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Thailand - Australian general policy towards

FILE No. 451/2 Pt 4

SECRET

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

N.E.A. Division

BASEMENT

South East Asia Section

SIAM (THAILAND) SUBJECT.
Australian General Policy towards.

BASEMENT R. P.

PREVIOUS FILE:	1945/49/10 – Aust. Peace Treaty with Siam
NEXT FILE:	

BASEMENT

RELATED PAPERS.	
FILE No.	SUBJECT.
451/1/1	Australian Representation
451/1/2	Siamese Representation in Australia

4886.... By Authority: L. F. JOHNSTON, Commonwealth Government Printer, Canberra.

This Pt. closed

Pt. 2 Opened

closed

Yokyo.

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION
LISTENING POST - F.E.F.

TOKIO. 15/12/49 - 2.30 p.m. ENGLISH MORSE (A.F.P.)

JAPANESE GOLD FOR THAILAND AND INDO-CHINA. Forty tons of gold will shortly be shipped out of Japan to Thailand and Indo-China. This gold is payment of Japanese debts incurred during the war, amounting to 43,000,000 U.S. dollars for Thailand and 37,000,000 dollars for Indo-China. Two representatives of the Bangkok Government, Thuaydep Devakul, Thai representative to the U.N. and Director of the Economic Affairs Section of the Thai Foreign Office, and Prayad Buransiri, head of the central administration of the Bank of Thailand, arrived in Tokio yesterday by air from New York to take over officially the Japanese gold for Thailand.

451/3/1/1

Refer to file 381/3/1/2 for information resulting from the Conference of Australian Representatives at Canberra November, 1949.

451/3/1/1

Note for file:

See Memo C441/49

of 22/11/49

re: Bangkok

Exchange of Reps. with Thailand

on file 451/4/1

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

SAW:EGM

O. 12729

SENT: 12th October 1949
1410

ENCYPHERED TO:

Australian Consul General,
BANGKOK. via Singapore.

66. RESTRICTED.

Your memorandum C361/49. You should press point of view on Thai authorities and also express concern to United States Ambassador that United States should continue to side against an ally and in favour of the one-time enemy of an ally in a matter of carrying out the terms of a peace treaty.

T.A.

12th October 1949

copy on 452/6/1

[redacted]

451/3/1/1

DRAFT CABLEGRAM TO -

AUSTRALIAN CONSUL-GENERAL,
BANGKOK.

No:

Date:

Your memorandum C361/49. You should press point of view on Thai authorities and also express concern to United States Ambassador that United States should continue to side against an ally and in favour of the one-time enemy of an ally in a matter of carrying out the terms of a peace treaty.

12th October, 1949.

JWB/BT.

E.A.

File No. 40/10/1.

Memo No. C361/49.

AUSTRALIAN CONSULATE GENERAL.
BANGKOK, SIAM. Thailand.

26th September 1949.

CONFIDENTIAL.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
DATE 10 OCT 1949
FILE No. 451/3/1/1

MEMORANDUM for:

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

GOLD IN JAPAN - RELEASE TO THAILAND AND INDO-CHINA.

The bag containing your memorandum No. 159 of 16th September 1949 (file No. 451/3/1/1) reached me this morning on my return from an interview with the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.

2. I had called on the Deputy Minister in connection with other matters but, in the course of the interview, he mentioned that the prominent part which Australia had played in seeking to prevent the return of the gold to Thailand had caused considerable resentment in several quarters in Bangkok. He went on to say that when the matter was brought up recently in Cabinet, he had explained that Australia was merely taking the natural course of safeguarding its own interests and that its action should not be regarded as an indication of unfriendliness to Thailand or as a ground for Thai resentment; he had said that, although two countries might have a substantial identity of interests and sympathies, there might be occasional instances in which their interests might diverge and they might have to pursue opposing aims. He said to me, however, that it was difficult to expect everyone to appreciate these considerations and, as the return of the gold was vital to Thailand's economy and as Australia's opposition had been given prominence by the press, many people would infer that our attitude to Thailand was generally unfriendly.

As I had not yet received your memorandum I was not in a position to comment on his remarks.

3. It may perhaps be doubted whether the Deputy Minister did in fact defend us in cabinet as warmly as he suggests, but his remarks give a true enough indication of the adverse way in which our action would be interpreted by many sections of the community here, and one may infer that such was the interpretation given to it by at least some of the Ministers. As previous experience in claims and other matters has shown, the Thai view of differences of opinion and interests is notoriously subjective.

I might mention that the attitude taken by the United States Government led to a thickly sentimental exchange between the United States Ambassador and the Thai Government, which received full publicity in the local press.

4. Having now read your memorandum and attachments I am considering whether to seek another interview with the Deputy Minister and to discuss with him some or all of the reasons for our attitude. I doubt whether this would serve any useful purpose and, in any event, I note that some discussion of the grounds has already taken place between the two Ambassadors in Washington. Similarly I doubt whether at this stage an explanatory statement to the local press would be of any use; apart from the lapse of several days since the matter was featured in the press, the reasons themselves would do little to placate Thai opinion.

Copy Published 3/10/49

Secretary Area 1944

CONSUL-GENERAL.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

MW/GC

CABLEGRAM. I.14476

Dated: 30th September, 1949
1800
Recd.: 1st October, 1949
0900

DECYPHER FROM:

Australian Consul-General,
BANGKOK.

B.84. PRIORITY. CONFIDENTIAL.

Claims.

Embassy has just shown me the latest United Kingdom plan for lump sum settlement in two stages. Understand Heydon has given you the substance of it. I have received indecypherable telegram from him which is probably a repetition of telegram to you.

2. The United Kingdom intention is apparently to propose the plan informally to Viwat before he leaves London in a few days, with the proviso that it is subject to the approval of the Australian and Indian Governments. They hope that we will join subsequently in formal submission to Thai Government here.

3. In my opinion, the figures proposed for stage I would be quite unacceptable to the Thais as it would provide 100% payment of our estimated fair awards (see annexure to my memorandum C.254 of July 14th) including a number of cases of Japanese action. The Thais will strongly contest some of our estimates, particularly personal prejudice; they are clearly unwilling to pay for Japanese action except with Japanese assets, and would undoubtedly expect a cash discount on any lump sum settlement. As frozen assets are listed here as currency reserve, the proposed release of £1,500,000 is unlikely to be a strong incentive to agree to an otherwise unacceptable settlement.

4. Thais would seek detailed discussion of our estimates and basis of computation which, if permitted, might lead them eventually to offer not more than £700,000 under stage I. Discussion would, however, seem purposeless, as the United Kingdom proposal is that their figures should be irreducible.

5. However, as the United Kingdom will not agree at present to support proposal for overall settlement at a discount, there appears to be no alternative but to join in proposing their plan. This will waste more time, but may perhaps bring us very slightly closer to eventual settlement on compromise basis.

6. The Commonwealth Governments concerned must sooner or later face the fact that virtual paralysis of the Claims Committee has removed the only effective means of forcing our will on the Thais, and that it is a waste of time to expect them to agree, voluntarily, to settlement entirely on our terms.

7. The £300,000 mentioned in attachment to my despatch C.284 includes 118,000 paid on award of Claims

Copy on claims file

-/ Committee

451/3/1

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

2. I.14476

Committee since March 31st.

8. Embassy agrees to the substance of the above estimates. Should appreciate urgent instructions.

..... Eastman.

MIN.& DEPT. E.A.

TREASURY

1st October, 1949

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

O.12263/64
Sent: 29th September, 1949
6.10 p.m.

ANOTHER TO:

Australian High Commissioner's Office,
LONDON. No. 4233. For External.

REPEATED TO: Australian Consul General,
BANGKOK. No. 65.

ACTION COPY

RESTRICTED:

Your 3994. Claims against Thailand.

We agree that every effort should be made to break present deadlock, and impending visit of Thai Minister of Finance appears to offer opportunity for doing so. We are not convinced, however, that the course proposed by the United Kingdom Government is the most satisfactory one. We particularly dislike the proposal that one and a half million pounds of the frozen assets in London should be released to Thailand as an inducement to the Thais to settle the comparatively small personal prejudice and personal property claims. This would be to surrender a further bargaining point and make more remote the prospect of obtaining from the Thais a satisfactory settlement of the larger commercial property claims.

We believe the United Kingdom Government has it in its power to persuade the Thai Government to accept an early and satisfactory overall settlement by lump sum. As we understand it, Prince Viwat is in London to seek financial assistance from the United Kingdom. It seems strange to us that the United Kingdom Government should apparently be considering meeting Thailand's requests for aid before insisting on settlement of United Kingdom and other British Commonwealth claims against Thailand. The United Kingdom has already provided equipment for Thai armed forces, and is evidently anxious to extend whatever other assistance it can. We do not disagree in principle with the importance of preserving stability in Thailand, but we consider that wartime claims are the first consideration. Once these are cleared up relations with Thailand will assume a less reserved character, and Thailand's requests for assistance can be considered on a more friendly basis.

We would accordingly urge that the Thai Minister of Finance be informed that settlement of the claims on a lump sum basis must come before any request for further aid, either financial or military, can be considered. The Thai Government should be pressed to settle immediately for six million pounds, which might be regarded as a fair representation of the total claims after Shipley has completed his investigation of the commercial property claims. If the figure subsequently proved more than enough the claimant governments might consider refunding the balance.

A firm effort now to urge a final lump sum settlement would in our view be much preferable to tackling the matter piecemeal, which would still leave the Thais with plenty of opportunity to delay a settlement of the major claims. They will have every incentive for doing so if they continue to receive financial and other assistance.

Please put these arguments strongly to the United Kingdom authorities.

MIN. AND DEPT. OF E.A. TREASURER AND TREASURY 30/9/1949

Secretary
AS(P)
E
ME
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RR
Adm
Eco

(Copy to 453/9/5/3/1) 45/1/3

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

"Z"
HW/SC

I. 14452.
Dated: 29th. September, 1949.
2210.
Read: 30th. September, 1949.
1040.

ENCYPHERED FROM:
Australian High Commissioner's Office,
LONDON.

ACTION COPY

4062 IMMEDIATE. CONFIDENTIAL.

Your 4233. Thailand.

Have put our views strongly to the Foreign Office which asked me to state:-

(a) Viwat enquired about prospects of loan (without requesting it) month ago on way to Washington and was informed there was no chance of loan in view of United Kingdom's financial position. There is no question of Thailand getting financial assistance.

(b) Equipment has only been supplied by United Kingdom against cash for army units in South Thailand which are important in connection with the anti-terrorist campaign in Northern Malaya. Thai co-operation in this is at United Kingdom request and in the United Kingdom view must not be jeopardised.

2. Officials therefore claim that their power to exert pressure is not as strong as appears but they admit return of Pol ø from Japan tends to make the present a time when Thai government could afford to reach a settlement on claims that is nearer than their lump sum offer last year. There is clearly division of opinion among United Kingdom authorities with substantial support for our views.

3. Idea outlined in Paragraph 3. of my Telegram 3994 has already been put to Viwat who said he would refer it to Bangkok where it could be further discussed. He was entirely noncommital and made no comment except that his Government favored principle.

4. On figure of £6,000,000, I understand Enemy Property Department of Board of Trade is flatly opposed to any figure less than £6,500,000 because it believes that any first figure is likely to be reduced somewhat and room for manoeuvre must be retained at £6,000,000 is so clos- to the figure which may be proven after Shipley's inveatigations or even less than it.

5. I think it is likely that possibility of immediate lump sum settlement of £6,500,000 will be put to Viwat when he sees United Kingdom officials on other matters on 1st. October, as an alternative to the other idea and on the same informal basis.

6. Would appreciate instructions on lump sum figure or other aspects in light of the above.

Copies: Secretary, ASO, E, MR, LC, PI, Pac, ANT, UN, ER, Adm, A/c, Exams.

Min. & Dept. E.A.
Treasurer & Treasury.

(Copy via 453/9/5/3/1/1)

30th. September, 1949.

ø as received.

RS

451/3/1/1

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

NER/KC

1.14276

Dated: 26th September, 1949.
1855
Recd: 27th September, 1949.
1145.

DECYPHER FROM:

Australian High Commissioner's Office,
L O N D O N.

