and I should be glad if the following paragraphs could be inserted:

1. Add the following paragraph after the existing paragraph 6:

"6A. An event of particular importance in the maintenance of internal unity and stability was the return, in March 1950, of His Majesty King Bhumibol Aduldet. The background of the young King's accession to the throne on the death of his brother King Ananda Mahidol, will be well known, and the present King's reluctance to return for the various ceremonies connected with his accession was very clear. When at last he did return for his formal coronation, the cremation of the late king, and his marriage to Queen Sirikit, the effect on the people, whose reverence for the Kingship has always been an important element in their national life (and of course also an important factor in their opposition to Communism), was very striking. The revival of the ancient ceremonies, with the colour and ritual which are so closely bound up with tradition, did much to remind the people of their long-standing unity under a monarchy. Whereas democracy as such is not fully understood or appreciated by the mass of the ordinary people, their loyalty to the King is for the most part clear and unqualified. It was unfortunate that the King did not remain, but it is understood that he will return in the latter part of 1951. In character, the King is not strong, but if only as a figure-head, his presence in Thailand, is of great importance."

2. Add after the existing paragraph 24 the following:

" 24A. The production of rubber during the year was very pleasing, and the rubber export was equal in value to the entire rice export. Thailand exported more than 100,000 tons of rubber, and, at the very high prices which were prevailing, the sum of the equivalent of Baht 200,000,000 was received from this source. The development of rubber production, which showed such satisfactory results in 1950, will undoubtedly be an important element in the Thai economy".

3. I regret the omission of these matters from the original report.

(Sgd.) A. H. Loomes

CONSUL-GENERAL.

CONFIDENTIAL

AUSTRALIAN CONSULATE-GENERAL. BANGKOK. THAILAND.

ANNUAL REPORT 1950.

ADMINISTRATION:

1. The Australian office staff at the commencement of the year comprised the Consul-General, one consular clerk, and one clerk typist. The consular clerk, Mr. J.F. Knox, having completed his term of duty, departed from Bangkok in September, and was replaced by Mr. R.N. Hamilton with the rank of Vice-Consul. Nai Narong Phongmaliwal was also employed in the office as clerk-interpreter.

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS:

A. INTERNAL.

2. In spite of an unsettled beginning of the year 1950, internal politics in Thailand maintained a stability which was both unusual and heartening. The Government's control has been greatly extended, and its position much strengthened.

3. The year began, however, with two disturbing incidents. The first was the aftermath of the sudden retirement, in December, of the Chief of the Air Force, Air Marshal Luang Thevaritthi Panluck, and the Director General of the Department of Territorial Defence, Colonel Khun Silp Sornchai (the latter was subsequently reinstated). These incidents, with the consequent rumours and specualtion which tend in Thailand to distort and magnify all events, created a feeling of intense uneasiness which seemed to presage a troubled year. It was in this atmosphere that the second disturbing incident occurred. On 27th January, General Luang Kach Songgram (Depty Commander in Chief of the Army),who had long been a source of embarrassment to the Government, was arrested by the order of the Prime Minister, Field Marshal Pibul Songgram, on the ground that he was planning a military coup d'etat. Documents were seized which indicated an intention of seizing power and of assassinating the Prime Minister, Lt.Gen. Phin Chunhawan (Commander in Chief of the Army) and Major General (now Lt. General) Phao Sriyanond. A quantity of arms was also discovered. It seemed however very doubtful whether Kach had sufficient support to overthrow the Government. In order to avoid bloodshed, which seemed probable if Kach were detained in custody in Tailand, the British Ambassador, at the request of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, agreed to allow Kach to proceed by special plane to Hong Kong, where, I understand, he still remains.

4. The outcome of the Kach incident was on the whole satisfactory for the Government, as it removed a disturbing element and, as well, increased the prestige of the Prime Minister. It also served to clarify the political allegiance of some influential men, such as Lt. General Phin Chunhawan and Lt. General Phao Sriyanond.

5. After this inauspicious beginning, internal politics acquired a much greater stability during the course of the year. An important factor in this acquisition of stability was the growth of the Police Force into a powerful pro-Government instrument to act as a counter to any aggressive move on the part of the Navy or of the dissident elements of the Army, which previously were the source of the greatest anxiety to the Government. The growth of the Police Forcehas brought about not only a feeling of greater security for the Pibul Government but also a greater degree of peace and order within the country itself. Although

...../much still remains

much still remains to be done to make Thailand a well-ordered and peaceful country, the power of the Police is certainly a step in the right direction. Its growth is of course not without some danger, especially as history in this country has clearly indicated that armed forces (however called) are, by their interference in politics, foundations of a Government rather than the instruments and servants of it. The growth of the Police Force has been accompanied by a great rise in power of Lt. Gen. Phao Sriyanond, the Deputy Director General of the Police Department, who, in fact through not in office, is undoubtedly the real leader of the Police.

6. It is important to note that the greater stability of the Government has not been accompanied by any substantial improvement in its efficiency. The end of the period under review did not show any diminution of the corrupt practices nepotism and the like which has been a feature of the Thai administration. Certainly some steps were taken to reduce corruption in official circles, but the results were negligible in fact. This state of affairs led the leader of the Opposition, Nai Khuang Aphaiwongse, a man of much ability but with little opportunity of using it to advantage, to introduce into the House of the People's Representatives on 8th November, a motion for a general debate, which, if successful from his point of view, would overthrow the Government. There was, however, little hope that he would succeed, and, in fact, the debate, because of technicalities concerning the presentation of the motion, did not in fact take place.

6A → see next memo

B. EXTERNAL.

7. The year 1950 was a very full and important one from the point of view of Thailand's foreign policy, and the country's relations with other States.

8. Although some countries, notably the United States and to some extent the United Kingdom, realising the strategic importance in maintaining Thailand as an anti-communist bulwark against aggression from the North and North-East, had shown their interest in this country and had openly wooed the Thais, the Government had not at the commencement of 1950, clearly indicated its intentions as to the position it would take in world politics. Its voting in the United Nations and its general attitude towards the Western Powers had however indicated a tendency towards a support of these Powers. During the year, however, the Government finally committed itself, by definite overt acts, to follow the general overall policy of the democratic group.

9. The first act in this direction was the recognition in March, 1950, of the Associated States of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. This recognition was accorded in spite of the opposition of several members of Cabinet, including the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nai Phot Sarasin, and resulted in the latter's resignation. The recognition of these States was not based upon any legalistic argument, and indeed the principal reason put forward by the Prime Minister in favour of recognition was that "this step would demonstrate to the world the anti-communistic feeling of Thailand and would be a practical step in halting the spread of Communism in South-East Asia". The other reasons, certainly not altruistic, were that recognition of the three States, demonstrating Thailand to be in opposition to Communism, would make it more likely that Thailand would obtain economic and political support, and, if necessary, military support, from the United States, and, further that recognition would win for Thailand three allies who could help to protect Thailand's independence by serving as buffer states between this country and communist groups.

...../10. The second clear act

10. The second clear act of Thailand in support of the policy of the Western Powers was the decision in July, 1950, for the despatch to Korea of a Thai military force. Although the Thai military contingent was considerably less in numbers than the figure at first indicated, the gesture was a further indication of the position which Thailand intended to take in world affairs.

11. The attitude of the United States to Thailand was undoubtedly confirmed by these acts on the part of the Thai Government. The holding of a Conference in Bangkok of United States Representatives under the chairmanship of Mr. Phillip C. Jessup in February, 1950, was the initial step in setting in motion a large-scale programme of economic and military assistance to Thailand, as well as to other countries of this region. The details of the economic aid programme were decided upon in April as a consequence of discussions with Mr. A. Griffin, head of the United States Economic Cooperation Administration, China Division. The programme covered a broad field for the supply of equipment and the provision of experts in the fields of agriculture, health, education, communications, and industries. An agreement concerning principles upon which the aid would be provided, was signed by the Thai and United States Governments on 19th September, 1950, and by the close of the year there had been established in Bangkok a large United States Special Technical and Economic Mission, and a part of the equipment and some of the technical experts had already arrived.

12. On the question of military aid, an agreement was made 17th October, 1950, which provided for the supply of military equipment. This equipment, which be made available to the three Thai armed ~~forces~~ services in approximately equal shares by value, will total about U.S. $10,000,000 in the first year, and it is expected that more will be forthcoming in subsequent years, including, probably, equipment and arms for the Thai Police Force.

13. The relations between Thailand and the Western Powers and other countries outside the Soviet bloc have generally improved during the year. The particular question of Australian relations with Thailand will be dealt with later in this report.

14. The recognition by Thailand of the States of Indochina and the other anti-communistic acts and associations of the Govern ment have brought forth from the communist regime in China a number of bitter attacks alleging aggressive tendencieson the part of Thailand, as well as ~~aggressive~~ oppressive measures directed against the Chinese minority in this country. The Communist Party of Thailand has also to some extent intensified its activity in the country, but at the close of the year pressure from this source, or from the Peking radio attacks had not created an atmosphere of unrest which caused any great alarm. The situation in Korea and the position in Indo-China did however create some uneasiness, as one might reasonably expect.

C. THAILAND'S RELATIONS WITH AUSTRALIA.

15. At the commencement of the year under review, the attitude of the Thai Government towards Australia was not as favourable as it might be. In the preceding November Australia had rejected the Thai proposal for the exchange of diplomatic represe/ntatives on the ground that the claims of Australians against Thailand had not yet been settled. This had been interpreted as a serious rebuff to the Thais, who had otherwise been courted by other countries, in particular the United States

...../and also the

and also the United Kingdom, and treated with the utmost consideration. Australia's reply to their approach, following as it did upon our wrongly-interpreted "opposition" to the return of the Thai gold from Japan, was, especially as it was based on a financial commitment, very wounding to the Thai pride. For some time during the year, therefore, the thinly-veiled disappointment on the part of the Thai Government manifested itself in a number of pin-pricking difficulties under which it was necessary for this mission to be carried on. Later, however, the position improved, particularly when Australia's initiative in the Colombo Plan had impressed the government of this country with the obvious desire of Australia to be friendly and helpful.

16. On the question of an exchange of legations, an informal approach was made in New York to the Thai Foreign Minister Nai Worakarn Bancha, indicating that the Australian Government could reply favourably to the earlier Thai proposal that Australian should be raised to legation level and that the appointment of a Thai Minister to Australia would be welcomed. This tended somewhat to reopen an old wound, and it came just shortly before the final conclusion of a lump-sum settlement of outstanding war claims. Negotiations on the matter are still proceeding at the time of the writing of this report, but it is expected that the matter will be shortly settled to the mutual satisfaction of both countries.