3994. RESTRICTED.

From External. Thailand claims.

The United Kingdom Authorities are now convinced that 6½ million pounds will be sufficient to satisfy all United Kingdom and other Commonwealth claims on the following basis;

(a) Outstanding personal prejudice 300000

(b) Outstanding personal property 522057 made up as follows -

United Kingdom and Commonwealth (other than Australian and Indian) personal property	239854
Australian property	30000
Indian property	95000
General property (i.e. property of petty traders etc.)	157203
Total	522057

as opposed to the present declared total of claims 796732.

(c) Remainder to tin and commercial property claims. Thai assets frozen in United Kingdom considerably exceed the sum of 6.5 million at present though they are valued at 8.8 million.

2. As attempts at lump sum settlement last year failed United Kingdom authorities feel that the objective should be to clear up claims in (a) and (b) as soon as possible and that the claims in (c) should be more easily settled with (a) and (b) out of the way. They think (c) will have to await further assessment by Shipley in Bangkok. He returns there in November. Ultimately they think these may have to be based on a lump sum settlement also.

3. The Thai Minister of Finance, Prince Viwat will be in London later this week and United Kingdom Authorities intend informally and provisionally suggesting to him that an immediate lump sum settlement of 822000 pounds might be made by the Thai Government to cover balance of personal prejudice and personal property claims and that consideration of the other claims by committee be resumed on Shipley's return. As a concession to make this proposal attractive they might indicate their readiness to release to the Thai Government forthwith 1500000 pounds from Siamese frozen assets in London. They intend to make it clear that this lump sum of 822000 pounds must be administered exclusively by the Commonwealth members of the existing Claims Committee and that the 822000 pounds is an absolute figure though if it proves more than enough they would be prepared later on to consider refunding the balance.

451/3/1/1

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

4. They are not clear on the effect of devaluation on that part of the claims which are made in Picals as the Siamese Government has not yet fixed a new rate of exchange but the agreement provides that claims were to be in sterling values in 1942 so that the question of devaluation may not arise.

5. In any discussions with Viwat they say they will make it clear that the proposal is provisional only and is on behalf of the United Kingdom Government only and without consultation with the Indian and Australian Governments. They assume that Viwat will have to refer the matter back to the Siamese Government.

6. The United Kingdom Authorities say that from discussions in the Claims Commission in Bangkok they are absolutely satisfied the sum of 6.5 millions would satisfy all claims as determined by the commission and 1500000 pounds can be safely released to the Thai Government without detriment to the interests of any British Commonwealth claimants and without prejudice to the principles stated in C.R.O. telegram D130 of 8th April 1948. They feel on the other hand that procedure in Claims Commission offers such opportunities of delay to Siamese that claimants will be prejudiced unless an attempt is made to break the present deadlock.

7. I have informed Eastman very briefly of this proposal and he will be able to get details from the British Embassy Bangkok to which they are being telegraphed by the Foreign Office today.

8. Informally I have suggested that the United Kingdom discussion of the matter with Viwat be delayed as long as possible and that in any event unless you indicate to the contrary in the meantime the fact that it represents the United Kingdom views only should be stressed.

Min. & Dept. E.A.
Treasurer & Treasury.

27th September, 1949.

PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT.

SECRET

S.41/1/6.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
Rec'd 20 SEP 1949
File No. 45/2/1 45/3/1/1

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

Referred in connection with previous correspondence.

P

a s Brown.
Secretary.
19.9.49.

COPY.

SECRET

Office of the High Commissioner
for the United Kingdom,
CANBERRA.

Ref:2/141.

19th September, 1949.

SECRET.

Dear Sir,

With reference to my letter of the 14th September on the subject of the release of Japanese gold to Thailand and France, I am directed by the High Commissioner to inform you that after the most careful consideration, which took account of the points mentioned in the Australian Government's telegram No.154, the United Kingdom Government has decided not to raise the question in the Far Eastern Commission. It was made abundantly clear by the United States Government that any attempt to deter the United States from transferring the gold to France and Thailand would gain nothing in actual fact and would only cause considerable resentment. A point which weighed with the United States is that in the case of Thailand there may be certain compensating advantages in bringing about the settlement of Commonwealth war claims, since her financial position will be measurably improved, and she will no longer be able to argue that financial stringency compels her to use her frozen assets in London as backing for her currency.

The United Kingdom Government takes the strongest exception, however, to the procedure followed by the United States Government in this matter and the Foreign Secretary is taking this up with the Secretary of State.

I am to express the regret of the United Kingdom Government that owing to the necessity of referring this matter to Mr. Bevin in Washington it has not been possible to inform the Australian Government of their views at an earlier date.

Yours faithfully,

(Sgd.) J. M. Hunter
for Official Secretary.

The Secretary,
Prime Minister's Department,
CANBERRA. .. A.C.T.

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

FAR EASTERN COMMISSION MEETING. In Washington, the U.S. announced at a meeting of the Far Eastern Commission that General MacArthur had been authorised to turn over 80,000,000 dollars of Japanese gold to Thailand and Indo-China. The U.S. opposed the motion supported by six members of the Commission that would have prevented the transfer. China, Australia, India, New Zealand, the Philippines and Russia were those supporting the motion. Canada, Britain and the Netherlands abstained, while France withdrew from the discussion as an interested party. Despatches say that Thailand would receive 43,000,000 dollars while Indo-China would get 37,000,000 dollars.

NYork 16.9.49

451/3/1/1

PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT.

KS/MJ

SECRET

P.M.'s File No.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
Rec'd 19 SEP 1949
File No. ~~451/1~~ ?

The Secretary,
Department of External Affairs.

Referred.

451/3/1/1

A. N. Brown
Secretary,
Prime Minister's Department.
16 SEP 1949

P

OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER
FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM,
CANBERRA.

H/O.

Ref.: 2/141

14th September, 1949.

SECRET

Dear Sir,

With reference to the Australian Government's telegram No.154 to the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations on the subject of the release of Japanese gold to Thailand and France, I am directed by the High Commissioner to inform you that the matter is now under consideration by the Foreign Secretary in Washington, and Mr. Bevin has been asked to inform the representatives of Commonwealth countries on the Far Eastern Commission of the view which he takes.

Yours faithfully,

G. KIMBER

Official Secretary.

The Secretary,
Prime Minister's Department,
CANBERRA, A.C.T.

Refer to file ~~for~~ 461/3/1/1 for
Submission to Secretary
re Japanese Gold for Thailand + France
dated 16/9/49.

451/3/1/1

LRWcI.BS (file copy)

CONFIDENTIAL.

File No. 451/3/1/1

CANBERRA. A.C.T.

Memo. No.

16th September, 1949.

MEMORANDUM for -

The Australian Consul General,
BANGKOK.

You will probably be aware of the recent expression of intention by the United States Government to release to Thailand and France some $80 million in gold at present held in Japan and earmarked for Thailand and Indo-China as a result of trade transactions during 1941-43.

The matter was first brought to our notice by the United States Embassy in Canberra, which declared its intention to file with the Far Eastern Commission a copy of the directive it proposed to send to General MacArthur. Subsequent developments are described in the attached telegrams, which also set forth the reasons why we have opposed the United States plan.

It will be seen that we are less concerned with France's share of the gold than with Thailand's. The first point on which we are insisting is that the Far Eastern Commission's jurisdiction in the matter must be upheld; but if the Commission were to find that clear legal title to the gold rested with Thailand and Indo-China we would not be greatly concerned if Indo-China's share were released to France immediately. As regards Thailand, however, we will continue to oppose release until all outstanding Allied claims are settled.

We are far from confident that our opposition can have any practical effect. It is quite likely that the Far Eastern Commission will be unable to reach a decision that would prevent the United States from going ahead and issuing its directive to SCAP. If the release to Thailand could be held up, however, we have in mind that it might serve as a useful weapon for persuading the Thais to be more co-operative in the matter of our own pending claims.

SECRETARY.

Secretary to see

NOTE.

Japanese Gold for Thailand and Indo-China.

Monsieur Priestley (French Charge d'Affaires) has recently asked to see the Minister for the purpose of discussing with him the matter of the French share of the gold which the United States wants to release from Japan to Thailand and Indo-China.

I telephoned Priestley yesterday and suggested that he might come along and discuss it in the Department first of all, after which he could if necessary see the Minister. This he agreed to do, and he saw me yesterday morning.

He pointed out that the French Government regarded the gold earmarked in Japan as French property beyond any question, and therefore not in any way subject to the jurisdiction of the Far Eastern Commission. The French accordingly considered that they were quite correct in asking the head of the occupation in Japan, who at present has physical custody of the gold, to return it to them. The United States was quite satisfied that the gold belonged to France. Priestley understood that the bulk of it (he did not know exactly what proportion) had accrued to France before the beginning of the Japanese war, at a time when not only France, but the rest of the Allies, were continuing to carry on normal trading operations with the Japanese.

The French Government was accordingly disturbed that Australia should have apparently taken the lead in the FEC in resisting the United States proposal to release the gold. The French felt that Australian influence in these matters might have the effect of stirring up opposition among other FEC countries which might perhaps be less capable than Australia of deciding a matter of this sort objectively on its merits and might tend to judge it rather on political considerations. The French hope that Australia might see its way to withdraw its resistance.

I explained to Priestley first of all that we had been given to understand by the United States that the gold had been earmarked for Thailand and Indo-China as a result of transactions carried on with the Japanese during the war, and not before. It was this consideration, among others, which had led us to entertain doubts whether France and Thailand possessed clear legal title. As long as these doubts existed - and they were shared by the United Kingdom and other FEC countries - we felt that the matter was clearly within the competence of the Far Eastern Commission. Until it was absolutely clear that the gold belonged to France and Thailand, the FEC could rightly claim that it could be regarded as part of Japan's assets, and these were clearly subject to FEC jurisdiction until their disposal could be determined at the peace conference.

I explained to Priestley the recent history of FEC and of the continual efforts made by the United States to by-pass it and undermine its jurisdiction. We had tried hard from the beginning to maintain the authority of FEC, which was after all the only means open not only to us but to France, of impressing our views on the occupation authorities. We were disappointed that there had been so much delay in making peace with Japan, but we did not regard this as an excuse for allowing the FEC to become impotent. This particular question was clearly one on which we felt that FEC's rightful jurisdiction must be upheld on principle. It was significant that the United States Government, even though it proposed to act unilaterally outside the FEC, had itself acknowled FEC's competence by filing with the Commission its proposed directive to SCAP and by acknowledging the Commission's right to discuss it.

I made .....

noted on 461/3/1/1

I made it clear to Priestley, however, that we were less concerned with France getting its share of the gold than with the Thai aspect of the matter. If the FEC were able to decide that legal title to the gold rested with France and Thailand, we would not raise any further opposition to the release of the French share. With Thailand the case was different; we had been at war with Thailand, and we, together with the United Kingdom, India, New Zealand and Burma, still had outstanding claims against the Thai Government arising out of the war. We did not consider that any Thai assets held overseas should be relased to Thailand until all Allied claims had been satisfactorily settled. We would accordingly continue to resist release of the Thai gold, but not the French gold if we could be satisfied on the matter of title. I added that we would like to see the FEC try to decide the question on its merits at its next meeting.

Priestley said he saw the picture clearly, and would inform his Government of out attitude and the reasons for it. It was clear that the main point of conflict between us was the question of the initial competence of the FEC.

Priestley observed that the French Government apparently attached a good deal of importance to this matter, and for this reason had instructed him to discuss it with the Minister. He wondered whether, now that I had explained it to him, it would be necessary for him to see the Minister. I said that this was of course ultimately a matter for him to decide in the light of his instructions, but that I personally did not feel it would be necessary. The Minister had taken a direct personal interest in the matter, and I was confident I had expressed his views accurately. Priestley agreed that he need not see Dr. Evatt.

16th September, 1949.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. **SECRET.**

AUTHOR COPY

JBH:LB:JSH

I.18695,90

ENCYPHER FIRST:

Dated: 16th September, 1949
1315

The Australian Embassy,
WASHINGTON.

Recd: 17th September, 1949
0900 hours.

870. SECRET . IMMEDIATE.

F.E.C.122.