17. The year 1950 was an important one from the point of view of claims against Thailand. There had been various unsatisfactory proposals made in earlier years for the settlement of outstanding Commonwealth war claims by means of a lump-sum payment, but no satisfactory solution could be arrived at. However, early in 1950, Mr. J.F. Shipley, expert adviser on tin-mining claims, completed a preliminary assessment of those claims which had hitherto rendered any overall settlement difficult and a series of conferences were held, which eventually resulted in an agreement by the Thai Government to pay £stg.5,245,000 in full settlement of outstanding claims. An unfortunate difficulty arose when the Government of Burma refused to participate in the settlement, and a further series of discussions with the Thai Government was necessary to reach a settlement excluding Burmese claims. Eventually an agreement was concluded on 3rd January, 1951, for a full settlement of Commonwealth claims, with the exception of Burmese claims, for a lump-sum payment of £stg.5,224,220. This is considered to have been a very satisfactory settlement, and claims can thereunder be paid at approximately 97% of their value.

18. A matter of particular importance concerning the relations of Thailand with Australia, and with other members of the British Commonwealth, is the Colombo Plan for Co-operative Economic Development in South and South East Asia. An approach was made on 19th June, 1950, inviting the participation of the Thai Government in the activities of the Consultative Committee. In July, two special advisers assigned by the United Kingdom Government and one by the Government of India to advise Governments on the plan and, where appropriate, to assist them in the preparation of questionnaires, came to Bangkok to examine the information available in the E.C.A.F.E. Secretariat and to have discussions with Thai officials. As the Thai Government had not indicated its acceptance of the invitation, it was not possible for these gentlemen to have more than general discussions with Thai Government officials.

19. On 16th September, the Thai Government indicated its acceptance of the invitation to participate in the activities of the Committee, and designated representatives to the meeting of the Committee which took place in London in October. On 8th November, however, I was informed orally by an officer of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the Thai Council of Ministers had decided not to proceed with participation in the work of the Committee for the time being. It was indicated that Thailand

...../was under some

was under some considerable pressure at the time both because of budgetary difficulties and also because of the lack of personnel who would be concerned in the implementation of the work. It was pointed out that the demand for funds and personnel arising out of a recently granted World Bank loan, the United Nations Technical Assistance programme and the United States E.C.A. programme, to all of which the Thai Government was committed, made it very difficult to assume further obligations at that stage. It was, however, indicated that a reconsideration of the Cabinet decision was hoped for. No formal notification to this effect was received, and encouragement was given to an early review of the decision. The Thai Government was represented at the meeting of the Council for Technical Cooperation in December at Colombo by an observer. At the time of the writing of this report, no final decision by Cabinet on the reconsideration of the earlier decision not to participate has been made, but indications are that full participation will soon be decided upon.

ECONOMIC.

20. The economic situation of Thailand remained stable and, indeed, improved during the year.

21. The economy of Thailand depends largely on the production and export of rice. The production of this commodity in 1950 did not show any substantial increase over the previous year, and the exportable surplus totalled about ~~1,250~~ 1,250,000 tons. Although no adequate statistics are available, the approximate amounts shipped to various countries are as follows:-

United Kingdom and territories (particularly Malaya)	400,000 tons.
Japan	300,000 "
Indonesia	160,000 "
Philippines	140,000 "
India	80,000 "
Other countries	170,000 "

22. Virtually no new land was placed under cultivation during the year, but certain schemes were decided upon (see later) which can in the future provide for a greater output.

23. Mineral production showed an improvement over previous years. The following are the total amounts of various minerals produced (in these cases, the figures are probably accurate):-

Tin-Concentrates	Piculs	241,822.15½
Wolframite	"	13,068.07
Mixed concentrate (wolfram and tin)	"	5,860.50
Antimony		2,861.76
Lead		22,404.11
Gypsum		5,557.51

24. During the course of the year, partly on pressure from American interests, and partly out of a desire to earn more dollars, a proposal was put forward by the Thai Government that companies operating in Thailand should ensure that approximately 50% of their production should be sold to America or to dollar countries. It was proposed, that, if companies did not voluntarily dispose of their tin in this way, legislation would be enacted to compel them to do so. No such compulsion was however required and, by the end of the year, the exports of tin to the United States was approximately 50% of

...../the tin produced

the tin produced. It might be mentioned that in the latter part of the year, when, for defence purposes, tin was much in demand, the price of tin concentrates reached an unprecedented level.

L/A → see next Memo

25. Unfortunately, statistics are not available as to the production of other commodities, such as teak, hides, skins and shellac, but the level of production was, I understand, broadly similar to the previous year.

26. The year 1950 was of particular importance from the economic point of view because of the crystallising of certain development plans, which will in the future greatly increase the economic potential ~~xxx~~ of the country.

27. The first of these plans was the economic aid programme of the United States, which has been briefly referred to earlier in this report. This programme which began to be implemented immediately, was originally intended to provide equipment and technical assistance to the value of U.S. $12,000,000, in the first year ending on 30th June, 1951, but later this amount was reduced to U.S. $9,400,000. The scheme provided for the following types of assistance:-

1. Agriculture - the establishment of an agricultural centre to deal with general aspects of agricultural development, and with training and research. Equipment for pumping and rice-milling. Expert assistance in developing idle lands, and in the control of insect and other pests. The development of "complementary" crops.

2. Health - the provision of malaria control units, and a research institute, expert assistance in the teaching of medicine and equipment and books for professional schools.

3. Education - the provision of teachers and educational experts, and also books, equipment and other teaching aids.

4. Communications, Industries - expert advisers in railways, roads, port and harbour instaliations and dredging. Experts to assist in the development of radio communication, telephones, and also in geology and metallurgy. Equipment will be provided for the repair of rolling stock and locomotives and for road-building, and a dredge for the harbour will be provided (the latter being paid for in ticals). Equipment will also be provided for radio communications and telephones, and generating plants. A Bureau of Standards will also, with American assistance, be set up.

28. Under an agreement for the supply of economic aid, dated 19th September, 1950, it is provided that Thailand will provide "counterpart funds" in local currency, to be used for local currency expenditures connected with the assistance programme, the administrative expeditures of the Special Technical Economic Mission set up under the agreement, and also expenditures incidental to the furnishing of technical assistance The amount of these counterpart funds in local currency can be up to the full baht equivalent of the value of the equipment and services provided. In the 1951 budget, there has been included a provision of Baht 40,000,000 for this fund.

29. The second development plan, which can be of great importance in the economic life of Thailand is the assistance which may be provided under the Colombo Plan. The foundations for Thailand's participation in this plan were laid in 1950; the matter has been dealt with elsewhere in this report.

...../30. A further important

30. A further important step in economic development which occurred during the year was the granting to Thailand by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development of a loan, in the first instance of U.S. $19.9 million. The loan, the granting of which was announced in August, 1950, is to be used for financing the following projects:-

1. Agricultural and irrigation works, in particular the Chainat Dam scheme. This scheme, which envisages the damming of the Chao Phya River in the Chainat district (north of Bangkok) to improve the irrigation of the central rice-growing plain, as well as to provide a small hydro-electric plant, has long been considered a necessary project in improving and extending the rich rice fields of Thailand.

2. Harbour works, including the dredging of the bar of the Chao Phya River (on which Bangkok stands), and the enlarging and improving of port facilities at Bangkok. Because of the silting-up of the mouth of the river, it has not been possible for ships of any reasonable size to reach Bangkok, and this has long been a source of difficulty and expense in the import and export of goods.

3. Expansion of the railway system.

31. Details of the loan were discussed later in the year with the International Bank, and at the time of writing of this report, the second project is already being implemented.

B. CURRENCY.

32. For most practical purposes, Thailand is a free-currency country, and there are no fixed rates of exchange. During 1950, the baht tended to harden. On the open market, the rate of exchange in relation to sterling showed the following variations:-

January	58.30
February	57.30
March	57.25
April	57.00
May	57.05
June	56.90
July	57.00
August	56.95
September	56.60
October	55.50
November	54.15
December	55.25

The tendency to harden has been continued in the present year, and the rate current at the time of writing is Baht 53 to £1 sterling. Similar increases in the baht value have been observed also in relation to U.S. dollars. This increase in the value of the baht has been due in part of favourable trade balances, and also, to some extent, to artificial shortages of local currency created by the failure of the Government to pay rice-millers punctually for rice (all rice is purchased by the Government). Such periodical shortages of local currency tends to lower the sale value of foreign currency. This is particularly noticeable at the time of writing, when the rate of exchange is lower than at any time since the war.

C. THE BUDGET.

33. The Government expenditure as shown in the budget showed no very unusual features, but the following observations might be made:

...../(a) the allocation

(a) the allocation of ordinary expenditure for the Defence services of the sum of Baht 208,034,554 represented about 23% of the total ordinary expenditure (Baht916,842,596). The allocation for the Ministry of Health represented about 6%, the Ministry of Agriculture about the same, and the Ministry of Education about 14%.

(b) extraordinary expenditure totalling Baht 1,032,508,770 showed the following interesting items:-

(i) appropriations of Baht 30 million for "preservation of public peace", and of Baht 33 million for military purchases.

(ii) an appropriation of about Baht 755 million for "special monthly allowances" to offset the rising cost of living.

(c) the ordinary and extraordinary expenditure was shown as covered by revenue derived principally from direct and indirect taxes, and from State Commercial undertakings.

(d) extraordinary investment expenditure which totalled Baht 521,721,000 was notable by providing about Baht 109 million for highway construction and works, and about Baht 162 million for railwork works.

34. Later in the year, in August, a supplementary budget was passed, providing for an additional Baht 8 million for ordinary expenditure, about Baht 166 million for extraordinary expenditure (including a further Baht 135 million for "special monthly allowances") and extraordinary investment expenditure of about Baht 23 million (including a further Baht 17 million for reserve capital for road construction).

D. NATIONAL ECONOMIC COUNCIL.

35. A notable advance in economic planning was made by the creation in February 1950 of a National Economic Council.

36. The Council consists of the President of the Council of Ministers as Chairman and not more than 20 other members. The Council's work is divided into five sections or groups, being the Agricultural, Financial, Commercial, Industrial and Communication Groups. It is to have the following powers and duties:-

1. to give advice and opinion to the Government on matters affecting the economic development of the nation;

2. to advise the Government as to the best possible methods to be followed in promoting and improving the economic welfare of the nation as a result of technical study or experience, research, survey or statistics, including a result of past experiment (sic);

3. to gather and compile statistics from the whole of the Kingdom.

37. The creation of this Council will, I feel, do much to bring about a more orderly economic development of the country, which has not known any well co-ordinated plan or scheme of development. The inclusion of the aim to compile statistics is also of special importance. The members of the Council, including Mom Luang Dej Snitwong, who is a man of outstanding ability, are of a sufficiently high standard to allow the council to make a substantial contribution in the field of its activity.

29th March, 1951.

(Sgd.) A. H. Loomes
Consul-General for Australia

THAILAND

a Report to U.S. Senate
by Senators T.F. Green + Homer Ferguson
on C-W. Parlty Assoc. Meting in Canberra
March 22nd, 1951 10-13/12/50

Arriving at Bangkok on Friday, December 15, the group was met at the Don Muang Airport by Ambassador Stanton and other key officials of the United States Embassy, including Counselor William Turner, Second Secretary Roland Bushner, Administrative Officer John Morgan, and Public Affairs Officer Olcott Deming.

Here one of the busiest schedules of the entire journey awaited us. Talks followed with Prime Minister Field Marshal Pibul Songgram and Foreign Minister Banche. After luncheon at the home of the United States agriculture attache, Mr. Graham H. Quate, the delegation sat down for a round-table conference at the United States Embassy attended by Ambassador Stanton and his staff, Ambassador Key from Rangoon, Burma, and Minister Donald Heath from Saigon, Indochina. Ambassador Key and Minister Heath flew from the respective capitals to which they are accredited for this conference in Bangkok.

In the evening a large reception was given at the Ambassador's residence in honor of the delegation. Present were members of the diplomatic corps of Bangkok, numerous Thailand officials and others prominent in the business and cultural life of the Siamese capital.

Siamese press on Bangkok Conference

Most Thailand newspapers carried the following release simultaneous with the arrival of the delegation at the Bangkok Airport :

UNITED STATES SENATORS TO ARRIVE HERE TODAY

United States Senators Theodore Francis Green and Homer Ferguson are scheduled to arrive at Don Muang Airport at 8.30 tonight. The Senators recently represented the United States at the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in Canberra, Australia.

During their stay in Bangkok the Senators will meet with Prime Minister Pibul Songgram. They will also confer with the American chiefs of mission to Thailand, Indochina, and Burma. Ambassador David Key will arrive here from Rangoon today, while Minister Donald Heath will come from Saigon on Saturday.

Senators Green and Ferguson, who previously visited Thailand last November, are both members of important committees of the Upper House of the American Congress with responsibility for preparing legislation and approving appropriations for carrying out United States foreign policy.

Thomas B. Wenner, of the United States Department of State, is accompanying the Senators. The party is expected to depart from Thailand on Sunday, proceeding to New Delhi where its members will confer with the American Ambassador and members of the Indian Government. - USIS.

Rightist organ Kuang Hua Pao predicted that as a result of this conference, "American foreign policy in regard to southeast Asia will have certain changes." The independent rightist organ, Chung Yuan Pao, played up the conference as indicative of an increase in American steps to oppose communism in southeast Asia; while the

Poli gen of U.S. visits of various countries

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leftist, Hsing Hsien Jih Pao, saw American diplomatic agents in southeast Asia holding secret conferences to discuss present and future conditions in Asia "in order to determine a new foreign policy." Pro-Communist Ch'uan Min Pao told its readers that United States heads of diplomatic missions in Thailand and Burma were converging on Bangkok for special conferences with American Senators and State Department officials who were rushing in by plane to take part. Other Bangkok papers carried stories indicating that "American State Department representative Wenner will preside."

One danger to Thailand's security arises in consequence of the large Chinese minority, actually some 3,000,000 Chinese out of a population of 18,000,000. Communist China is using overseas Chinese in Thailand who are a very influential group to further her interests in southeast Asia. They are well-entrenched in business and wield considerable economic power in the country. Their political orientation in the majority is now pro-Communist China. They are a strong nationalist group with deep feelings for the homeland. These Chinese have relatives and property interests in China which must be cared for. Furthermore, they look to whatever government is in effective control of China to protect them from what they regard as discrimination by the Thai Government. The Chinese are bitterly disliked not only in many sections of Thailand but also in Malaya.

The answer in Thailand as to whether the trend will be toward, or away from, support of Communist China is likely to hinge not upon abstract espousal of the principles of democracy against communism, but rather upon the success or failure of the Mao regime in governing China to the satisfaction of these Chinese. Important also will be the outcome of Maoism as a crusading force in southeast Asia.

Communist pamphleteering in southeast Asia.

The march of events in Asia in the past year has caused the Communists to step up their campaign which seeks to foster the belief that communism is the wave of the present and the future which needs to be accommodated rather than resisted. This trend has not yet reached the point where any very sizable portion of the Chinese community can be definitely tagged as party members. Nevertheless the ranks of the fencesitters and pseudo-Communists have expanded according to qualified informants in the Thai capital. The communists' favorite appeal today in Thailand, as in much of southeast Asia, is to suggest that the eventual communization of all Malays is a foregone conclusion; that it should be a relatively simple matter for all citizens to shift gear from subservience to existing regimes to one offering the benefits of a life under Marxist communism. Thais are told that they have a choice between an "easy political shift-over" to a way of life designed in their own best interests, or of becoming homeless refugees along the roads of Thailand like the inhabitants of Korea - "the rubble heap of imperialist aggression."

The following is a typical example of recent, more aggressive pamphleteering efforts by Communists in this part of Asia :

RED BATTALION OF EAST ASIA, FORMERLY RED COMPANY OF EAST ASIA

Greetings, all. I have more news for you. You may remember our group. Now we are assured from reliable sources that victory is near. We ask you not to be unduly frightened and thereby weaken our position. Our group has been strengthened by men from Burma. You must realize that we did not expect Tibet would be so easy to occupy. Our group has penetrated more than 70 miles into Burma, and soon that country will be next to fall. Tibet, India, Burma, Indochina, Thailand will definitely be ours. We can truthfully brag that Thailand is an exceedingly easy prey. Field Marshal Plek has lately been more careful than ever. Do you, Field Marshal, know you

almost lost your life at the Police Day parade, but, luckily for you, the rain (spoiled our plan and) saved you. But soon we will cut off your head to show the town that it has lost a capitalist. This budget for a bigger army and more weapons shows your fear. Isn't it true? We have heard that you gave an interview to Prachathipathi (newspaper) in which you said, "Let them come; we will fight them to the death." We wonder whether you really mean it. May we inquire where your wife and children are? Have they not escaped, or does she plan to organize a woman's corps and ask the capitalists for money? Well, that is possible.

Do you know that the soldiers you sent to Korea would have been wiped out but for a slight error in our communications? We hope to bring you more news. In the m antime, here is a brief reminder:

Thailand must come under the Communist flag.

To Field Marshal Plek Pluak (white ant), Uncle Phin Chunhavan, Phao Sriyanond: Beware the new year. Do not concern yourselves too much with official ceremonies such as the Constitution Day affair, etc. Beware! This is not just a hoax.

(s) Chief of the Red Battalion of East Asia.

Thai political situation.

Important factors in the current Thailand political situation are the following:

1. Former Premier Pridi Banomyong, rival of Premier Pibul Songgram, has been increasingly active and is believed to be in constant touch with the Communist high command across the Thai border.
2. There can be no dodging the fact that the combined resources of Thailand, Burma, and Indochina constitute a rich and tempting prise for the Chinese invader.
3. Siam has fought in Korea. But recent reverses there might seriously affect military morale in an Asia now in its first gloating over the ability of the yellow man to force the white man out of Asia.
4. Asiatics in increasing numbers may not wish to be "traitors" to the yellow man's upsurge in Asia, notwithstanding a good deal of hatred of the Chinese in Indochina, Burma, and Thailand.
5. Communist influence in Thailand is being exercised through the party itself, estimated at several thousand members. The party was known to work very closely with the Viet Minh and through the Communist press consisting of three news organs. It is working also through the Central Labor Union affiliated with the WFTU, an organization of some fifty to sixty thousand persons including Chinese operatives and some Thai workers - especially rice-mill and dock hands. It has a toehold even in the long-established Chinese Chamber of Commerce. The latter, if not Communist-dominated, nonetheless has Red Chinese among its officers. Finally there is the influence wielded by Chinese schools and Chinese teachers.
6. Communists in eastern middle Asia, of course, have a sharp eye on Thailand's major crop - rice. This could be used to feed China's undernourised millions. They also have an eye on other major and minor crops suitable for direct consumption by China and the U.S.S.R.
7. Soviet and Chinese Communists are working among overseas Chinese in Thailand, using for the present nonviolence means. Major aims of these propagandists are to (a) secure broad-based support for Red China and pride in her victories; (b) foment a hatred of

the present Thai Government, the United States of America and her democratic allies; (c) secure support for Communist comrades in Indochina and Malaya, and (d) prevent overseas aid and assistance to the Thai Government.

8. There is no good reason to suppose that Communists in Thailand will hesitate to resort to a program of violence when the time is ripe. There are some 50,000 Vietnamese in the North East Province, most of whom reportedly support the Communist-controlled Viet Minh. According to certain trained political observers in Bangkok :

> As the Viet Minh increases its threat in Indochina and infiltrates Laos, it is reasonable to expect that the Vietnamese in Thailand not only will come more completely under the control of the Viet Minh, but also will extend their influence over the large population of Laos in Thailand.

9. Some 700,000 Malay Moslems reside in Thailand's Southern Province, providing a potentially critical area for Communist activity because of old grievances against the Bangkok Government and Moslems' demands for regional autonomy. Communist propaganda has not been slow to capitalize on such grievances and aspirations.

10. The Government of Premier Songgram in Bangkok is on record as being "determined to fight off communism." It continues to proclaim its sympathy with the west in line with plans to increase its support behind UNO and its war effort in Korea. Thailand has laid out a military program calling for the raising of 4,000 soldiers in support of UNO and Thai objectives. Last fall some 1,200 Thai soldiers departed for Korea.

11. Finally, the present regime has risked popular disfavor in recognizing the Bao Dai government in Indochina (as well as the Governments of Cambodia and Laos). However, many persons in Thailand resent the French being in Indonesia, whose hold they consider to be detrimental to the best interests of the peoples of Indochina. Their thesis is that discredited nationalist regimes in southeast Asia, like rotten plums, would be the first to drop off the tree of their own weight. "Why make it easier for communism?" they ask.

.....

a Report to U.S. Senate by
Senators T.F. Green + Homer Ferguson

INDOCHINA ~~AND BURMA~~

16/3/51

While we did not actually visit Indochina or Burma, we did have opportunities to learn much about conditions there.

Few political subjects elicit more heated debate in Asia today than that of western support for French forces in Indochina, including backing for the Bao Dai regime. There are those who stoutly defend, for example, the United States position in what is tantamout to giving effective assistance to the Viet-Nam ruler, Bao Dai, as well as military assistance to the French colonial army.

The question must be frankly faced as to whether the United States, in seeking to avoid a political vacuum which would surrender the area to the Communists, is itself losing face and forfeiting the cooperation of the very persons it is trying to save from Soviet communism by support of the incumbent regimes in Asia (not excluding South Korea), which vital elements there consider discredited or partly discredited.

One school of thought concedes the weaknesses of the so-called colonial regimes in Indochina and southeast Asia generally, but looking at immediate dangers, holds there is no other choice but to support them and seek their rehabilitation. This school reasons that a withdrawal of support from the French and Bao Dai in Indochina, as an example, would be an open invitation to invasion by Mao Tsetung or for Ho Chi-minh and his "Chinese volunteers" to take over control of the country. In this school's opinion it is a matter of backing the best horse available in the race to beat the Communists which is already well under way.

The opposite point of view is that for sake of temporary expediency, the United States - as sponsor of the rights of self-determination and independence of peoples, and itself an example to the world of a nation which righteously fought against "colonial tyranny" - cannot afford to play the role of sponsor to discredited colonial regimes anywhere in the world. At least, this school argues, it cannot do so and retain its reputation as the leader of the United Nations and advocate of resistance to aggression. The argument is made that colonial peoples fail completely to see a distinction between defense against external aggression and what they believe to be internal aggression from the colonial regime.