509.

At this-morning's meeting, we pressed issue to vote as instructed in your telegram under reference. Result of voting on Australian resolution "that issuance of directive be postponed until matter fully investigated and decided by F.E.C." is as follows;

For: Australia, China, India, New Zealand, Philippines, U.S.S.R.

Abstentions: Canada, Netherlands, United Kingdom (Denning told us last night that he had protested vigorously to State Department about proposed directive. He had also spoken to Thai Finance Minister and urged a very early settlement of outstanding claims against Thailand).

Against: United States.

France did not participate in vote. Resolution was thus lost on United States veto.

2. Following is summary of progress of meeting;

(a) New Zealand, China, Philippines and India made statements in support of our position.

(b) United States made statement repeating its previous arguments that Thailand and France were legally entitled to earmark gold and stating that this matter was not one of policy, but rather of implementation by S.C.A.P. under a supplementary directive issued by the United States in accordance with Section I of paragraph III of the terms of reference of F.E.C. United States also gave answers to questions posed by Australia at last F.E.C. Meeting (See F.E.C. Document 343/1 sent under cover of P/L No. 493/49 of 13th September which included statement that gold for Thailand was in respect of purchases of rice, tin and rubber.

(c) [illegible] then made statement pointing out that this was a matter of principle which should, pending a Peace Treaty, be decided by the F.E.C., that F.E.C. should decide whether any countries should be given preferential treatment in the distribution of assets in Japan and that Thailand has not settled outstanding debts. He noted in passing that whilst we had doubts about the legality of French Government's title to gold, it might be that F.E.C. would, after mature consideration, decide that gold should be released to France. In this event, Australian Government would be willing to give due consideration to claims of France. We also referred to possibility that gold might be in payment for services performed by Australian and other allied prisoners of war in Thailand, and moreover, that the property of Australian commercial interests.....

451/3/1

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. **SECRET.**

I.13685,90

interests in Thailand, for instance, tin belonging to Australian mining companies, might fall within the category of services for which Thailand may be given payment. In conclusion, we asked for vote on substantive questions directive be reviewed to S.C.A.P., recess followed and it was clear that there was no support for this motion, but that certain of our colleagues would support a motion to postpone issuance of directive. We therefore fell back on your second proposal.

(d) U.S.S.R. took line that vote at today's meeting was not essential and apparently accused the United States of hastening vote for political reasons. We then pointed out that we had asked for vote today.

3. United States representative, in reply to Indian question stated that the United States proposed to issue directive and intended at time of issuance to release statement to press, giving background (presumably) explaining United States position. We suspect that story of today's meeting will be leaked and have already been approached by press, but have given no comment. Should we maintain this attitude to press when United States issues its press release?

4. Other questions were discussed at meeting which will be reported in later telegram.

MIN. & DEP'T. OF E.A.

17th September, 1949.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

This is a [illegible] paraphrased version of a cipher message. It is not to be communicated outside a Government Department or used in any way without paraphrasing. Secret Cypher

MD/jo

CABLEGRAM

DECYPHER TO

O.11442

September 13, 1949

4.10

AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY
WASHINGTON

509. CONFIDENTIAL.

Your 831 (FEC119).

We consider the best course would be to try at Thursday's meeting to have the matter brought to a vote on its merits. Our main argument should be that Thailand was at war with us and other Allies and that no assets should be released to Thailand until all outstanding wartime claims against Thailand have been settled. We would not be unduly disturbed if FEC should decide that Indo-China's share should be released forthwith, though we are still doubtful about legality of title in both cases. An immediate vote on the substantive question would safeguard the authority of FEC and would at the same time place on the United States the onus of deciding whether to veto if it found itself in minority.

If however FEC is unwilling to consider proposal on its merits, you should move that directive be postponed until question can be fully investigated, considered and decided by FEC in interests of all Governments which participated actively in war against Japan.

We are doubtful whether there is anything to be gained from entering into legal argument on question of title. Investigation might show that legal title is valid, but this is in any event secondary to main consideration that Thailand has not even yet settled outstanding claims against Australia.

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MIN AND DEPT E.A.
September 14, 1949

451/3/1/1

Text of Thai Ambassador's Note delivered to Amb Embassy Washington 9th Sept. 1949. Original covering memo on 479/10/11

P
Y

MEMORANDUM

The Government of Thailand has requested the Government of the United States to take such measures as may be required to release to the Bank of Thailand certain gold bars owned by the Bank of Thailand and deposited for safekeeping in Japan.

Documents have been submitted to the Government of the United States establishing that the Bank of Thailand is the lawful owner of 2,696 gold bars, with a fine gold content of 38,854,999.30 grams, which are being held for safekeeping on its behalf in the vaults of the Bank of Japan at Osaka and Tokyo. The Bank of Thailand is in possession of safekeeping receipts issued by the Bank of Japan. In addition, it is in possession of weight lists, certificates of inspection and other documents, describing the bars by number, gross weight and fine gold content. The gold bars are physically segregated from other gold in the vaults in the Bank of Japan and the markings and other identifying symbols evidence that the gold is owned by the Bank of Thailand and is being held in safekeeping for it.

The gold bars constitute a major part of the Currency Reserve maintained by the Bank of Thailand pursuant to the Thailand Currency Act B.E. 2471.

Approximately one-half of the gold was purchased pursuant to agreements entered into in 1941, which provided for the settlements of credits by transfers of gold. The remainder was purchased with balances which accrued in favor of Thailand during the war. The dates of the pertinent agreements and the amount of gold presently held under earmark in Japan pursuant to such agreements are summarized as follows:

Date of Agreement	No. of Bars	Weights
Aug. 2, 1941	185	2,316,948.70
Aug. 26, 1941	268	3,979,273.60
Dec. 6, 1941	454	6,527,857.70
Dec. 20, 1941	327	4,896,246.10
Dec. 25, 1942	412	6,041,666.70
Oct. 29, 1943	430	6,250,000.00
April 8, 1944	424	6,055,364.10
Oct. 27, 1944	196	2,787,642.40
Total	2696	38,854,999.30

The gold acquired during the war was purchased in an effort to maintain the integrity of the Thai Currency System and to avert financial

451/3/1/1 General Policy re Thailand

and economic collapse. The Thai Government had been obliged during the war to make available to Japan local currency in excess of 1600 million baht in exchange for yen. This resulted in a tremendous increase in the note circulation and there was serious danger of economic and financial ruination. The Thai Government eventually succedded in arranging for the purchase of a total of 1506 gold bars, with a fine gold content of 21,807,239.6 grams. The purchase represented the conversion of the yen equivalent of baht 114,000,111.51, as compared to the outlay of over 900 million baht in the purchase of rice and other commodities which were sent to the southern regions occupied by Japan for civilian and military consumption.

It is apparent that only to a small degree was the Thai Government able to mitigate the acts of exploitation and spoliation of the Thai economy by the Japanese Government. By the end of the war the unliquidated credit balances in favor of Thailand amounted to baht 1,556,653,411.07. Note circulation had risen to baht 2,096,132,348 as compared to a pre-war circulation of baht 297,334,079. Currency reserves had fallen from 98.5% to approximately 35%. Over 60% of this reserve was accounted for by the gold held under earmark in Japan.

Under well established principles of both municipal and international law, the Bank of Thailand acquired valid title to the gold purchased by it. Its prompt release will promote stability in Thailand.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. SECRET.

H .MAL.

Dated: 9th September,1949.
1807.
Rec'd: 11th September,1949.
0900.

D.CYPHER FROM:

Australian Embassy,
WASHINGTON.

835. F.C130. [redacted] ...CAT.

Thai Ambassador called on the Ambassador this morning and left a note of which the following is the summary;

The Thai Government has requested the United States to release to the Bank of Thailand certain gold bars owned by the Bank and deposited for safekeeping in Japan. The Bank of Thailand possesses receipts issued by the Bank of Japan, weight lists, certificates of inspection and other documents describing the bars by number and fine gold content. The bars are physically segregated from other gold in vaults in the Bank of Japan and suitably marked and identified. The gold constitutes a major part of the Thai currency reserve. Approximately one-half of the gold purchased before the end of 1941 i.e., 31st December. The remainder purchased with balances which accrued in favour of Thailand during the war. The gold was earmarked between 2nd August,1941, and 27th October,1944 - gold acquired during the war was purchased in an effort to maintain the integrity of the Thai currency system and avert financial and economic collapses. The Thai Government was obliged during the war to make available to Japan local currency considerably in excess of gold earmarked by Japan for Thailand. Local currency was for purchase of rice and other commodities which were sent to Southern Regions occupied by Japan for civilian and military consumption. Only to a small degree was the Thai Government able to mitigate the acts of exploitation and spoilation of the Thai economy by the Japanese Government. 60% of the Thia currency reserve was accounted for by the gold held under earmark in Japan. The Bank of Thailand acquired a valid title to the gold under established principles of both municipal and international law. Its prompt release will promote stability in Thailand.

2. The Thai Ambassador requested that his representations be sympathetically considered by the Australian Government. The Ambassador took the opportunity of referring to Thailand's outstanding obligations to Australia.

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Min and Dept. E.A.

11th September,1949.

451/3/1

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. SECRET.

I. 13695.
Dated: 9th September, 1949
1505.
Rec'd: 10th September, 1949.
1100.

M. .N.L.

D.C.V. H.L.R. FROM:

Australian Embassy,
WASHINGTON.

830. S.G.A.T.

F.E.C No.118.

Our telegram No.820.

Essential background to United States directive and the fact that Australia protested in FEC yesterday has been leaked to the Press. Press report quotes amounts of gold for Thailand and France as given to us by State Department, explains why gold was earmarked and the American Officials have investigated French and Thai claims and have reached the conclusion that they were justified.

Press states that Philippines also protested as you are aware in our telegram under reference, this is not so.

.....

Min and Dept. External Affairs.
11th September, 1949.

451/3/1

This is an unparaphrased version of a Cypher Message. It is not to be distributed outside a British Commonwealth Government Department or Instrumentality without paraphrasing. It is never to be downgraded below 'Restricted'.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. SECRET.

[redacted]..GC

I.13347

Dated: 9th September, 1949
1339
Recd.: 10th September, 1949
0900

DECYPHER FROM:

Australian Embassy,
WASHINGTON.

831. SECRET. IMMEDIATE.

For Dr. Burton from Ambassador.

F.E.C. 119. Your 499.

We have been considering how to bring this question to a vote as instructed in paragraph 4 of your 485 of 6th September in view of time factor if the United States, as seems most likely, proceeds with the issuance of directive to S.C.A.P. on 16th September.

2. The only approach that occurs to us would be to introduce a resolution that the directive be not issued. This would give rise to procedural disputation viz. paragraph 111(1) of F.E.C. terms of reference. We would maintain that this directive could not be issued as a result of a specific F.E.C. policy decision and the United States would argue that the directive was in implementation of F.E.C. basic past surrender policy and would obstruct by every possible means. Whether we could force the issue to a vote is doubtful. We might move a motion that a vote be taken at once but some other delegation might move for postponement. Second motion would be voted on first and if approved support the United States. In any event it appears most unlikely that other Governments would have given or would have wished to give instructions to their representatives on this issue.

3. It does not seem possible to prevent the United States from issuing directive although directive can of course be reviewed by F.E.C. after it is issued. However, from past experience, it would appear that such action would result ultimately in fruitless discussion and a decision unfavourable to us because of the United States veto. Moreover, we would be forced into a position from which we could only with difficulty retreat and would possibly impair our friendly relations with the United States Government.

4. We feel that the United States arguments in rebuttal of our statement yesterday will be predicated on legal issues and, as yet, we do not have sufficient factual information about the earmarking of the gold to argue with confidence. Any views that you might have on legal aspects would be most helpful.

5. You are aware of the United States general attitude towards F.E.C. and its disinclination to work through it. The whole issue should be considered in this context.

MIN.& DEPT. E.A.

10th September, 1949

451/3/1

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

[redacted]/GC

This is an unencrypted version of a Cypher [illegible] the Government [illegible] mental [illegible] never to be downgraded below "secret".

I.13341

Dated: 8th September, 1949
1917

Recd.: 9th September, 1949
1600

DECYPHER FROM:

Australian Embassy,
WASHINGTON.