Here is involved a major psychological factor in the attitude of Asia today. It is a problem which must be most carefully reckoned with by our global strategists.

A Report to U.S. Senate by Senators T.F. Green & Homer Ferguson 22/3/51

As to BURMA there is good reason to believe that if the United States had not backed South Korea against Communist aggression, the United States might as well have cleared out of Burma.

Burma has just passed through exceedingly troubled times. Serious disorders and insurrection in Burma for the past 2 years have been a matter of grave concern. Of considerable satisfaction to the United States has been the progress of efforts in recent months on the part of the Burmese Government to restore law and order in that country.

An agreement has been reached with the Burmese Government under the ECA program and by an exchange of notes whereby technical and economic aid will be forthcoming to Burma. Economic rehabilitation of the country is a very pressing matter. The standard of living of the people must be raised. Internal stability must be promoted. A special technical and economic mission has been established at Rangoon by ECA. Between eight and ten million dollars is being spent on this project during the present fiscal year.

According to the terms set forth in the Mutual Defense Assistance Act of 1949, the United States Government has agreed to give to the Burmese Government 10 river boats. These craft will provide protection to the movement of river commerce, which is especially important to the economic welfare of Burma. This commerce has been, and is still being, disrupted by the efforts of hostile and quite determined forces. Damaged craft lately have been repaired and refitted under the defense program.

As in Thailand, the Burmese Government (Socialist) has announced that it is strongly opposed to communism.

....

Summary of 2nd Items of Gen Interest.

20/3/51

A Bill to grant amnesty to army officers at present serving sentences in connection with the coup plot of October 1948 was rejected by the House of Representatives on 15th March.

The Bill had been introduced by a private member of the House.

An opposition bill to grant an amnesty to Muslim political prisoners accused of plotting separation of the Southern provinces of Thailand was also defeated in the House of Representatives when government representatives failed to reply to the speech of the M.P. introducing the Bill. The House then voted to discuss other matters.

453/2/1

FILE COPY
JMcC/HN

453/2/1.

Memo No. ....

20th March, 1951.

MEMORANDUM for:-

The Australian Consulate-General,
BANGKOK.

We should be grateful for any information you may have concerning the following report by New Delhi Radio on March 3rd last.

> "A plot to overthrow the Thai Government is reported to have been discovered in Bangkok. Security forces there have been put on the alert. A number of officers have been rounded up and a warrant has been issued for the arrest of Rear-Admiral Kamhiran, former commanding officer of the Siamese Marine Corps. Many police officials have been held for questioning."

(R.L. Harry)
For Secretary.

P. I. Summary.

14/3/51

THAILAND

Recent reports indicate that the exiled Nai Pridi Phanomyong, former Regent, Premier and leader of the civil party has been negotiating with Pibul. It is believed that Pridi anticipates the fall of either Burma or Indo-China to the Communists within the next few months. In this event, Pridi has indicated that with internal Communist support this external pressure would enable him to seize power. At the same time, the name of Pridi has been associated with the newly formed Ratsadorn Party, which has a programme of social reform indistinguishable by some observers from Communism. It seems definite that Pridi is preparing for a return to power. A factor likely to make difficult any compromise by Pibul is that Pridi was banished for alleged complicity in the murder of King Ananda.

453/2/1/1

Summary S.W. Radio News.

13/3/57

2. Plot in Thailand.

There has been no further news from any radio source with regard to an alleged plot to overthrow the Thai Government, which was broadcast by New Delhi Radio on Friday night. New Delhi said at the time that such a plot had been discovered in Bangkok, that security forces there had been put on the alert, and a number of officers had been rounded up. Furthermore, a warrant had been issued for the arrest of Rear-Admiral Kamhiran, former commanding officer of the Siamese Marine Corps. It was also said that many police officials had been held for questioning.

more news to come if nothing widespread occurs.

J.P.

R/S.M.

file pls

453/2/1

10/3/51. b. Times.

PLOTS REPORTED IN PAKISTAN AND SIAM

(A.A.P.-Reuter)

SINGAPORE, Friday.

Plots against the Siamese and Pakistani Governments were reported in Bangkok.

Security forces were put on the alert and a number of officers arrested.

A warrant was also issued for the arrest of a high naval officer who is alleged to be the brains behind the Siamese plot.

The naval officer is Rear Admiral Taharn Kamhiran, a former commanding office rof the Marine Corps.

A number of police officers whose names are not disclosed are being held for questioning.

It was reported that other officers of the police department and armed forces would be made.

In Lahore, the Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan said that a plot had ben unearthed which was aimed at creating "commotion in the country by violent means."

He named the ringleaders as Major General Akbar Khan, Chief of the General Staff, and Mrs. Akbar Khan, Brigadier Ma Latif and Ahmad Faize, Editor of "The Pakistan Times."

The Prime Minister added that the two miltary officers involved had been dismissed from the service.

Authorities have held a number of police officers for questioning.

~~453/6/1~~

453/2/1

NEW DELHI. 9/3/51 - 10.30 p.m.

A PLOT TO OVERTHROW THE THAI GOVERNMENT is reported to have been discovered in Bangkok. Security forces there have been put on the alert. A number of officers have been rounded up and a warrant has been issued for the arrest of Rear-Admiral Kamhiran, former commanding officer of the Siamese Marine Corps. Many police officials have been held for questioning.

453/2/1

TRIPLICATE.

SECRET

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
Rec'd 5 MAR 1951
453/2/1
File No. 454/1/2

File No. 100/5/1.

AUSTRALIAN CONSULATE-GENERAL,
BANGKOK, THAILAND.

28th February, 1951.

S E C R E T.

DEPARTMENTAL DESPATCH NO. 3/51.

FROM: Australian Consul-General, BANGKOK. THAILAND.

TO: Secretary, Department of External Affairs,

POLITICAL SITUATION.

A very interesting piece of information has just come to my knowledge concerning Nai Pridi Phanomyong, former Premier and Elder Statesman, which could have important effects upon the political situation in Thailand.

2. The British Charge d'Affaires was informed by a normally reliable informant that Pridi has been in Bangkok up to two weeks ago, when he left for an undisclosed destination probably in the North-East of Thailand. The intention of the visit was to sound out the Prime Minister, Field Marshal Pibul Songgram, on the question of his being received back into Thailand and given complete exoneration from any charges which have been made against him, in particular, the charge of being concerned in the murder of the late King Ananda Mahidol.

3. The intermediary between Pridi and Pibul is stated to be Nai Tiang Sirikhan, who was a member of the Seni Pramoj and Thamrong cabinets, a staunch supporter of Pridi and still a member of Parliament for Sakon Nakorn in the North East of the country. The proposition stated to have been put to Pibul savours of an ultimatum. It is that after the fall of Indo-China and/or Burma to the Communists (which Pridi apparently considers probable within a few months), the external pressure on Thailand would become so great that the Pibul Government, except with very strong Anglo-American armed forces, could not survive, and Pridi could, with internal Communist support, seize power in the country. This, however, Pridi is reluctant to do, as he does not wish to commit himself to Communism, with which he does not in fact agree. As an alternative, therefore, he proposes that Pibul should grant him complete exoneration of all charges against him, safe conduct to Bangkok and restoration of his property. The main stumbling-block to an acceptance by Pibul of these terms is the fact that Pridi has been charged with complicity in the murder of the late King Ananda, and the matter is still under consideration by the Courts. The answer proposed to this difficulty was to introduce, during the month of March, evidence in the Court which would completely exonerate Pridi (whether this evidence will be real or fabricated was not stated). An acquittal of Pridi by the Court would then enable Pibul, with a clear conscience, to receive Pridi back. The reasons put forward as justification for the return of Pridi are twofold: firstly, the return of Pridi with Pibul's consent would avoid the possibility of any internal disruption or civil war between the supporters of the two factions, and, secondly, the presence of Pridi, whose prestige is stated to

...../be high with

be high with the Chinese communists, would ensure, if not the independence of Thailand in a Communist-held South-East Asia, at least the probability of advantageous terms from the Communists if Thailand's independent status could not be maintained.

4. Apart from the difficulty of the King's death case, it would seem that a more important stumbling block to the acceptance of any proposal as set out above lies in the person of Lieut-General Phao Sriyanondh, whose power in Thailand, as I have previously reported, is very great. Phao is known to be strongly opposed to Pridi, and the most bitter attacks on the latter have usually emanated from Phao. The power and prestige of Phao, which is thought by many to be greater than that of Pibul himself, would make it impossible for Pibul, except with Phao's consent, to allow Pridi's return on the conditions mentioned.

5. I must add that I cannot accept the whole of the foregoing without some reserve, and I am making further enquiries (as are also the British and American Embassies) to check on the information. It may however, I think, be taken as true that Pridi has in fact been in Thailand, and has made some tentative feelers towards bringing about his return to Thailand with at least a partial reconciliation with Pibul. I shall naturally report any further information which I am able to obtain on this subject.

(Sgd.) A.H. Toomey

CONSUL-GENERAL.

FILE COPY
WBP:HMH

File No.
453/2/1.

SECRET

15th January, 1951.

MEMORANDUM for:

The Secretary,
Department of Defence,
Victoria Barracks,
MELBOURNE.

I refer to cypher message SD/4128 from Farelf to Troopers received in this Department on 1st December, 1950.

2. We passed the section on page 6 of this message, dealing with Siam, to the Australian Consul-General in Bangkok, and requested his comments. A copy of his reply (memorandum No.7/51) of 3rd January is attached for your information.

(T.A. Pyman),
for Acting Secretary.

SUPPLEMENT: THAILAND
Jan. 6, 1951

SPEECH BY PHIBUN SONGGRAM

PRIME MINISTER REVIEWS NATIONAL EVENTS

Bangkok, Thai Home Service, Dec. 31, 1950, 1400 GMT--B

(Prime Minister Phibun Songgram's address to the Thai people on the occasion of the New Year)

(Text)

"Dear Thai people. Today is the last day of 1950 and in (a few hours) the new year of 1951 will begin. It is nearly 3 years since I was given your confidence through your representatives in the Parliament to set up the Government of His Majesty, the King, to administer the policies of the Nation.

"I have carried out my duties in coordination with the present Council of Ministers, the Parliament, and Government officials, and the people. I have taken into consideration the opinions of the Thai people in all matters and on some occasions I visited the people myself.

"Now I feel it is expedient to bring to the attention of the Thai people all national events and tasks to help their understanding and to help them carry out their duties, thus promoting the good of the country.

"First, as Prime Minister and Chief of the Government of His Majesty, the King, I want you all to think seriously about the King's address which was delivered to you a moment ago, and realize the importance of his request that all the Thai people must be united and harmonious in the face of the world crisis, which may bring danger to our Nation. I myself and and the Council of Ministers, as well as all Government officials, will act strictly in accordance with the King's request as each is deeply loyal to him. Any acts which may bring disunity to our Nation will be abandoned, and the Cabinet and I and all Government officials will assiduously promote everything that may bring to our country unity and harmony in accordance with the King's desire.