828. RESTRICTED.

F.E.C. 117.

Your 499.

Gold for Thailand and France.

A firm statement along the lines of your recent telegrams made by the Ambassador at this morning's meeting. Chinese and Indian representatives supported. Comments of various members are summarised as follows:

(a) Chinese representative argued that the action contemplated by the United States was contrary to paragraph 16 of the policy decision on interim import-export policies for Japan. (F.E.C. 232/26). He also referred to page 242 of S.C.A.P. summary of non-military activity of September 1947 and asked why China had been singled out as an exception. He said that no hasty or premature steps should be taken, that this issue was an integral part of Allies general claims against Japan and urged that directive be withheld.

(b) The Indian representative, whilst without instructions on this particular issue, said that his Government was most concerned that the policy-making functions of F.E.C. should be safeguarded and expressed opinion that directive should be fully considered by the Commission.

(c) The United Kingdom representative observed that he would withhold comment for the time being until further evidence as to title of the gold had been provided.

(d) The French representative pointed out briefly that this question did not fall within competence of F.E.C., but was properly administrative act within competence of S.C.A.P. He said that any discussions about this matter should be conducted through diplomatic channels and that the French Government would not produce evidence of title before F.E.C.

2. We put it to the Chairman that this matter should be urgently considered by F.E.C. before directive was issued. Chairman replied that it was his assumption that the United States Government would give opportunity for further discussion by Commission.

MIN.& DEPT. E.A.

9th September, 1949

451/3/1

This is an unparaphrased version of a Cypher Message. It is not to be distributed outside a British Commonwealth Government Department or Instrumentality without paraphrasing. It is never to be downgraded below 'Restricted'.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. SECRET.

[redacted]

[redacted]: JSH

ENCYPHER FROM: [illegible] September, 1949

The Australian Embassy,
WASHINGTON.

Recd: 8th September, 1949
1400 hours.

820. EMERGENCY. SECRET.

F.E.C.116.

Late this afternoon we were called to the State Department by Allison who, under instruction from Butterworth, reported at length the United States position with regard to the transfer of gold from Japan to Thailand and France.

2. Following is summary of his comments:

(a) The decision to take this step was approved by President Truman personally after consultation with the Departments of Defence, State, Treasury and the Attorney General.

(b) The United States Government is certain that they are legally correct in transferring gold otherwise they would not have taken this decision. The State Department is preparing a factual memorandum about the legal position for distribution to friendly powers.

Stressed again that Thailand's legal right to earmark gold was not connected with Austria's claim for compensation from Thailand.

(c) Allison pointed out that U.S.A. believes that U.S.A. is entitled to a major portion of the gold belonging to Japan. Therefore, if this amount is not accepted as belonging to Indo-China and Siam, it may be claimed later by the U.S.A. for occupation costs.

(d) They stressed the political significance of proposed move in order:

(1) To contain Communism in Asia and,

(2) To assist the French in the interests of the Western Union and the Atlantic Pact.

Referred to the geographical position of Australia and expressed the opinion that we might view the situation in its widest aspects.

(e) Said that if this issue were raised by Australia at F.E.C. meeting tomorrow, it would give the Soviet a "chance for a field day".

Suggested that we ask you not to raise the issue in the meeting tomorrow. In this event, the United States would delay the issuance of a directive to S.C.A.P. for a further week to allow time for further negotiation (i.e. for another fortnight).

(f) Allison gave the impression that the United States had made firm decision to issue directive.

3. We felt you should be advised of the foregoing immediately.

MIN. & DEPT. E.A.

8th September, 1949.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

ALF/MG

O. 11134

Dated 6th September, 1949
1800

DECYPHER TO:

Australian Mission,
TOKYO.

266. CONFIDENTIAL.

Release of gold to Thailand and France.

U.S. Embassy in Aide-memoires of 31st August and 5th September informed us that U.S. Government proposed to instruct Supreme Commander to release to Thailand and France $80 million in gold which had been earmarked by Japan for those countries as result of trade transactions between 1941 and 1943.

2. We have now informed U.S. Embassy that Australian Government is unable to support either substance of U.S. proposal or manner of its implementation. We have pointed out that Australian Government is not convinced that title to gold rests with Thailand and France. We reminded U.S. that during period in question Thailand was at war with Australia and other countries and Indo-China was under Japanese occupation, and that we had reason to assume that services on which Thai and French claims rest were performed in furtherance of Japanese war effort. We stated that gold should properly be regarded as part of Japanese assets and its ultimate disposition laid down in peace treaty and that the matter should in any event be fully considered and voted upon by FEC before any directive sent to S.C.A.P.

3. Full texts by air bag.

MIN & DEPT E.A. (479/10/11)
(480/6)
(480/30)

7th September, 1949

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

Cypher to be used for all communications between Government and Diplomatic Representatives. It is never to be downgraded below 'restricted'

MD/jo

DECYPHER TO

O.11132/3
Sent September 6, 1949
6.10pm

AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY
WASHINGTON.....485

SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS
LONDON.....154

CONFIDENTIAL.

Release of gold to Thailand and France. Your FEC.113

1. We have now informed U.S.Embassy in reply to their Aide-memoires of 31st August and 5th September that after careful study Australian Government is unable to support either substance of U.S. proposal or manner of its implementation. Following is summary of points in our Aide-memoire:

2. Notwithstanding United States citation of international law and monetary practice, Australian Government is not convinced that Thai and French title to the gold has been clearly established, particularly having regard to abnormal conditions prevailing at time Japan is stated to have earmarked gold for Thailand and France. Between 1941 and 1943 Thailand was at war with Australia and other countries and Indo-China was under Japanese occupation. In absence of detailed information Australian Government assumes that services on which Thai and French claims rest were performed in furtherance of Japanese war effort against allies.

3. Gold should properly be regarded for present purposes as part of Japan's assets and its ultimate disposition laid down in peace treaty. Even if regarded as transferred the gold should still be regarded as enemy assets in possession of occupying forces and available to meet war damage and other claims made by Allied on enemy countries.

4. Matter should in any event be fully considered and voted upon by FEC before any directive sent to SCAP.

5. Full texts by air bag.

MIN AND DEPT E.A.(479/10/11)
(480/6)
(480/30)
September 7, 1949

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. **SECRET.**

[redacted]MER

I.12973

DE[redacted]YPHER FROM:

Dated 1st September, 1949
1319

Austrialian Embassy,
WASHINGTON.

Recd. 2nd Septem[redacted], 1949
1000

787. Secret.

Our FEC112. FEC113.

State Department has now replied informally along the following lines -

(A) Regrets that it cannot postpone notification of directive to F.E.C. in view of assurances given to France and Thailand and because all F.E.C. countries except U.S.S.R. have already been informed of the directive;

(B) Whilst the United States would of course respect Australia's claims against Thailand, it considers that Thailand's legal right to earmark gold is not connected with Australia's claims for compensation.

2. We understand that the State Department is sending further instructions to United States Embassy Canberra.

MIN. AND DEPT. OF E.A.

2nd September, 1949

451/3/1/1

2 Spare

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

:NER

C.10861.

Sent 31st August, 1949 1555

DECYPHER TO:

The Secretary of State
for Commonwealth Relations,
L O N D O N.

150. CONFIDENTIAL:

We have been informed by the United States Embassy that the United States Government proposes to instruct the Supreme Commander to hand over to Thailand and France approximately $80M (eighty million dollars) in gold which had been earmarked by Japan for those countries as a result of trading transactions. The procedure which we understand has been communicated to you involves a notification to F.E.C. and we are asked to support the United States in the matter.

While there may be less objection to the gold being transferred to France for French Indo-China we have strong objection to the transfer to Thailand with which we were at war and which country under the Treaty of Peace made with her has an outstanding obligation to Australia in respect of certain claims and the United Kingdom Government is in a similar position.

We propose therefore to inform the United States Government that we would expect them to respect our position in relation to Thailand, even though they themselves were not at war with Thailand, and that no transfers of gold should be made from Japan one enemy to Thailand another enemy until claims on Thailand have been satisfied.

We should be glad of your urgent comments.

MIN. AND DEPT. OF E.A.

1st September, 1949

Secret
Planning & Ldee
R. L. Anderson

also 452/3/1

E-S-R
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I have copy for (RH?).

451/3/1/1

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DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. SECRET.

...:MD

DECYPHER FROM: Dated: 31st August, 1949.
1957.

THE AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY, Rec'd: 1st September, 1949.
WASHINGTON.

786. SECRET.

Your 470.

F.E.C.112.

As Allison was not available, we discussed the question with his assistant who was unable to give a firm reply, which is promised tomorrow, but expressed the following tentative views -

(A) The directive, copy of which was sent to the United States Embassy, Canberra, will be filed with the Far Eastern Commission and subject to review by the Commission. The State Department, however, is most anxious that this should not happen and would probably veto any proposal to modify the directive. Communication to S.C.A.P. is termed "directive" not "interim directive". (The State Department would not state the significance of the change of nomenclature but we interpret it as -

(a) A method of getting around the relation between interim directive and matters of urgency, or

(b) Indication that United States is no longer concerned with formulation of policies by F.E.C.

(B) The State Department is inclined to the view that Australia's relations vis - a - vis Thailand are distinct from Australian and United States relations vis - a - vis Japan.

(C) The United States would be extremely reluctant to postpone transmission of the directive to F.E.C. since Thailand and France have been promised that action will be taken immediately. The present intention is to forward the directive to F.E.C. on 2nd September and issue it to S.C.A.P. a fortnight later. This period would allow time for further representations by the Australian Government.

(D) The State Department stressed that transfer was strictly legal and at the same time had political value in encouraging the Thais to resist the spread of Communism.

2. Suggest you might wish to concert action with other interested British Commonwealth Governments.

3. We were informed by the State Department of this matter on 29th August and given firm assurance that the United State's Embassy, Canberra, was thoroughly briefed to discuss it with you (see our memorandum No.998 of 29th August).

MIN. & DEPT. EXTERNAL AFFAIRS. 2nd September, 1949.

451/3/1/1

WAR DAMAGE CLAIMS AGAINST THAILAND

On 3rd April, 1946, Australia and Thailand (Siam) concluded a Final Peace Agreement, several of the articles of which provided for the payment of compensation by Thailand in respect of war losses and damage sustained by Australian citizens and firms.

Subsequently, on 6th January, 1947, an agreement was concluded for setting up in Bangkok a Joint Claims Committee consisting of an Australian member, a United Kingdom Member, an Indian member and three Thai members. Of this committee, the United Kingdom member has acted as Chairman, with the right to exercise a casting vote. Claims for war loss or damage which have been disputed by the Thai Government are referred to the Committee for adjudication.

Independently of the foregoing agreements, and in pursuance of the Thai Tin Ore Agreement of 7th December, 1946, the Thai Government paid a sum of £1,250,000 to Commonwealth (including Australian) tin mining companies as compensation for tin ore removed from their leases during the war of 1941-1945.

The United Kingdom Government has been holding in London frozen assets of the Thai Government, which are understood to amount to some £8,000,000 sterling.

The Joint Claims Committee has made only slow progress in the examination of disputed claims and from time to time proposals for the payment by Thailand of a lump sum in satisfaction of outstanding claims have been canvassed.

As long ago as 21st October, 1947, the Thai Government addressed to the Australian Consul-General at Bangkok an Aide-Memoire seeking a revision of the Final Peace Agreement with Australia and expressing Thailand's wish to make a lump sum payment in respect of outstanding claims.

On 25th November, 1947, the Treasurer approved in principle the acceptance of a lump sum payment from Thailand in settlement of outstanding Australian claims.

On 4th December, 1948, the Australian Consul-General, Bangkok handed to the Thai Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs a Note dated 1st December, 1948, expressing the willingness of the Australian Government to meet the Thai Government's point of view to the extent of fixing an upper limit to the latter's overall liability and specifying that the lump sum in question should consist of :

(a) the total of all assets of the Thai Government or of Thai Government instrumentalities frozen or held by the Custodians of Enemy Property in the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India, Pakistan and Ceylon and their territories; and

(b) a sum, in Thai currency and expendable in Thailand, equivalent to £1,000,000 sterling.

In the meantime, a technical expert, Mr. J.F. Shipley had been commissioned to examine and to report in detail to the British Commonwealth Thai Claims Committee on the most complex group of claims under consideration by the Committee - the claims of the mining companies. These claimants sought awards of £5,939,467, which the Thais were prepared to settle for only £1,228,378. Mr. Shipley was prepared to award the mining companies £2,022,572 or 34% of the sum they claimed.

In a Note dated 7th June, 1949, the Thai Government replied to the Australian Note of 1st December, 1948, offering in settlement of all British Commonwealth claims an immediate lump sum payment of

£3,500,000 exclusive of a sum of £1,549,350, which it claimed to have already paid up to 31st March, 1949. This offer was made conditional upon the release of Thai Government and Thai assets frozen by the several countries of the Commonwealth.

On 14th June, 1949, the Australian Consul General, Bangkok, reported that the Thai Government had probably arrived at the figures of £1,549,350 by adding to the £1,250,000 paid under the Tin Ore Agreement certain awards made by the Claims Committee prior to the 31st March, 1949.

On 11th July, 1949, the United Kingdom Chairman of the Claims Committee prepared the following confidential estimate of Allied claims against the Thai Government

	Claims	Amounts
1.	Tin	2,158,382
2.	Commercial Property	3,509,738
3.	Personal Property	239,854
4.	General Property	161,083
5.	Australian Property	30,000
6.	Indian Property	95,000
7.	Balance of Personal Prejudice	300,000
		£6,494,057

The Australian Government has recorded its view (P.M.'s file No. J.41/1/7) that the claims provisions to Final Peace Agreement with Thailand would lapse if the Thai Government accepts the terms of the British and Australian Notes presented to them proposing a lump sum settlement and that in that event the British Commonwealth Thai Claims Committee should be replaced by a Commonwealth Claims Commission, in which the Thais would not participate. The primary function of the proposed Commission would be the destribution among claimants of any lump sum received from the Thai Government.

On 23rd July, 1949, the Australian Consul-General, Bangkok, advised that the Thai Government is offering the sum of £3,500,000 in full satisfaction of all claims not settled on the 31st March, 1949.

It is understood that the British Ambassador, Bangkok, and the Indian Minister, Bangkok, are recommending a counter-bargaining offer of £6,000,000 subject if necessary, to a discount of £1,000,000 for a quick settlement.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

GG/jo

DECODE TO

AUSTRALIAN CONSUL GENERAL
BANGKOK.

O.10120
Sent August 12, 1949
1440

56. UNCLASSIFIED.

Mr. A.H.Loomes has been appointed to succeed you as Consul General. Tentative plans are to leave Sydney early September by sea.

Please request provisional recognition.

E.A.
August 12, 1949

451/3/1/1

Copies to:
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DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

GOLOMBO

DECODE TO

O.10121
Sent August 12, 1949
1440

HIGH COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE
LONDON.

3447. UNCLASSIFIED.

For External.

Please prepare Commission of Allan Henry Loomes as Australian Consul General at Bangkok with jurisdiction throughout Thailand and submit for King's signature.

E.A.
August 12, 1949

451/3/1/1

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Thursday, 19th May.

Question No. 20.

MR. FRANCIS: To ask the Prime Minister -

(1) Does Australia conduct trade relations with Thailand.

(2) If so, what is the volume of this trade.

(3) What trade or other representation has the Commonwealth Government in Thailand.

(4) In view of reported moves in Bangkok to expel Australian nationals as a retaliatory measure to the Federal Government's plan to deport a Siamese nursemaid from Australia, what action has the Australian Government taken to prevent a rift between the two countries.

for information only. No request has been received from P.M. for draft answer.

451/3/1/1

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

MC

I. 3997.

SAVINGRAM FROM:

Dated 3rd March, 1949.

SECRETARY OF STATE,
FOR COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS,
LONDON.

Rec'd 11th March, 1949.
11.50.

Secret. H. No. 60. Saving.

My telegram 31st August, H. No.372.

SIAM.

On the 23rd February a state of emergency was proclaimed by the Siamese Government. This proclamation, which had been expected for some time, was designed to give to the government certain extraordinary powers which they deemed necessary. In particular it would enable them:-

(a). To use the army in support of the police in joint action with United Kingdom forces on the Malayan border, and to close the frontier. Hitherto only police would be employed and they had been unable prevent Chinese agitators from crossing the frontier at will.

(b). To enforce a stricter control over communist elements within the country.

2. On the 26th February disturbances broke out in Bangkok. Reports of their origin are conflicting, but in the early stages a marine detachment found itself in conflict with a body of soldiers, and shots were exchanged. Fighting, which was fortunately limited to the immediate area of Bangkok, continued until the 28th when a cease-fire was arranged.

3. It seems that a coup d'etat was attempted by left wing elements who favoured Nai Pridi, the exiled former Prime Minister. It is probable that the disturbanes which has now occured is that which the government anticipated when proclaiming the state of emergency.

4. The disturbance is in fact a reflection of the Siamese political scene. The army and the navy have always been the two most important factors in Siamese affairs. The army has backed Pibul, the right wing Prime Minister, whereas the navy has favoured Pridi. For some time the navy has taken little part in political events and Marshal Pibul, the Prime Minister and the army's man, has in return left the navy well alone. It has never, however, been certain when or whether the navy would wish to re-enter the active field. The future must now depend on how far Pibul can influence the naval - and through them the marine - leaders. In these circumstances no forecast of the final outcome of the recent clash is possible.

5. In accordance with our general policy of promoting stability in South East Asia, we are in favour of continuance of the Pibul regime which has, during the last six months, brought a measure stability to Siam and no alternative to which is in our view likely to be an improvement. In particular we are anxious to avoid any interfer with Siam's rice exports which are now coming forward in highly satisfactory quantities.

A.MIN. & DEPT. E.A.
MIN. & DEPT.DEFENCE.

11th March 1949

451/3/1/1

2

451/3/1/1

See L R Mc I's memo to Secretary Acheson

Court Representation = S.E.A. on file 58 1/1/1

451/3/1/1

FILE COPY: GL/EW

451/3/4/1.

30th September, 1948.

MEMORANDUM for:

The Secretary,
Prime Minister's Department,
CANBERRA.

TRAINING OF SIAMESE IN AUSTRALIA.

With reference to your minute of 14th February 1947 forwarding copy of memorandum dated 12th February 1947 from the Department of the Treasury on the above subject, and to subsequent correspondence (your file AS 340/1/1), I have to inform you that following on discussions which occurred during the recent visit to Siam by the Australian Goodwill Mission, the Australian Government has offered to Siam, as the first stage of a programme of educational assistance, and in accordance with the spirit of resolutions regarding reconstruction adopted by UNESCO, one Junior Fellowship and one Scholarship, to be available for study within Australia as from the beginning of 1949. The Fellowship and the Scholarship will be open to both men and women.

The purpose of the Junior Fellowship is to provide opportunities of post-graduate study at an Australian educational institution for a student who has recently completed a course of academic, professional, rural or technical training, but whose eventual contribution to the development of his country may be increased by a further period of training. The selected student will be provided with a living allowance valued (after taxation deductions necessary under Australian law have been made) at about £7 (Aust.) per week, and additional funds will be available to meet the costs of essential tuition, books, instruments and travel within Australia. Duration of the period of training under the Fellowship will be from six months to two years. Costs of travel to and from Australia will be paid by the Australian Government which will also arrange for suitable reception and accommodation.

The purpose of the scholarship is to provide opportunities for a student from Siam to undertake at institutions providing professional, academic, technical or rural training in Australia, a course up to four years in duration. The Australian Government will pay for the costs of travel to and from Australia, and will provide a living allowance valued (after taxation deductions necessary under Australian law have been made) at about £4 per week for the duration of the course. Funds will also be available to meet essential expenses for tuition, books and equipment, and travel within Australia. The Australian Government will arrange for suitable reception and accommodation of the students.

Details on 863/3/2.

Secretary.

File No. 451/3/1/1.

Memo. No.

CANBERRA, A.C.T.

24th August, 1948.

MEMORANDUM for:

The Australian Consul-General,
BANGKOK, SIAM.

In reply to your memorandum C.188/48 of 2nd August, 1948, I attach hereto copy of your memorandum C.128/48 of 18th June, 1948.

JWB/RJ

SECRETARY.

Sent RJ 25/Jul.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
Record 7 AUG 1948
File No. 451/3/1/1

No. C. 188/48.

AUSTRALIAN CONSULATE GENERAL.
BANGKOK, SIAM.

MEMORANDUM for: 2nd. August, 1948.

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

Formal recognition of Siamese Government.

I refer to my memorandum No. C. 128/48 of 18th. June 1948 on the above subject.

It appears that all four copies of the above memorandum were forwarded to you and no copy has been retained for my own file. I should therefore be grateful if one copy could be returned to me for record purposes.

DD
HM
RP

CONSUL-GENERAL.

Memo for Aust. Consul General, Bangkok, Siam.

In reply to your memorandum C188/48 of 2nd August, 1948, I attach herewith copy of your memorandum C. 128/48 of 18th June, 1948.

Secretary

DUPLICATE

AUSTRALIAN CONSULATE GENERAL
BANGKOK, SIAM.

No. C. 188/48.

MEMORANDUM for: 2nd. August, 1948.

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

Formal recognition of Siamese Government.

I refer to my memorandum No. C. 128/48 of 18th. June 1948 on the above subject.

It appears that all four copies of the above memorandum were forwarded to you and no copy has been retained for my own file. I should therefore be grateful if one copy could be returned to me for record purposes.

CONSUL-GENERAL.

H51/3/1/1

SIAM — EXCHANGE OF DIPLOMATIC AND/OR CONSULAR REPRESENTATIVES.

See memo. C 172/48 from Bangkok, of 27th. July, 1948.

Indicates Siamese hope of a Legation in Bangkok.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
2 AUG 1948
File No.

Ref. No. C 166/48.

AUSTRALIAN CONSULATE GENERAL.
BANGKOK, SIAM.

22nd July, 1948.

MEMORANDUM for:

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

FORMAL RECOGNITION OF SIAMESE GOVERNMENT.

With reference to your telegram No. 57, I called on the Minister of Foreign Affairs on 19th July and informed him of your instructions. At the same time I handed him a confirmatory letter and also a formal reply to his letter of 1st May (see my memorandum No. C94/48 of 4th May, 1948).

2. The Minister expressed great pleasure at the resumption of normal relations.

3. He also enquired whether it was the intention of the Australian Government to establish a Legation in Siam; if such was the intention he would like to plan the necessary staffing and financial arrangements for establishing reciprocal representation in Australia. He said that he was merely enquiring and did not wish to be taken as pressing for the raising of the status of our representation here.

I said that I knew of no proposal on the part of the Australian Government for the establishment of a Legation. I mentioned that the Thamrong and Khuang Governments had expressed their desire for exchange of representation on a legation level and that I understood that the Foreign Minister in the former Government had had some inconclusive talks with Dr. Evatt on the subject, but that I had heard nothing more of it.

4. With reference to our agreement in September, 1947, for the establishment of a Siamese Consulate-General in Australia the Foreign Minister said that, owing to the previous non-recognition, no provision for the establishment of the post had been made in this year's budget. It was therefore probable that they would be unable to establish the post until next year.

A. J. McLaren
CONSUL-GENERAL.

1. The Secretary
2 Mr McIntyre

A. We are pleased enough relieved to learn that the Siamese are not sending a Consul-General to Australia during 1948

B. The Philippines has a better claim to an Australian Legation than Bangkok: while I favour the withholding the establishment of formal diplomatic (as distinct from Consular) relations until Siam behaves we should be careful to ensure that in this matter Siam does not obtain from us a greater recognition than we are prepared to accord to the Philippines. H.V.E. 27/7/48

451/3/1/1

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. SECRET.

[redacted]

O.9836
Sent: 12th July, 1948.
1740

DECYPHER TO:

AUSTRALIAN CONSUL-GENERAL,
[redacted].

87. Your R.103.

Recent exchange of letters between Minister for External Affairs and Siamese Foreign Minister can be regarded as indication that we are in normal diplomatic relations with Siam.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS(re draft of 13/7/48)

16th July, 1948.