"On this auspicious occasion I beg you all to wish Their Majesties the King and Queen happiness and prosperity.

"I take this occasion to express my ideas and wishes so that you may take them into consideration in performing your duties.

453/2/1

"Our world, as known today, is divided into ages, from the ancient to the present. In the prehistoric period no weapons or instruments were made of metal. They were all made of stone and the people lived in woods and forests, not having houses and buildings as they do today. Administration, economics, finance, culture, and laws were unheard of There were changes later according to the civilization of such ages. In this new period, scientists have discovered atomic energy, and it may later be called the atomic age.

Political Events

"As for political events, there have also been evolutions in each period up to the present, which can be called the age of democracy. Democracy consists of three main principles which are related to each other: Namely, that the State belongs to the people and is governed by the people and for the people. Our country is now under this system, which is also followed in many countries of the world. The chief purpose of democracy is to bring happiness to the country and its people, both governors and those being governed, in accordance with the country's and each person's capacities.

"Now there has been created a new system which is called Communism. The entire population of a country is governed by a group of people who, by regulating the people's freedom and liberty, force them to act according to what the group desires. People have no right to private property, but everyone can earn a living by serving the Government. Private individuals have no (money). This system has been in use for only 30 years. It is hard for this system to achieve wide popularity since it means the destruction of all existing democratic systems in use throughout most of the world. Under democracy all people are contented and happy and cherish the hope that their living standards can be raised. Moreover, it is generally admitted that Communism oppresses and persecutes men to assure their obedience. So the majority of people in the world had no desire to adopt Communism in their countries, and no one was fully aware of its danger.

"Realization of this danger began just after World War (Two), when the Communists launched a campaign of propaganda to mislead the people of all countries into accepting Communism. Many of them, encouraged by the Communists, took up arms and fought among themselves to establish Communism in various parts of the world. Civil wars are going on in many places, especially in Korea. Our democracy-loving Thailand has sent as many troops as we could to join with the U.N. Armed Forces.

"Apropos of this, I would like to urge all the Thai people to think of our Thai soldiers who have sacrificed for our happiness and to wish them a happy New Year on this occasion.

Two Camps

"To continue--you will be able to see that the present world has become so much smaller than before that it can be divided into two parts or camps--democracy which furnishes the people with happiness and Communism which restricts freedom and liberty and considers that the people belong to the State completely. The majority of the world is democratic and has only one aim--to maintain peace and happiness among the people of the world. The minority is Communistic and carries out aggression both in propaganda and by inciting people of various countries to fight among themselves, thus endangering future peace.

"The world situation is no longer peaceful and happy as in the past. All democratic countries including Thailand must unite to fight against Communism for eventual victory so that the peace and happiness of the democratic peoples will be restored. How long it will take is still a question.

"Under such conditions of world crisis our Nation together with other democratic countries has to struggle against propaganda to prevent Communism from penetrating our country. Especially (economic and financial) affairs and others must be changed and improved in order to meet the situation. The Government will take further steps to maintain our democracy, Nation, religion, King, and Constitution; in brief, the eternal happiness of all Thai people.

"In order to achieve this important matter, I wish to express my personal opinion that all Thai people must unite to oppose the menace of Communism, to help maintain the peace of the country, and to raise the general prosperity. At the same time, they should help promote the efficiency of the military, police, and other forces so they will be able to cope with any disturbances and disorders which might arise.

"My dear Thai people, now the New Year is almost here. Your duty is to bring peace and happiness to our Nation, yourselves, and the people of future generations. I, as Chief of His Majesty the King's Government, pledge that I will perform my duty to the best of my ability in order to bring peace and happiness to all Thai people. From the time the Government assumed office up to the present, it has followed the policy of bringing peace and happiness to all the people. Within the last few years we have supported the Government, the merchants, and the public in every effort leading to an increase of crops and production, creating general prosperity and happiness in the country. The people can find without difficulty both consumer and domestic goods within the country. There has been no shortage since the war nor has there been rationing of any kind as there has been in other countries.

Economic Progress

"Besides, we have exported our surplus products and thereby steadily raised the national income. For instance, in 1947 tax revenues were estimated (at the beginning of the year--Ed.) at over 685 million ticals, but the amount actually received was over (995 million) ticals. In 1949, they were estimated at over one thousand 598 million ticals, but the actual amount received was over one thousand 828 million ticals. In 1950 they were estimated at about one thousand 949 million ticals; though the actual amount received has not yet been completely ascertained, it is expected to be well over 2 thousand 400 million ticals. The Government revenue for (1951) is now being studied by Parliament and is expected to be over 2 thousand 500 million ticals.

"These figures show us that our national commerce has been well promoted and assisted. If we had not increased our production, we would not have had more goods to export, and the Government would not have been able to collect more domestic and export taxes. Government income depends purely on the national income from which the Government receives taxes to spend on public welfare and utilities.

"Since public welfare, communications, transportation and irrigation are essential to help increase national income, the Government has given these matters ever more attention. For instance, while in 1933 there were (one thousand 121) kilometers of highways, in 1947 there were (5 thousand 747) kilometers, and in 1949 there were (5 thousand 776) kilometers, now in 1950 there are 5 thousand 832 kilometers and (4 thousand 752) kilometers more are under construction, giving a total of (20 thousand 589 kilometers).

"These highways are useful for traffic and for public convenience in transporting goods to market. The goods in turn are the source of increase of the people's income and thus of the Government's as well.

"Irrigation has been extended, for Thailand is an agricultural country. You may know that if enough rice for public consumption and for export is not produced, the Government income will be decreased. Therefore, the Government has endeavored to promote irrigation constantly, as may be seen in the farmlands within the Government irrigation areas.

"While in 1931 there were only one million 670 thousand rais (of irrigated Government land--Ed.) and in 1942, 2 million 933 thousand rais, in 1950 there are now 4 million 297 thousand rais.

"As for the civil irrigation service being carried out in small localities, where there used to be over 2 million 250 thousand rais of farmlands being assisted, there are now about 12 million rais being rendered service by this irrigation project.

"As for electric works, waterworks, telegraph and telephone systems, seaports, hospitals, and schools, there have been improvements and increases for the people's welfare. Besides there have been many more contributions which cannot be described completely here. But ... to appreciate the results of work by the Government on a later occasion.

"Our policy in aiming at public welfare and happiness, as shown in the figures above, has given our Nation credit in various foreign lands, as our national budget is well balanced every year. Besides, it provides a large anount as reserve. While in 1947 there were 768 million ticals of gold reserve, in 1950 there were more than one thousand 476 million ticals. While there were more than 527 million ticals in foreign currencies in reserve in 1947, in 1950 there were more than one thousand 303 million ticals.

"During the last 3 years, we have grumbled about inflation in our country, but now such complaints have largely subsided because there has been no printing of currency notes over the value of the reserves.

"As for our national debts for borrowings from foreign countries in the past for the rehabilitation of our country, they have been nearly completely paid off; only small amounts are left. Besides, the rate of exchange of our money in relation to foreign currencies is still rising. Just after the war one British pound cost 65 to 80 ticals, but now it costs only about 57 ticals, and one dollar (U.S.--Ed.) sells for about 22 ticals.

"Currencies on the market are now well stabilized. There have been no great changes except as a result of the war scare, which has caused some changes in the prices of goods. But these changes are not due to depreciation of money or lowered output of products. They result from a decrease of production in other countries as a consequence of their producing more war materials and arms. This situation should remain only for the time being, and we can hope that normal conditions will return soon.

Cost of Living

"As for the cost of living, the Government has tried to the best of its ability to lower it as desired by the people. But, to make it lower than it is, it will be necessary to boost production and transportation. Moreover, we must realize that we depend largely on foreign markets. Nowadays the United States of America and the United Kingdom are the countries that do most of the world's purchasing. Consequently, the prices of goods imported into our country are set in accordance with the prices in those two countries.

"If we reduce our prices unilaterally, we will certainly lose, for we have to purchase goods from other countries at the same time. For instance, we are now selling rice to other countries at 40 pounds per ton, and with this 40 pounds we can buy one ton of (cloth) from them. If we reduced our price on rice to 10 pounds per ton in order to reduce the prices of other goods, we would still not be able to buy goods at the same prices. On the contrary, we would have to sell tons of rice before we could buy a ton of (cloth), as in the instance above.

"So I hope that the Thai people will understand that the Government is not being neglectful and is trying by every means to raise the people's living standards for the sake of public welfare and happiness and to lower prices in order to reduce their expenses.

"As regards domestic political events, we adhere to democracy under which one can express his opinions and ideas as he likes. The opinions expressed by individuals or through the newspapers will be offered to the public for judgment as to what is right and suitable, and eventually to be adopted as public opinion. Such opinions will be submitted to the Assembly, which is established in accordance with the Constitution and laws, and to the House of Representatives, Upper House, and the King for approval as laws of the Nation.

"I have heard that many Thai people are worried about our country getting involved in war as happened in World War Two. I, therefore, wish to inform you that, in the present world, war will occur in a country only when its people disagree ideologically and one group has embraced Communism. This will finally cause fighting between those who love democracy and the Communist Party, and a good chance thereby offered the Communists to send troops to invade the country.

File No. 100/5/1.

Memo. No. 7/51.

AUSTRALIAN CONSULATE-GENERAL,
BANGKOK, THAILAND.

3rd January, 1951.

S E C R E T.

MEMORANDUM for:

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

SITUATION IN THAILAND.

I acknowledge receipt of your memorandum No. 242 of 18th December, 1950, in which you quoted a situation report by FARELF Singapore, with particular reference to the so-called "Free Thai Movement". I have the following comments to make.

Free Thai Movement.

2. So far as the Free Thai Movement is concerned, this organisation as such does not seem to exist any longer. The establishment and subsequent history of the movement, as well as its connection with Nai Pridi Panomyong, will already be known to you. Although there is no doubt that some of the original members do group themselves together in some form of loose association because of the similarity of their aims and views, I can find no confirmation that the movement still exists in its old form.

3. The truth of the matter is probably that the Organisation has been merged either into a group of Pridi supporters (who were, and probably are, a wider group than the Free Thai Movement) or into the Thai Communist Party. The question whether these two groups are identical in aim will of course remain problematical. The Pibul regime loses no opportunity of branding Pridi a Communist, but I have no confirmation from any objective or outside source, and, in the absence of a definite confirmation, it would be unwise to identify the Pridi supporters as Communists, although some of them may well be.

Chinese Propaganda.

4. Thailand has for some time been subject to Chinese Communist propaganda, both from outside and from within. My despatches Nos. 7/50 and 12/50 of 6th June and 13th September 1950 will already have given you an outline of the nature and sources of this propaganda which is disseminated inside the country. Peking radio has also from time to time bitterly attacked the Thai Government, alleging illtreatment of the Chinese minority here. The attacks in January 1950 were especially violent, and, although there has been some repetition of them from time to time during the year, they have not been especially evident recently. Communist propaganda will probably increase greatly as a consequence of the decisions taken recently by the Thai Communist Party (See my despatch No. 15/50 of 6th December, 1950).

Co-operation with Vietminh.

5. There have been many rumours (but nothing more than rumours) that there was close cooperation between the Ho

...../Chi Minh and the

453/12/1

Chi Minh and the Thai Communists, and that some Chinese and Laos from Thailand had received guerilla and other military training with the Vietminh forces. I have no doubt that there has existed some means of liaison between the two groups, and the Vietminh may at one stage have been used as a channel of communication between the Communist regime in Peking and the Communists in Thailand, but I have not been able to obtain any reliable information on the question of training. Chinese Communists in Thailand are known to have paid visits to China for the purpose of "study", that is, political indoctrination (e.g. the visit of Nai Aree Livira, reported in my despatch No. 15/50). If the information reported in this despatch is correct, the channel of communication in future will be via Rangoon.

6. You will be aware that in the North-Eastern part of Thailand, in the provinces adjoining Laos and Cambodia there are concentrated a large number of Laos, and it has long been a source of some anxiety to the Goverhment that this group may be sympathetic to Ho Chi Minh. There seems little doubt that some of them are active Communists, particularly in Ubol, Udorn and Nakorn Phanom. The Government has evolved a scheme to concentrate the Lao population in a few provinces, but this has not, I understand, progressed very far.

Attempts on Pibul's life.

7. There have been some rumours of plans to assassinate Pibul, but no attempt has actually been made to carry any such plan into operation. Any attempt at a coup d'etat would probably involve a plan to assassinate the Prime Minister (for example, the abortive scheme of Kach Songgram).

General Comment.

8. This report seems largely based on rumour without any clear evidence to support it. Bangkok is a city where rumours are common, and consequently a great deal of time is normally spent here in checking the many press and other reports only to find eventually that there is no truth whatever in them. For example, there were stories of an unidentified submarine being sighted off the coast of South East Thailand and of a landing made by Chinese in naval uniform near Songkhla. After many enquiries, I found that the "submarine" was a Thai coastal patrol vessel and the landing was made by Thai sailors to replenish their water supply!

9. There is probably no doubt that many of the rumours are spread by Communists with a view to causing unrest and uneasiness amongst the people, and, from this point of view, they probably fulfil their purpose.

10. The Government's position is reasonably strong at present, and I do not think that their disinclination to face a general debate (if one could call it disinclination) has made a great deal of difference. Reasonably adequate armed support from the Army and Police would seem to be at least a partial guarantee against any attempt to overthrow the Government by force. The Government has come in for some criticism on the question of the capacity of some Ministers, and it is probable that there will be a reshuffling of cabinet portfolios. This however is not likely to lead to any trouble.

11. The main danger undoubtedly lies in increased Communist activity, which could be greatly intensified by

...../any worsening

any worsening of the international situation, especially in Indo China, which is a great source of anxiety. There is certainly a feeling of uneasiness throughout the country, and this has led to some American firms advising their employees to send their wives and children home. However, I see no immediate danger (and the American and British Embassies agree), but naturally will continue to watch the situation carefully, and keep you informed of any changes in the position.

CONSUL-GENERAL.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
Rec'd - 4 JAN 1951
File No.

File No. 90/6/14.
Memo. No. 447/50.

AUSTRALIAN CONSULATE-GENERAL,
BANGKOK, THAILAND.

13th December, 1950.

MEMORANDUM for:

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

SUMMARY OF ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

Enclosed herewith is a Summary of Items of General Interest for the period 6th to 12th December, 1950.

CONSUL-GENERAL.

JHC
for appropriate file and
handling to other departments.

453/2/1

P

DUPLICATE.

File No. 90/6/14. Thailand.

Memo. No. 447/50.

13th December, 1950.

MEMORANDUM for:

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

SUMMARY OF ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

---- Enclosed herewith is a Summary of Items of General Interest for the period 6th to 12th December, 1950.

(Sgd.) A. H. Loomes

CONSUL-GENERAL.

SUMMARY OF ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST
PERIOD 6th TO 12th DECEMBER, 1950.

Mr. Harold E. Stassen of the United States visited Bangkok on an unofficial tour in the last week. Mr. Stassen called on the Prime Minister and was entertained by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

A special committee to supervise the prevention of arms smuggling into or through Thailand is reported to have been established by the Prime Minister. Meanwhile both the Police Department and the Navy are reported to be increasing their vigilance and their equipment with a view to taking more effective measures to suppress traffic in illicit arms.

The Council of Ministers is reported to have accepted in principle a proposal by the Ministry of Justice thatJuvenile Courts be established throughout the country. A working committee has been established under the chairmanship ofthe Minister of Justice, to draft details of a Bill to set up such courts for presentation to Parliament.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs is reported to have announced on 9th December that certain changes would shortly bemade in Thai diplomatic representation abroad with a view to effecting economy. The Minister is reported to have indicated that staffs of the Thai legations in Norway and Sweden would be reduced and the present Minister to Switzerland would serve as Charge d'Affaires at both these Legations and in Moscow.

The Minister is also reported to have stated that Thailand plans to send a Minister to Saigon in 1951 and to open a Consulate in Hanoi.

On 8th December the Senate rejected by a vote of 15 to 32 a Bill to control rents throughout the country. The Bill which would set up a rent control board and prohibit the raising of rents more than six times pre-war levels was reported to have been opposed on the grounds of unconstitutionality in that it was designed to operate retrospectively in respect of all rent cases now pending in court.

Following reports that UNICEF has allotted U.S.$368,000 to Thailand for anti tuberculosis, mother and child health and yaws control projects the Ministry of Public Health have announced that a broad national health campaign will be opened in January 1951.

Main objects of the campaign were stated to be:

1. Reducing the dangers of the spread of T.B. in Bangkok.
2. Wiping out yaws among the rural population over a three year period.
3. Establishing a nucleus for a mother and child welfare program in Bangkok.

The Chief medical officer of the Department of Public Health estimates that more than one million of Thailand's population suffer from yaws, incidence of the disease in some provinces being as high as 25% of the population.

The Chiengmai branch of the Anti-Profiteering Committee is reported to have announced that sale and stocking of petrol and petroleum products is to be controlledin Changwad Chiengmai as from 28th November. Removal of petrol or petroleum from Amphurs of the Changwad without prior permission is banned.

FILE COPY
WBP/BR

453/2/1

29th December, 1950.

SECRET

MEMORANDUM for:-

The Secretary,
Department of Defence,
Victoria Barracks,
St. Kilda Road,
MELBOURNE. Vic.

.... I forward for your information, copy of a report on the internal political situation in Thailand, received from the Office of the United Kingdom High Commissioner in Canberra on 28th December, 1950.

(A. B. Jamieson)
for Acting Secretary.

Ref. 2/147.
Secret



DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
Rec'd 28 DEC 1950
File No.

The Secretary,
Dept. of External Affairs,
Canberra.

With the compliments

of the

Official Secretary

WJ 28/12.
IFW
13.W.
file.

Office of the High Commissioner
for the United Kingdom.
Canberra, A.C.T.

22nd December 1950.

SECRET

OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER
FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM
CANBERRA

Ref: 2/147
M:GT

22nd December, 1950.

Dear Sir,

I am directed by the High Commissioner to transmit to you herewith for the information of the Australian authorities, a report on the internal political situation in Thailand.

I am sending two copies of this letter to the Secretary, Department of External Affairs.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) JAMES MARJORIBANKS

Official Secretary.

The Secretary,
Prime Minister's Department,
CANBERRA.

453/2/1

THAILAND - POLITICAL SITUATION.

1. Recent telegrams from United Kingdom Ambassador in Bangkok have reported activity on the part of Communists and other opposition elements which has been increasing with the deterioration of news from Indo-China, and Korea.

2. During November the pro-Communist Thai Weekly "Politics" launched an evidently well-organised campaign for the Stockholm Peace Appeal, in which it was supported by other Chinese and Thai daily newspapers. United Kingdom and United States Information Officers have taken vigorous counter-measures.

3. The Parliamentary Opposition led by Nai Khuang unsuccessfully attempted to force a general debate on government policy, not, according to Nai, with the object of ousting the government but to obtain a reconstitution of the cabinet. A recently published draft resolution drawn up by the Opposition criticizes the government's foreign policy as "discrediting Thailand and the Thai people in the eyes of other nations". The United Kingdom Ambassador believes that many thoughtful elements in Bangkok are in fact increasingly disturbed by the forthright manner in which Pibul has aligned himself with the United States.

4. Reports on 28th November of an abortive coup d'etat and of a plot to assissinate Pibul appear to have been based on some internal disciplinary measures in the forces in which a number of junior officers were involved. In the Army there is apparently some support for the exiled General Kach but in the view of the United Kingdom Ambassador the stability of the present government is not seriously threatened.

5/ He also considers that a recent crop of anonymous letters threatening prominent personalities with assissination is probably communist inspired and designed to provoke instability. So, probably are unconfirmed rumours, of e.g. a pro-Pridi rising in Bangkok with a simultaneous Communist-staged uprising in the South and landings on the East coast (allegedly planned for the holidays beginning 9th December)and of a Communist-staged rebellion

/throughout

Thailand (allegedly to begin about 20th December) to include assissination of Thai officials and to synchronize with an advance of the Viet Minh army over the Thai border.

6. A theory of a gentleman's agreement between Pibul and Pridi (whereby Pridi assumes power after a pre-arranged coup d'etat as soon as the Western Powers ascendancy begins to crumble, Pibul and followers to be allowed to escape abroad) has also been current, but is totally uncorroborated by the United Kingdom Embassy who have tangible evidence of Pibul's co-operation and determination to resist communism.

7. Pridi's supporters are however assisted in good faith by (a) a few Thai politicians who believe that in the interests of their country's unity Pibul and Pridi should and still can be brought together; (b) a larger school of thought that considers Pibul's policy of unreserved support for the West to be dangerous and, failing adequate guarantees by the Western Powers of active aid in the event of war, would prefer to steer a middle course between the two power blocs.

8. Though any important communist success in Indo-China might strengthen these latter, the United Kingdom Ambassador feels we can meanwhile depend on Pibul and his goverment to cling to power and remain useful allies.

OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER
FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM
CANBERRA

SECRET

Ref: 2/147
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22nd December, 1950.

Dear Sir,

I am directed by the High Commissioner to transmit to you herewith for the information of the Australian authorities, a report on the internal political situation in Thailand.

I am sending two copies of this letter to the Secretary, Department of External Affairs.

Yours faithfully,

Official Secretary.

The Secretary,
Prime Minister's Department,
CANBERRA.

BW/CG

FILE COPY

453/2/1

29th December, 1950.

MEMORANDUM:

The Secretary,
Department of Defence,
MELBOURNE, S.C.1. Vic.

I am forwarding herewith for your information a copy of the Summary of Items of General Interest in Thailand for the period 29th November to 5th December, 1950.

(Patrick Shaw)
Acting Secretary.

Enc.

File.

Briefing P.M.
Dec, 1950

THAILAND.