#51/3/1/1

No. 6654/2491. Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Bangkok, 15 June, 1948.

Sir,

I have yesterday received from Mr.Macmahon Ball your letter dated 20th May, 1948 and I wish to express my deep appreciation and thanks for Your Excellency's kind sentiments and good wishes for Siam and for the development and continuance of cordial relations between Siam and Australia, which I am most happy to reciprocate.

As you may already be aware, as a member of the United Nations, Siam is willing to co-operate in every possible way with the activities of that organization in order to bring peace and happiness to the world. At the same time she is anxious to take advantage of the assistance of those various specialised agencies of the United Nations to solve her numerous post-war problems on an international level.

I am therefore in a position to assure Your Excellency that His Majesty's Government very much appreciate the assistance offered by Australia in accordance with the spirit of the resolutions

adopted.....

The Rt. Hon.H.V.Evatt, K.C.,M.P.,
Minister for External Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

Luang Wichitwatakarn

adopted by the first and second UNESCO Conferences concerning reconstruction programmes on the educational side, and that the presence of Mr.Macmahon Ball and members of his mission in our country is greatly welcomed by all.

Mr. Ball and members of his mission have met with the educational authorities as well as other High officials of this country and the result of their conversation will no doubt prove to be of great interest. I feel certain that he will report to you in detail regarding his mission to my country and I hope that he will carry back with him a satisfactory impression of his visit to Siam.

I cannot end this letter without expressing to Your Excellency my thanks for the gift of books which you were kind enough to send to me and I shall treasure them as a token of goodwill which I sincerely reciprocate.

I take this opportunity to convey to Your Excellency the good wishes of His Majesty's Government as well as of the Siamese people for the welfare and prosperity of our friendly neighbour Australia.

I have the honour to be,
with the highest consideration,
Sir,
Your obedient servant.

Pridi Debyabongs Devakula

DRAFT CABLEGRAM

To: AUSTRALIAN CONSUL-GENERAL,
BANGKOK.

No. .....

Date: .....

You may now formally acknowledge Siamese Government's note of 1st May, 1948 in appropriate terms pointing out that Australian Government expects Siam to honour undertakings entered into under peace treaty and all other international obligations.

453/1/1

LRMcI/SCB

Mr Whitlam:
I think a better way is to send short letter with credentials this evening.
WB

File
LRMcI

Seen.

F

DRAFT CABLEGRAM

To: AUSTRALIAN CONSUL-GENERAL,
BANGKOK.

No. .....

Date: .....

You may now formally acknowledge Siamese Government's note of 1st May, 1948 in appropriate terms pointing out that Australian Government expects Siam to honour undertakings entered into under peace treaty and all other international obligations.

453/1/1

LRMcI/SCB

CONFIDENTIAL.

Ref. No. C128/48.

AUSTRALIAN CONSULATE GENERAL.
BANGKOK, SIAM.

18th June, 1948.

MEMORANDUM for:

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

FORMAL RECOGNITION OF SIAMESE GOVERNMENT.

Up to the present time my relations with the Siamese Government have been conducted strictly on the basis of the instructions in your telegram No. 31, received here on 7th May, 1948. Although I could not avoid meeting the Minister of Foreign Affairs at two or three private functions which I attended, I did not call on him officially and my business with the Siamese authorities was conducted solely through permanent government officials. I also indicated discreetly to the Foreign Adviser that I would be unable to accept invitations to any official functions.

2. Both Government officials and private Siamese individuals have said to me that they are puzzled and surprised at Australia's unexplained refusal to grant formal recognition to the Government. They have pointed out that every other country has granted recognition and have asked me the grounds of Australia's continued refusal. The matter is also the subject of humourous remarks from time to time by some of the other foreign representatives here.

I have, of course, given non-commital replies and have avoided the subject as far as possible.

3. It is of interest to note that I have found resentment at our attitude not only amongst Government supporters but also amongst some opponents of the Government. As the political pattern here is totally unlike that to be found in Australia or other more politically developed countries, non-recognition of a particular government is interpreted by even some intelligent people, not as an objection only to the group in power, but as an indication of hostility to the country as a whole.

4. Up to the present time I have offered no criticism of your decision beyond that contained in para 3 of my telegram No. B78 of 3rd May, 1948. Australia having once refused to recognise the Government (and having thus incurred such unfavourable local reaction as might result), I had felt that we might perhaps turn the situation to our advantage by using the question of formal recognition as a bargaining point in the preliminary discussions on the lump sum settlement of war damage claims; as mentioned in my telegram B78, however, formal recognition would be a prerequisite to any final settlement on the lump sum negotiations

5. The situation has been entirely altered, however, by the visit of the Mission headed by Mr. MacMahon Ball. The latter bore a personal letter from the Minister addressed to "M.C. Pridideppongse Devakul, Ministerof Foreign Affairs" stating that Mr. Ball was his personal representative and inviting M.C. Pridi to discuss with Mr. Ball matters of "general interest to the two countries." As a result Mr. Ball called on both the Minister of Foreign Affairs and on the Prime Minister and had discussions with them. To avoid

...../2.

adding further complications I did not attend these discussions but, so as not to give undue offence, I joined the Prime Minister and Mr. Ball at afternoon tea after their discussion and also accepted an invitation to a small private dinner party which the Minister of Foreign Affairs gave for Mr. Ball.

6. On my understanding of the rules of protocol the Siamese Government would be fully justified in treating the method of address and contents of Dr. Evatt's letter, together with Mr. Ball's calls on the Foreign Minister and Prime Minister, as formal recognition of the Government. So far they have refrained from embarrassing us in this way but they must find it most difficult to reconcile these friendly overtures with our silent refusal to recognise them.

7. Mr. Ball handled the situation in a most tactful manner and did not commit the Australian Government on the question of formal recognition; on a number of occasions, however, it was quite impossible for him to avoid expressing the customary platitudes with regard to the development of friendly relations between the two countries.

8. In the face of all of this it is quite impossible for us to persist in our attitude of silent non-recognition. And it is far too late in the day for us to announce for the first time our grounds of dissatisfaction with the Siamese Government, however well-based they may be. I would therefore strongly urge that we grant formal recognition to the Government with the least possible delay.

9. I fully realize that the impression created amongst the Siamese will be that our former non-recognition resulted from unfavourable advice which I had given you, and that our subsequent grant of recognition was due to over-riding advice given by Mr. MacMahon Ball. (The former opinion was in fact expressed to a member of the Mission by one of the Siamese officials and is quite understandable, as my duties vis-a-vis the Siamese authorities have been practically limited to insistence on the honouring of Siamese obligations in respect of claims etc.; the only tangible gesture of goodwill on our part was made through the visiting Mission.)

Such an impression will not tend to increase my prestige as your representative here but that appears to be unavoidable; all the other circumstances point to the urgency of granting immediate recognition to the Government.

CONSUL-GENERAL.

Ref. No. C127/48.

AUSTRALIAN CONSULATE GENERAL.
BANGKOK, SIAM.

18th June, 1948.

MEMORANDUM for:

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

VISIT OF AUSTRALIAN MISSION TO BANGKOK.

The Australian Mission, consisting of Messrs. MacMahon Ball, McNicol and Harris, arrived in Bangkok at about midday on 12th June and left for Saigon at about 9.30 a.m. on 16th June.

2. There was a regrettable misunderstanding in the arrangements made for the reception of this Mission and for suitable contacts for the members during their stay.

3. Your telegram No. 36 advised that the function of the Mission was "to discuss with appropriate authorities education requirements of their countries and facilities available in Australia to meet these requirements."

Your telegram No. 38 stated that "Mr. Ball has been chosen by the Government to make this visit because it attaches the greatest importance to close relations with the people of South East Asia. He is fully familiar with Australian policy and will wish to make informal contact with Siamese officials and other individuals, particularly those interested in education."

As a result of these instructions I described the Mission to the Siamese as an "Educational Delegation" and the programme subsequently arranged by the Siamese provided for meetings between the Mission as a whole and the Minister of Education and various educational officials, visits to universities, etc..

4. At a small reception which I planned with the Mission on 12th June I invited, in addition to educational authorities, the Under-Secretary of Foreign Affairs and the Adviser on Foreign Affairs (both permanent government officials) so that Mr. Ball would have the opportunity of an informal talk, if necessary, on other than educational matters. I had also approved a proposal by LUEN SARABHAYA for an informal luncheon at which the Mission would have the opportunity of meeting certain opposition leaders as well as other prominent people.

5. In view of the stated objects of the Mission and the fact that Australia has withheld formal recognition of the Siamese Government (so that I myself have no official contact with any members of the Cabinet), I purposely refrained from arranging any meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs or the Prime Minister.

...../2.

6. On 7th June I received the following telegram from Mr. MacMahon Ball:-

" My instructions are to make visit as quiet as possible and avoid any splash. I rely on you to try to restrict formal functions without giving offence.

I hope to meet political leaders for cautious talks. "

On the following day, however, I saw your telegram No. 44 which, together with your telegram No. 45, confirmed me in my decision to arrange no contacts with members of the Cabinet (other than the unavoidable contact with the Minister of Education).

7. On the arrival of the Mission Mr. MacMahon Ball informed me that he was carrying a letter from Dr. Evatt addressed to "M.C. Pridideppongse Devakul, Minister of Foreign Affairs", stating that Mr. Ball was his personal representative and asking that the Minister should discuss with him "matters of general interest to the two countries."

Mr. MacMahon Ball was disturbed that no arrangements had been made for him to meet either the Minister of Foreign Affairs or the Prime Minister.

8. The matter was discussed by Mr. MacMahon Ball and myself with the Under Secretary of Foreign Affairs at the reception on that evening, as a result of which an appointment with the Foreign Minister was arranged for Monday morning, 14th June. An appointment for Mr. Ball to meet the Prime Minister was subsequently fixed for the afternoon of Tuesday 15th June and on that evening the Minister of Foreign Affairs entertained Mr. Ball at an informal dinner. He met leaders of the Democratic Party at lunch on that day and I arranged a meeting with the leader of the Constitutional Front (Luang Thamrong) at 6 that evening.

9. In the result the Mission transacted its educational business (principally through Mr. Harris) and Mr. Ball made all the political contacts which he desired.

Had I been informed in advance, however, of the fact that Mr. Ball had the letter from Dr. Evatt to the Foreign Minister and that he had the status of Dr. Evatt's personal representative, the following embarrassments could have been avoided:-

(a) I had led the educational authorities to believe that the whole Mission would participate in the education discussions, whereas in the result it was necessary for Messrs. Ball and McNicol to leave most of the discussions to Mr. Harris so that they could attend to the political aspects of their work. Although the educational authorities subsequently expressed their warm satisfaction with their talks with Mr. Harris, their first reaction was one of disappointment and surprise that the leader of the Mission would not take part in all the talks;

...../3.

(b) As Government contacts had obviously been excluded intentionally from the original arrangements, the production of Dr. Evatt's letter and the last-minute scramble to arrange appointments with the Foreign Minister and the Prime Minister must, at best, have given an unfortunate impression of complete ineptitude on our part.

10. The Siamese have probably interpreted the incident in terms of blundering or obstruction on my part, rather than of any confusion in my instructions, but it is doubtful whether such an impression is to the long-term advantage of Australian interests here.

CONSUL-GENERAL.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. SECRET.

DBB/MB

I.11239
Dated 12th July, 1948
1300
Recd. 13th July, 1948

DECYPHER FROM -

The Australian Consul-General,
BANGKOK.

B.103. IMMEDIATE.

Patton called to-day at the request of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to enquire whether I had any news on the question of recognition.

2. Have you considered my memorandum 128/48 of June 18th yet and can you give me some indication of your intentions?

E.A. (Attn.) 13th July, 1948.

Sir Owen Chesswell



DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. SECRET.

DBB/MB

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E.A. (Attn.) 13th July, 1948.

451/3/1/1

DRAFT TELEGRAM TO AUSTRALIAN CONSUL-GENERAL, BANGKOK.

No.:

Date:

Your B.103.

Recent Exchange of letters between Minister for External Affairs and SiameseForeign Minister can be regarded as indication that we are in normal diplomatic relations with Siam.