A. Political.

1. Thailand is a constitutional monarchy, with the executive powers vested in the Prime Minister and his Cabinet. The representative organs have little power, and are in any case strictly controlled by the present Government.

2. The present Government, which consists principally of senior Army and Air Force officers, came to power by a coup d'etat in November, 1947. It is headed by Field-Marshal Pibul Songgram, and has been able to retain its position largely by virtue of the Field-Marshal's support from the army and an efficiently organised and privileged police force. The Government and its supporters are notably corrupt and the administration slow and inefficient and there are signs of growing discontent against the regime; at the same time, Thailand is comparatively free from the dissident movements which disrupt other Asian countries and the country is not unprosperous. A large rice surplus is exported to other Asian countries.

3. The Government is anti-communist and has openly allied itself with the cause of the Western democracies. Its recognition of the Bao Dai Government was the first clear indication of this attitude and the subsequent support for the decisions of the United Nations on Korea, coupled with the recent despatch to Korea of the first contingent of Thai forces, clearly defined the Government's position.

B. Economic and Military Assistance.

4. The Government is receiving extensive military and economic assistance. In May, 1950, the United States Government allocated $10 million for military aid to Thailand and, as a result of the visit of the United States Melby Mission which toured South-East Asian countries in June and July, 1950, it is expected that a larger military assistance programme extending over some years will be implemented. A Military Aid Agreement between Thailand and the United States was signed on 17th October. Military equipment for Thailand, the delivery of which has been delayed by the Korean war, will include modern training and operational equipment, light arms, ammunition, radio and radar equipment, trucks and road-making equipment, essential parts for reservicing the Thai Navy, and a squadron of fighter aircraft.

5. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development recently approved loans to Thailand totalling $25,400,000. The loans, which were the first granted by the World Bank to a South-East Asian country, will be used for irrigation projects, the development of port facilities and the modernisation of the Thai railway system.

6. Thailand will also receive economic and technical assistance from the United States from the funds allocated for the Point IV Programme. The Griffen Mission, which surveyed the economic and technical needs of South-East Asian countries in March and April, 1950, recommended an expenditure of $11,620,000.

7. The Thai Government at first refused the invitation to participate in the British Commonwealth "Colombo Plan", on

the grounds that Thailand was already fully occupied with the administration of aid from America and with the loan from the International Bank. This decision will possibly be reconsidered by Thai Cabinet.

C. Relations with Australia.

8. Since the war, the main question in Australian-Thai relations has been the settlement of war claims of the tin mining industry. Negotiations between Thailand on the one hand and the United Kingdom, India and Australia on the other, have now reached the final stage and conclusion of an agreement is expected shortly.

9. Australia is at present represented in Thailand by a Consul-General; however, in September, 1949, the Thais sought to raise representation to Legation level and Australia has now indicated that it will reply favourably to this request.

Department of External Affairs
Pacific Division.

BW/CG

FILE COPY

CANBERRA, A.C.T.

Memo. No.

18th December, 1950.

SECRET

MEMORANDUM:

The Australian Consul-General,
BANGKOK.

SITUATION IN THAILAND.

I should be glad to have your comments on the following situation report, which has just been received from FARELF, Singapore, with particular reference to the Free Thai movement:-

"After long interval Siam once again object of virulent Chinese propaganda. Reported that Chinese member of Siamese Communist Party states that since beginning 1949 Siamese Communists and free Thais have been receiving training from Viet-Minh.

Some signs restlessness among junior section officers.

No confirmation press reports attempt on life of Pibul, 25th November.

General comment.

Whilemuch of above may be rumour which not unusual in Siam, it may be indication that internal trouble is brewing. Such trouble might be inspired by free Thais with strong Communist support and possible participation by Viet-Minh. In such event possible that at least some proportion of Thai Navy would join insurgent movement against Government since former have shown free Thai sympathy in past. Government's position not improved by disinclination to face general debate probably induced by doubts of ability to survive vote of confidence. Government's attitude causing adverse comment in many sections of Siamese opinion."

P.S.

453/2/1

(Patrick Shaw)
for Secretary.

453/2/1

19/12/50

INDO-CHINA : NOTABLE EVENTS IN RECENT MONTHS

17th September: The Viet-Minh forces, which had been concentrated in Northern Tenking launched a new offensive with an attack on the frontier town of Dongkhe, 90 miles north of Hanoi. The town was captured on 19th September.

4th October: French forces abandoned the large frontier post of Caobang before the advancing Viet-Minh forces.

14th October? The U.S. Government announced that further allocations would be set aside for aid to Indochina. Following discussions in Washington, the U.S. Government announced that $ 200 million worth of military equipment would be sent to Indochina before July 1951, and that it was planned to divert substantial numbers of flames, artillery and other weapons from Korea, as part of the military aid programme, as soon as the Korean situation permitted. In addition, the U.S. authorities announced that, by the end of 1951, the French Government would receive an allocation of $ 2,400 million from the $ 6,000 million which had been set aside for the rearmament of 20 countries against Communist aggression. This allocation would be used to rebuild French military strength in Europe and Indochina.

16th October: Following upon the evacuation of five other frontier ports in the north-eastern Tonking, (Thatighe, Nacham Dongdane Langson Lod Binh), a state of emergency was proclaimed by the French authorities in the province of Tonking.

19th October: The French Government reaffirmed its intention to defend the Red River delta area with all available resources. The Cabinet decided that full control of the war in Indo China should be left in the hands

453/2/1/1

of the Minister for the Associated States, M. Le Tourneau, and that he should be given full powers to call upon the manpower supplies and shipping needed for the campaign.

23rd October: The French forces abandoned the north-western frontier post of Muong Khuong.

25th October: The French forces withdrew from the large north-western frontier town of Laokay.

27th November: The Pau Conference between the Governments of France, and the Associated States of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos concluded after discussions lasting for more than five months. Closing the Conference, M. Le Tourneau, the French Minister for the Associated States, stated that as a result of the agreements reached at the Conference, the States would in future control their own national Treasuries and would be autonomous in matters of finance, customs, excise, foreign trade and domestic planning.

7th December: General de Lattre de Tassigny was appointed French High Commissioner in Indo China, with full civil and military authority succeeding the previous High Commissioner, M. Pignon, and the French Commander-in-Chief, General Carpentier.

.....

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
Rec'd 19 DEC 1950
No.

File No. 90/6/14.
Memo. No. 437/50.

AUSTRALIAN CONSULATE-GENERAL,
BANGKOK, THAILAND.

6th December, 1950.

MEMORANDUM for:

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

SUMMARY OF ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

---- Enclosed herewith is a Summary of Items of General Interest for the period 29th November to 5th December, 1950.

CONSUL-GENERAL.

BW. for appropriate file — Defence
Department please.

453/21

SUMMARY OF ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST
PERIOD 29th Nov. TO 5th Dec. 1950.

Police and military forces in Bangkok were alerted on 25th and 26th November following the arrest of three junior army officers in connection with an alleged plot to overthrow the government. Official statements by the Prime Minister discount the plot as a "trivial matter" which was discovered and defeated while still in its early planning stages. The plotters have been variously reported as Communists and supporters of the exile Lt.Gen. Luang Kach Songgram.

The Prime Minister announced on 30th November that all equipment presently scheduled for delivery to Thailand under the military aid agreement recently concluded between Thailand and the United States is expected to be delivered by the end of 1950. The third shipment of this equipment has now arrived in Bangkok.

An unconfirmed press report states that agreement has been reached between the Ministries of Defence and of the Interior to cooperate in establishing units to train the people in the use of arms in order that they may assist the armed forces in the event of aggression.

A Bill authorising expenditure by certain government departments in advance of the 1951 Budget is having a stormy passage through the national Parliament. The Bill which was introduced into the House of Representatives in October was drafted to authorise expenditure of Baht 48 million. This figure was subsequently reduced by a committee of that house to some Baht 36 million, the reduction having been effected in respect of part of the Police department's share of funds.

The Bill has now been wholly rejected by the Senate and returned to the House of Representatives.

Being of a financial nature the Bill may still become law in its present form provided it obtains the affirmative vote of more than one half of the total membership of that house. The efforts of the government parties are accordingly at present directed towards ensuring that these votes are obtained.

The Prime Minister himself had occasion to refer to the consequences of the Senate's action in this regard in his press conference on 30th November. Nor were his comments indicative of much confidence in his government's powers of obtaining the necessary support. In the circumstances he took the opportunity to stress his view that defeat of the Government in respect of this Bill would not necessarily mean that the government would resign. He added however that it would mean that the government might find it almost impossible to carry out essential and urgent measures for the safety of the government.

Opposition to the Bill in the Lower House as in the Senate is expected to take the line firstly that certain appropriation made by the Bill in respect of Police department coast guard operations are unnecessary and would only duplicate work now done by the Navy and secondly that all appropriations made by this Bill should properly be included in the 1951 Budget Bill which is expected to be promulgated in about two months time.

A draft Royal Proclamation understood to be under the present consideration of the Council of Ministers, will, if authorised, reserve the publication of all Thai language material exclusively to Thai nationals.

The Deputy Minister for Finance, Nai Savet Piempongsarn, who recently returned from a visit to the United Kingdom and the United States is understood to be recommending that his Ministry establish a new bureau for the suppression of counterfeiting and of tax evasion.

A United Kingdom firm is shortly to undertake the aerial survey of an area of some 18,000 square kilometers in central Thailand with a view to providing information necessary for the routing of a new railway through the area.

FILE COPY
JMcC:PF

453/2/1

6th December, 1950

MEMORANDUM for:

The Secretary,
Department of Defence,
Victoria Barracks,
MELBOURNE.

.... Enclosed for your information is a clipping from the Summary of Items of General Interest for the period 22nd to 28th November, 1950 received from the Australian Consulate-General, Thailand.

P.S.

(Patrick Shaw)
for Secretary.

453/2/1

FILE COPY
/MK

453/2/1

4th December, 1950

MEMORANDUM for:-

The Director-General,
Department of Civil Aviation,
522-536 Little Collins Street,
MELBOURNE. Vic.

Enclosed for your information is a clipping from a Summary of Items of General Interest from Bangkok for the period 15th - 21st November, 1950.

dgd P.S.

(Patrick Shaw)
for Secretary

453/2/1

FILE COPY
/MK

453/2/1

4th December, 1950

MEMORANDUM for:-

The Secretary,
Department of Commerce & Agriculture,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

Enclosed for your information is a Summary of Items of General Interest received from Bangkok for the period 15th - 21st November, 1950.

Sgd P.S.

(Patrick Shaw)
for Secretary

453/2/1

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CONFIDENTIAL

Foreign Office and Whitehall Distribution

FS 1015/20

SIAM
November 28, 1950
Section 1

POLITICAL SITUATION IN SIAM

Criticism of the Administration

Mr. Whittington to Mr. Bevin. (*Received 28th November*)

(No. 252. Confidential) *Bangkok,*
Sir, *22nd November, 1950.*

My telegram (No. 121, Saving) of 15th November drew attention to the growing volume of criticism of the Administration of Field-Marshal P. Pibul Songgran. It would be a mistake to attach too much importance to the parliamentary opposition to the Government, because the politicians who criticise Pibul have, for the most part, openly declared that they are themselves neither anxious nor prepared to take over the Government. They realise that they would not be able to supply the firm Government which the country needs, and for the present seek only to impose some check on the Administration by functioning as a normal parliamentary opposition. The Government are also able to discount for the present any threat from the services; a sense of external danger, and the outlet for their energies which the Korean expedition has provided have caused the Army and Navy to sink their differences. The Pibul Government is not, therefore, likely to face any immediate crisis.