Distribution:

E.A.

13/7/48

LRMcI/SCB.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. SECRET.

DBB/MB

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E.A. (Attn.) 13th July, 1948.

MM Intge: inform him by cable that Municipal Judges suffice to show we are in normal diplomatic relations

W

Draft Telegram

Aus tralian Consul-General,

BANGKOK.

Secret Immediate

Your Memo. N. C.128/48 of 18th June.

Please inform Siamese Government that in accordance with advice tendered by you the Australian Government has recognized its accession to office as from 16th April, 1948.

KTK

451/3/1/1

DUPLICATE.

CONFIDENTIAL.

Ref. No. C128/48.

AUSTRALIAN CONSULATE GENERAL.
BANGKOK, SIAM.

18th June, 1948.

MEMORANDUM for:

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

FORMAL RECOGNITION OF SIAMESE GOVERNMENT.

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2. Both Government officials and private Siamese individuals have said to me that they are puzzled and surprised at Australia's unexplained refusal to grant formal recognition to the Government. They have pointed out that every other country has granted recognition and have asked me the grounds of Australia's continued refusal. The matter is also the subject of humourous remarks from time to time by some of the other foreign representatives here.

I have, of course, given non-commital replies and have avoided the subject as far as possible.

3. It is of interest to note that I have found resentment at our attitude not only amongst Government supporters but also amongst some opponents of the Government. As the political pattern here is totally unlike that to be found in Australia or other more politically developed countries, non-recognition of a particular government is interpreted by even some intelligent people, not as an objection only to the group in power, but as an indication of hostility to the country as a whole.

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5. The situation has been entirely altered, however, by the visit of the Mission headed by Mr. MacMahon Ball. The latter bore a personal letter from the Minister addressed to "M.C. Pridideppongse Devakul, Minister of Foreign Affairs" stating that Mr. Ball was his personal representative and inviting M.C. Pridi to discuss with Mr. Ball matters of "general interest to the two countries." As a result Mr. Ball called on both the Minister of Foreign Affairs and on the Prime Minister and had discussions with them. To avoid

...../2.

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6. On my understanding of the rules of protocol the Siamese Government would be fully justified in treating the method of address and contents of Dr. Evatt's letter, together with Mr. Ball's calls on the Foreign Minister and Prime Minister, as formal recognition of the Government. So far they have refrained from embarrassing us in this way but they must find it most difficult to reconcile these friendly overtures with our silent refusal to recognise them.

7. Mr. Ball handled the situation in a most tactful manner and did not commit the Australian Government on the question of formal recognition; on a number of occasions, however, it was quite impossible for him to avoid expressing the customary platitudes with regard to the development of friendly relations between the two countries.

8. In the face of all of this it is quite impossible for us to persist in our attitude of silent non-recognition. And it is far too late in the day for us to announce for the first time our grounds of dissatisfaction with the Siamese Government, however well-based they may be. I would therefore strongly urge that we grant formal recognition to the Government with the least possible delay.

9. I fully realize that the impression created amongst the Siamese will be that our former non-recognition resulted from unfavourable advice which I had given you, and that our subsequent grant of recognition was due to over-riding advice given by Mr. MacMahon Ball. (The former opinion was in fact expressed to a member of the Mission by one of the Siamese officials and is quite understandable, as my duties vis-a-vis the Siamese authorities have been practically limited to insistence on the honouring of Siamese obligations in respect of claims etc.; the only tangible gesture of goodwill on our part was made through the visiting Mission.)

Such an impression will not tend to increase my prestige as your representative here but that appears to be unavoidable; all the other circumstances point to the urgency of granting immediate recognition to the Government.

CONSUL-GENERAL.

Aust Gen Policy towards Siam

"Canberra Times".

MONDAY, JUNE 14, 1948.

AUSTRALIAN GIFT TO SIAM MINISTER

BANGKOK, Sunday.
The Australian Goodwill Mission arrived here yesterday for a four-day visit.

Mr. MacMahon Ball conveyed a personal message and a gift of books from Dr. Evatt to the Siamese Foreign Minister (Pridi Dewawongse).

Do we "recognise" this ?

Mr McIntyre

In my opinion, Mr Macmahon Ball's presentation and message constitute a formal act of recognition of the present Siamese Government.

V.T.K.
7. 6. 48

Me too

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

NC/MAL.

I. 8690.
Dated: 26th May,1948.
1631.
Rec'd: 27th May,1948.

DECODE FROM

Australian
~~BRITISH~~ CONSUL GENERAL.

BANGKOK.

For External B.85. Your telegram 36.
Scholarship for Asiatic Student. Siamese Authorities welcomes visit. In case Government offer accommodation to Delegation as their guests please advise whether this may be accepted in view of present non-recognition.

---oo---

External Affairs (Attention)

27th May,1948.

Secretary

What about it?

H.M.C.

Yes: nothing to do with recognition! But other w. of might lead to it.

WB

Reply sent

RP Please copy & reply on the file/order

4/6/48

Mr Marshall (D.E.A.)

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

MB

0.7185

Sent: 20th May, 1948

DE[illegible]E TO -

The Australian Consul-General,
BANGKOK.

38.

Formal note regarding scholarships referred to in my telegram No. 36 will not be sent to you as it is now desired that fuller particulars relating to the plan should be conveyed by Mr. Macmahon Ball on his arrival. Mr. Ball has been chosen by the Government to make this visit because it attaches the greatest importance to close relations with the peoples of South East Asia. He is fully familiar with Australian policy and will wish to make informal contacts with Siamese officials and other individuals, particularly those interested in education. He will be accompanied by Mr. D. McNicol of the Department of External Affairs and Mr. G. Harris of the Commonwealth Office of Education. The delegation will arrive at Bangkok by special R.A.A.F. plane on 10th June and will leave on 13th June.

E.A. (P.I.553/2/2)

21st May, 1948.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. **SECRET.**

Dated 30th May, 1948
1425 hours.

AGH:JSH

DECODE TO:

THE AUSTRALIAN CONSUL, DILI NO.6.

Repeated to:

THE AUSTRALIAN CONSUL GENERAL, BATAVIA. NO.128.

THE AUSTRALIAN COMMISSIONER, SINGAPORE, NO.270.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT, RANGOON. NO.28.

THE AUSTRALIAN CONSUL-GENERAL, BANGKOK, NO.37.

THE GOVERNOR, HANOI, NO.1.

THE AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY, NANKING, NO.97.

THE AUSTRALIAN CONSUL-GENERAL, MANILA. NO.81.

For all addressees.

Following is itinerary for R.A.A.F. aircraft A65-101 with R.A.A.F. markings and international letters VH-RFR :

28th May	Darwin - Dili	RON
29th May	Dili - Sourebaya - Batavia. Remain Batavia 30 May - 1st June.	
2nd June	Batavia - Singapore. Remain Singapore 3rd-5th June.	
6th June	Singapore - Rangoon. Remain Rangoon 7th-9th June.	
10th June	Rangoon - Bangkok. Remain Bangkok 11th-12th June.	
13th June	Bangkok-Hanoi. Remain Hanoi 14th - 16th June.	
17th June	Hanoi - Hong Kong	RON
18th June	Hong Kong - Shanghai	RON
19th June	Shanghai - Nanking. Remain Nanking 20th-22nd June.	
23rd June	Nanking - Shanghai	RON
24th June	Shanghai - Hong Kong	RON
25th June	Hong Kong - Manila. Remain Manila 26th-27th June.	
28th June	Manila - Morotai	RON
29th June	Morotai - Darwin	

Crew Captain M.M. Heinrich, Second Pilot R.R. Davidson, Navigator J.M. Scott, W.O.P's G.J. Mitchell, R.E. de Lacy, all Flight Lieutenants. Fitter Sgt. V.E. Murphy. Passengers W. MacMahon Ball, D.W.McNicol, V.G.Harris. Accommodation required for both passengers and crew.

For Hanoi and Rangoon only. Please arrange landing permits and accommodation.

For all other addressees. Please obtain landing permits and arrange accommodation.

E.A.(UN)(PACIFIC)
AIR.

451/3/1/1

21st May, 1948.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

CABLEGRAM.

WC/MEB. O. 7048/9.

DECODE TO ; Sent ; 18th May, 1948.

AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY.
NANKING. 94.

ACTING CONSUL-GENERAL.
BANGKOK. 36.

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR ASIATIC STUDENTS.

In pursuance of the government 's decision to provide scholarships for Asiatic students (both through purely Australian scheme and through a larger scheme regarded as coming within UNESCO) we propose to send representatives of this department and of Office of Education to N.E.I., Malaya, Burma Siam Indo-China, the Philippines and China to discuss with the appropriate authorities the educational requirements of their country and the facilities available in Australia to meet these requirements.

Mission will comprise Messrs. Macmahon Ball, Harris (Office of Education) and D. McNicol and will arrive at Bangkok about 7th June and Nanking about 16th June, Would you please enquire informally to ensure that such a visit will be welcomed by the governments to which you are accredited. Terms of a formal communication you should make to these governments being sent by airmail. It should be emphasised in an informal approach that only a small number of scholarships is contemplated at this stage, i.e. for 1949 owing to limited facilities in Australia.

It is not proposed that mission should visit India, Pakistan or Ceylon (to which countries a small number of scholarships will be offered) owing to the distances involved and the fact that the educational requirements of these countries are better known than those of the countries referred to in paragraph 1.

An approach in this matter has been made to governments of Burma and Indo-china direct, and by Australian representatives in Batavia, Manila and Singapore, to N.E.I. Philippines and Malaya.

Mission will also discuss the question of educational supplies and equipments including text books prepared in Australia which it is proposed Australia should make available as part of UNESCO reconstructions assistance and provision to N.E.I. Burma and Malaya only of approximately, £160,000 worth of boots and clothing each under post-UNRRA relief scheme.

Office of Education. 19th May, 1948.

E. A. (P.I.553/2/2)

No formal communication will be forthcoming

381/3/4

Now by hand

for 381/3/4/1

Mr. Cumes

E.C.A.F.E. - Representation of East Indies, Vietnam, Siam

The Australian Delegate to the Third Session of E.C.A.F.E. should, I think, be instructed

(a) that subject to its being given and accepting sponsorship from the Netherlands, the Republic of Indonesia should be supported for associate membership;

(b) that, failing (a), Australia should support any move, formal or informal, designed to permit representatives of the Republic of Indonesia to attend the Third Session as observers;

(c) that Australia should not oppose the admission, as associate members or as observers, of the representatives of other states of the N.E.I., whose membership is sponsored by the Netherlands Government;

(d) that the admission of Siam ~~to membership~~ delegates should not be opposed;

(e) that without further reference to Canberra he should not support the admission of the Republic of Vietnam to associate membership.

2. Mr. McIntyre agrees with the foregoing. We both understand that for associate membership sponsorship has to be forthcoming from the metropolitan power.

KTK.
17th May, 1948

Ref. No. C93/48.

AUSTRALIAN CONSULATE GENERAL,
BANGKOK, SIAM.

1st May, 1948.

CONFIDENTIAL.

MEMORANDUM for:

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

SIAMESE POLITICAL SITUATION - CONVERSATION WITH ADVISER ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

Shortly before 9 a.m. on 1st May, 1948, I received a call at the Consulate-General from Mr. Kenneth S. Patton, the Adviser to the Siamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Mr. Patton commenced by informing me that the Ministry had just discovered that it had omitted to send to me the formal letter of notification which had been addressed to each of the other foreign representatives. He stated that he had been informed that this omission was due to the mistake of a clerk who had prepared the notifications for only those representatives who had acknowledged the previous communication from the KHUANG Government. Mr. Patton said that the Minister of Foreign Affairs, before sending me a notification now, had asked him to ascertain whether the earlier omission would be held against the Government. I informed Mr. Patton that, if the Minister saw fit to send me a notification, I would forward it on to Canberra with the explanation which had been given to me and would at the same time inform my government that I fully accepted Mr. Patton's assurance that he believed such explanation to be true.