2. Yet it is inescapable, particularly to one who like myself had experience of the warm response which Pibul elicited from his people in the years before the war, that his country is not at present whole-heartedly behind him. Public opinion may be comparatively undeveloped in Siam, but Pibul would not have found it so easy to return to power in 1947 if the general public (including the junior officers and rank and file of the services, and the civil service as a whole) had not been so sick and tired of the muddle and corruption of successive Governments after the war. There is a danger therefore that if his Administration is merely tolerated, unenthusiastically, for want of something better, the external enemies of Siam may exploit the situation by fomenting discontent, with the intention of creating unrest, and perhaps of substituting for Pibul, a Messiah of their own. The only one in sight at the moment is the exiled Senior Statesman, Nai Pridi Banomyong, who, for the present, remains largely discredited in his own country except in the eyes of a powerless section of university students and junior naval officers.

3. Against this background, criticism of the Government, voiced in Parliament by the Opposition, and much publicised by the Bangkok press (with whom Pibul has been unpopular for a long time, owing to high-handed treatment of newspapermen and the liberties of the press) takes on a rather more serious character. No sooner had the organised parliamentary Opposition to the Government begun to make itself felt a week or two ago, by tabling a seven-point resolution for a debate on Government policy, than the small Communist paper *The People* (Mahachon) capped it by publishing as a free issue a virulent manifesto. This covered much the same ground, for internal politics, as the Democratic Party motion, but concentrated on attacking Government foreign policy, and in particular their alliance with the American imperialists (as evidenced by the recently concluded Economic and Military Aid Agreements with the United States). Although the normal circulation of the paper is small, the manifesto caused some stir (the editorial staff were detained by the police) and it is probably in order to take advantage of the interest aroused by the incident that the Siamese and Chinese Communist and fellow-traveller publications have chosen this moment to launch the Stockholm Peace Appeal in Siam (about which I have reported separately in my telegram No. 125, Saving, of 20th November).

4. In the upshot the motion for a general debate was not accepted by the Speaker of the Lower House because the Democrat Party were not able at the last moment to comply with the technical constitutional requirement that the motion be signed by at least one-third of the members of the House if the issue was to be pressed to a vote of confidence. The quorum is forty-one. The

note on 453/5/1

noted by J.P. 5/7/51

453/2/1

Democrat Party (led by Nai Khuang) command the support of about thirty members, and had relied for the balance on a temporary partnership with a group of some ten "Independents" led by Nai Tiang Sirikhand, which is in fact the rump of Nai Pridi's parliamentary following. This rump had been voting with the Government because they hate Khuang even more than they dislike Pibul, but Nai Tiang's strong disapproval of the Government's foreign policy, particularly in relation to Indo-China and also grievances about alleged Government neglect of the North-Eastern provinces, in which Nai Tiang's constituency is located, has made them change sides for the occasion. The motion failed, not because of any weakening of Nai Tiang, but because of internal dissensions within the Democrat Party itself.

5. Two points are noteworthy about this proposed attack on the Government. In the first place, the Government has shown itself fearful of the attack; it was in fact responsible for fomenting the dissension in the Opposition which caused the failure of the motion for debate, and, on Field-Marshal Pibul's own statement to myself, it is his intention to avoid any general debate because, as his Excellency explained, in this time of international crisis it is unseemly that such a parliamentary attack should be made. On the other hand, Nai Khuang has told me that, apart from attempting to curb the grandiose corruption in certain sections of the administration, he is anxious to impress on the Government some sense of constitutional responsibility. He instanced the American Military Aid Agreement, which had been signed without any previous reference to Parliament, and complained that the first reading of the Budget Bill for 1951 had been rushed through the Lower House in the unprecedentedly short time of half a day. At the same time, Nai Khuang pretty well agreed that parliamentary discussion would have had little or no effect on the ultimate result in either case.

6. Although this parliamentary attack on the Government has proved abortive and would almost certainly have been futile, it is interesting to record the seven points of the motion of censure because they do, in fact, represent the principal criticisms generally levelled at the Pibul Government. They are as follows:—

"(i) The ministers of the Government administer the country in an apparently dishonest manner by placing their own self-interest before that of the people and the nation.

(ii) The Government is unable to solve the problem of the high cost of living.

(iii) The Government does not administer the country in accordance with the spirit of democracy.

(iv) The Government lacks efficiency in promoting national education.

(v) The results of the Government's foreign policy tend to discredit Thailand and the Thai people in the eyes of other nations.

(vi) The Government administers the country in a way which serves to promote corruption in officialdom rather than to suppress it.

(vii) The Government is unable to carry out its policy pertaining to public peace and security. There have been incidents pointing to increasing oppression of the people and destruction of public welfare and security."

7. It is unfortunate that there was no debate in the Lower House, since a defence of the Government against the charges made by the Democrats, and those of the Communists, is not so difficult to conduct. As regards internal politics, this Administration is undoubtedly as corrupt as its predecessors. Although the Government could point to a number of measures taken to check corruption, particularly in the lower ranks of the civil service and police, the general accusation of corruption is one which it can safely ignore; corruption is recognised by all as an inevitable ingredient of Siamese Government and, as long as economic prosperity lasts (*i.e.*, the price of rice is high) and there is money for everybody, it is not an evil the practice of which is likely to cause a Government's downfall.

8. The complaint about a rise in the cost of living also has considerable justification. Those hardest hit are people living in urban areas, Government officials and all who have small fixed incomes, and possibly also the population of undeveloped areas (such as Nai Tiang Sirikhand's North East). But the vast majority of the population of the country as a whole is concerned with the production of rice, and this has yielded very adequate returns.

9. Accusations that the Government are not paying sufficient attention to national education are a side issue, unlikely to arouse great passion. The salaries paid to teachers are low, and the standard of teaching is consequently said to have fallen off, but this

is still a country with a very high literacy rate. The Ministry of Education is staffed with competent officials, and so far as I am aware the politicians do not interfere with their arrangements to any marked degree.

10. Points (iii) and (vii) of the Democrat Party resolution resolve themselves into the accusation that Pibul has turned Siam into a police state, and an inefficient one at that. The other side of the medal, however, is that the police force, who were corrupt, inefficient and ashamed of their existence at the time Pibul took office, are rapidly becoming a well-trained body, whose influence is making itself steadily felt, particularly in keeping down lawlessness and banditry and in controlling illegal entry into the country. To charges of militarism the reply may be made that, while there is no denying that the Administration is setting aside a very high proportion of the national revenue for the armed forces (17 per cent. was allocated to defence in the last budget), the loans obtained from the World Bank will be applied to the development of the various large-scale projects which the Government have in mind for the welfare of the country.

11. But the live issue (the importance of which was immediately grasped by the Communists) is that of foreign policy. By aligning himself uncompromisingly with the West, Pibul has made himself doubly vulnerable. He has frightened all those (and they are many) who prefer the traditional Siamese policy of neutrality to entanglements with foreign Powers. These are the people who do not think dishonour worse than death and who would prefer the risk of Communist domination (a risk, incidentally, in which they obstinately refuse to believe) to the danger of having their country turned into a battlefield. But Pibul would be unlikely to face much trouble from these faint-hearted people, if he were not in danger of losing the support which is most obviously and traditionally his: that of the stout-hearted Siamese nationalists. In so far as there is any ideological backing for the present Government it is plain, old-fashioned nationalism, and although this has been soft-pedalled since the war it should not be forgotten that Pibul's popularity in his earlier period was due to the success with which he built up his prestige as leader of a glorious Thai nation, powerful on its own account in the Far East. This idol was shattered by the quasi-Japanese occupation of, and the Allied intervention in Siam which the war brought. After three years of Pibul rule, national self-respect has revived, and provided it is guided into the right channels Thai nationalism can be very useful. Buddhism, though by no means a spent religion, is not a creed that stimulates action; democracy alone is too vague, too hackneyed; in Siam nationalism is probably the only idea with sufficient appeal to be a match against communism, and it is the only philosophy that Pibul can handle competently. It is essential to his prestige and the stability of his Government, therefore, that he should not appear to be "selling" his country to the Americans, or any other foreigners. Criticism on this score is all the more difficult for him to counter because of disappointment over his past performance.

12. One of the means by which Pibul has restored to Thai nationalists some of their erstwhile confidence has been by the unobtrusive, but persistent, boosting of Siam in general international relations, particularly in the United Nations. It is probably in a continuance of this policy that Pibul will find the best means of defeating criticism that he is too closely associating with any one Power or group of Powers.

13. Despite their very natural aversion to seeing their own country turned into a battlefield, the Siamese people dream of greatness, including greatness in war. Participation in the work of the United Nations not only gives the Siamese great scope for enhancing their national prestige, but most unexpectedly, thanks to the Korean crisis, has also given them the opportunity of military adventure. The United Nations idea has caught the imagination of the Siamese people in a way which may be difficult to credit in the more disillusioned atmosphere of Western countries, and Pibul is carefully nursing this enthusiasm. There has been a crop of patriotic songs, and however surprising it may be to hear children and high-spirited young men burst into song over such themes as "When the United Nations call came, we Thais were the first to answer, &c.," there is no denying their present sincerity: such manifestations are frequent and quite spontaneous. The United Nations cause has glamour.

14. Pibul is taking advantage of this to blur the distinction between purely bilateral assistance received from the United States (which might become unpopular), and co-operation in United Nations programmes (which may, with care, retain their appeal). A good example of this is the speech made by the Prime Minister at a reception which

note on 4/52/61

he held on United Nations Day, 24th October, the text(1) of which I enclose. If he overdoes this kind of thing there is a danger that the United Nations may come to be regarded as being only an off-shoot of the United States, but provided the Americans are tactful, and do not overwhelm this country with their own personnel—or at least endeavour to leaven American personnel with experts drawn from other countries, Pibul should have a good chance of combating charges that he is becoming a puppet of the West, and of stirring his countrymen out of their apathy into something more like genuine popular support for his policies, so that indigenous Thai nationalism merged into the United Nations ideals, where external policy is concerned, may offer a positive doctrine to counter the spread of communism. How successful this will be does not depend on Government propaganda alone (though much can be done in this way). As I have endeavoured to show, the Government have an answer to the criticism made against them, but, for the present, they are merely holding their own. To obtain a response from the people they must be able to show that genuine progress is being made. Much will depend on the speed and efficiency with which the Government's development programmes are implemented.

15. I am copying this despatch with enclosure to His Majesty's representatives at Rangoon, and Saigon and to the Commissioner-General at Singapore.

I have, &c.

R. WHITTINGTON.

(1) Not printed.

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