Mr. Patton then proceeded to sound me out as to whether such a communication would be likely to be acknowledged and as to the prospects of the Australian Government granting recognition to the PIBUL administration. I replied that if I received any such communication I would, of course, immediately seek instructions but that I was not in a position to indicate whether or not I would be instructed to reply and, if so, how soon or on what conditions. I said, however, that I could fairly state that the Australian Government was gravely disappointed at the way in which democratic principles and practice had suffered in the recent political events in Siam but that I could not say at this stage what would be the resulting attitude of the Government to the PIBUL administration. I said that I was sure that the Australian Government would observe with close interest the way in which the PIBUL administration addressed itself in practice to its treaty obligations and to its responsibilities in connection with the United Nations but that I could hold out little prospect of it being prepared to extend recognition at this stage.

2. Mr. Patton said he would discuss the matter again with the Minister of Foreign Affairs but his present inclination was to advise that no communication should be addressed to me at this stage but that action should be

...../2.

postponed until there was some greater likelihood of a favourable reply.

(I had, in fact, received your telegram No. 26 very shortly before Mr. Patton's visit but was not certain as to whether you desired me to convey your decision at this stage to the Siamese authorities).

3. I asked Mr. Patton if he could tell me the present attitude of the Siamese authorities to the assurances which the American Ambassador had sought in his letter of 30th April (see my memorandum C92/48, of that date). Mr. Patton replied that in the minds of the Siamese authorities the matter was tied up with questions of protocol and they were debating earnestly amongst themselves as to whether it was customary or necessary for such assurances to be given. Mr. Patton left little doubt in my mind that he personally had little time for this red tape and felt that, if it was the intention of the Siamese Government to honour its obligations, there could be little harm done by saying so, even if it had been said before. In the result, however, I understand that no written reply will be sent to the American Ambassador's request but that, when the latter calls formally on the Minister on the 3rd May, he will be given full verbal assurances covering these questions.

4. In an informal discussion which followed, Mr. Patton confessed that he also was gravely disappointed at recent political events and that he was doing some "watchful waiting" on his own account. His first inclination on PIBUL's accession to power had been to resign but on further consideration he felt that it might be possible for him by staying on to do something to help Siam as a country without involving himself in policies of which he could not approve. He said, however, that if in practice he found that he could not reconcile his work with his conscience he would certainly resign.

In the course of the discussion, I mentioned that the KHUANG Government had succumbed a little earlier than I had anticipated. Mr. Patton replied that the military clique had stepped in earlier than anticipated because the KHUANG Government had been making rapid progress in cleaning up abuses. They had succeeded in cutting down the defence budget, if not to a reasonable figure, at least to very much less than the military clique had wanted. Furthermore, they had been in process of establishing a Defence Committee which might have been able to exercise too wholesome a control over the armed forces and might have been able to prevent military interference in political affairs. Again, under the KHUANG Government the Navy had been cooperating wholeheartedly in the suppression of smuggling. The racketeers had, in short, to stop KHUANG quickly before he got too far in cleaning up abuses.

Mr. Patton went on to say that from his observation already it was clear that the Government was a one-man concern and that individual Ministers were either incapable or afraid of making decisions appertaining to their Ministries. He could not see that the Government in its present inefficient form could carry on for long; some early reshuffle was, in his opinion, inevitable but he was unable to see any likelihood of PIBUL himself being unseated in the foreseeable future.

CONSUL-GENERAL.

H.M.G. have under consideration a proposal for a draft agreement relating to British Somaliland which provides in essence the agreement to be negotiated by the U.K. on its own behalf & on behalf of Australia & other Commonwealth countries. I have informed H.M.G. that the negotiation of such an agreement by the U.K., with our consent, would amount to an act according de jure recognition to the present Italian Government & that therefore it is a matter for consideration by the Secretary.

A. J. B.
17. V.

Ref. No. C94/48.

AUSTRALIAN CONSULATE GENERAL,
BANGKOK, SIAM.

4th May, 1948.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
Rec'd 12 MAY 1948
File No.

MEMORANDUM for:

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

SIAMESE POLITICAL SITUATION.

Reference is made to my memorandum No. C93/48 of 1st May, 1948, and my telegram No. B77 of 3rd May, 1948.

2. Forwarded herewith for your information is copy of a letter dated 1st May, 1948, which I have received from the new Minister of Foreign Affairs advising me formally of the appointment of the new government.

CONSUL-GENERAL.

Encl. 1.

COPY.

No. 4701/2491

Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Saranrom Palace,
1st May, 1948.

Sir,

Following the resignation of the Council of Ministers under His Excellency Nai Khuang Apaivongse on the 8th April 1948, and the appointment by Royal Command dated the 15th idem of a new Council of Ministers with His Excellency Field Marshal P. Phibun-Songkhram as President of the Council and myself as Minister of Foreign Affairs, I have the honour to inform you that I have assumed charge of this Ministry as from the 16th April last, with my colleagues, Nai Pete Sarasin and Nai Warakan Bancha who have been appointed Deputy Minister and Minister Acting for the Minister of Foreign Affairs respectively.

In taking charge of the affairs of this Ministry, I beg to assure you that I shall unfailingly exert every endeavour for the furtherance of the friendly relations between our two countries, and it is, therefore, my earnest hope that I may receive from you all co-operation and confidence to that end.

I avail myself of this opportunity, Sir, to express to you the assurance of my high consideration.

(Signed) PRIDI DEBYABONGS DEVAKULA.
Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Monsieur Allan James Eastman,
Consul-General for Australia,
BANGKOK.

DUPLICATE.

Ref. No. C94/48.

AUSTRALIAN CONSULATE GENERAL,
BANGKOK, SIAM.
4th May, 1948.

MEMORANDUM for:

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

SIAMESE POLITICAL SITUATION.

Reference is made to my memorandum No. C93/48 of 1st May, 1948, and my telegram No. B77 of 3rd May, 1948.

2. Forwarded herewith for your information is copy of a letter dated 1st May, 1948, which I have received from the new Minister of Foreign Affairs advising me formally of the appointment of the new government.

CONSUL-GENERAL.

Encl. 1.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

/JMC

O.6503.
Sent: 7th May, 1948.

DECODE TO:

THE AUSTRALIAN CONSUL-GENERAL,
BANGKOK.

31.

Your B.78. You may deal with Siamese Government on de facto basis in so far as Australia's interests are concerned. No announcement or communication is necessary.

E.A.

10th May, 1948.

HC

W51/3/1 1

DRAFT TELEGRAM TO: AUSTRALIAN CONSUL-GENERAL, BANGKOK.

No.

Date.

Your B.78.

You may deal with Siamese Government on de facto basis in so far as Australia's interests are concerned. No announcement or communication is necessary.

Distribution:

Authorised by: L.R.McI.F.

7th May, 1948.

LRMcI.IR.

Code.

Sent: 7.5.48.

F

451/3/1/1

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

CABLEGRAM. **SECRET.**

JHP:HR

I.7588

DECYPHER FROM:
AUSTRALIAN CONSUL-GENERAL,
BANGKOK.

Dated: 3rd May, 1948.
1800
Rec'd: 4th May, 1948.
8.50 a.m.

B.76. Confidential.

Your 86 - Siamese Political Situation.

Please confirm that I may deal with the Government on a de facto basis. I am of course continuing to participate in the Claims Committee activities.

2. Do you wish me to burn the boats by announcing your intention to withhold formal recognition or do you propose to keep the matter under review in the light of Government prospects of stability and its attitude in practice to the treaty and other international obligation? In the latter event should I make any announcement with regard to Ø [Draft in waiting]

3. With de facto recognition some progress can probably be made in a round about way on lump sum negotiations but I can at present see no way of reaching final agreement with formal recognition. As lump sum settlement offers best and safest hope prompt settlement of war damage claims, which appear to be your chief practical interest in Siam, I would urge that this factor be given due weight in conjunction with other considerations.

External Affairs(attention)

Ø mutilated portion.

4th May, 1948.

Copies to:
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DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
Rec'd 3 MAY 1948
File No.

No. C92/48.

AUSTRALIAN CONSULATE GENERAL,
BANGKOK, SIAM.

30th April, 1948.

MEMORANDUM for:

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

SIAMESE POLITICAL SITUATION.
RECOGNITION OF GOVERNMENT BY FOREIGN COUNTRIES.

L.R.McI.

K.T.K.

H.M.

Further to my telegram B74 of today's date, I forward herewith for your information copies of the following documents:-

(a) Letter dated 16th April 1948 addressed by the new Siamese Minister of Foreign Affairs to each foreign representative in Bangkok, with the exception of this Consulate-General;

(b) Form of acknowledgment sent by British, Chinese, Dutch, Indian, Danish and Swiss representatives on 30th April;

(c) Form of acknowledgment sent by American Ambassador on 30th April.

CONSUL-GENERAL.

Encls. 3.

COPY.

No. 4024/2491.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Saranrom Palace,
16th April, 1948.

Monsieur le Charge d'Affaires,

With reference to this Ministry's Note No. 3962/2491 of the 14th instant, I have the honour to inform you that, following the appointment by Royal Command dated 15th April, 1948, of a new Council of Ministers with His Excellency Field Marshal P. Phibun-Songkhram as President of the Council and myself as Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Nai Pote Sarasin as Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, I have today assumed charge of this Ministry.

In taking charge of the affairs of this Office, I beg to assure you that I shall unfailingly exert every endeavour to maintain and strengthen still further the close and friendly relations happily subsisting between our two countries. It is therefore my earnest hope that I may receive from you the same co-operation and confidence that you have been so good as to accord to my predecessor.

I avail myself of this opportunity, Monsieur le Charge d'Affaires, to express to you the assurance of my high consideration.

(Signed) PRIDI DEBYABONGS.
Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Monsieur Richard Whittington, O.B.E.,
His Britannic Majesty's Charge d'Affaires,
Bangkok

COPY.

British Embassy,
Bangkok.

171/85/48.

30th April, 1948.

Your Serene Highness,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Your Serene Highness's Note No. 4024/2491 of April 16th, 1948, informing me that, following the appointment by Royal Command dated April 15th, 1948, of a new Council of Ministers with His Excellency Field Marshal P. Phibun-Songkhram as President of the Council and Your Serene Highness as Minister of Foreign Affairs, you have assumed charge of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Furthermore, I note Your Serene Highness's assurance that Your Serene Highness will unfailingly exert every endeavour to maintain and strengthen still further the close and friendly relations happily subsisting between our two countries. Permit me to say, in reply, that I shall be happy to co-operate with Your Serene Highness in the furtherance of friendly relations between our Governments.

I avail myself of this opportunity to express to Yo_ur Serene Highness the assurance of my highest consideration.

(Signed) R.WHITTINGTON.

His Serene Highness
Major-General Prince Pridi Debyabongs,
Minister of Foreign Affairs,
Bangkok.

EFS/gc

American Embassy
Bangkok, Siam
April 30, 1948

No. 575

Excellency:

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your note of April 16, 1948 informing me of the formation of a new Council of Ministers with His Excellency Field Marshal P. Phibu-Songkhram as President of the Council and yourself as Minister of Foreign Affairs.

In reply, I have been instructed to remind Your Excellency of the great importance attached by my Government to the full protection and equitable treatment of American citizens and their interests and to the careful observance and implementation of treaty and other obligations, which include certain duties and responsibilities as a member of the United Nations. I am sure Your Excellency will agree with me that these are matters of importance in strengthening friendly relations between our countries and in promoting world peace. My Government would therefore be happy to receive specific confirmation of the general policies annunciated by His Excellency the Prime Minister with respect to the observance of treaty and international obligations.

I avail myself of this opportunity to express to Your Excellency the assurance of my highest consideration.

(signed) EDWIN F. STANTON

His Excellency
Monsieur Pridi Debyabongs,
Minister of Foreign Affairs,
Bangkok.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

BL.

I.7389
Dated 3rd May, 1948
1530
Rec'd 4th May, 1948
8.30

DECODE FROM -

Australian Consul General,
BANGKOK.

B.77.

My telegram B.74.

Siamese political situation.

Have now received letter of notification from the Minister for Foreign Affairs dated May 1st, in similar form to annexure (a) to my memo. C.92 of April 30th.

(ø Foreign ø) Minister has explained verbally that omission to write earlier was unintentional and due to oversight.

MIN. & DEPT. E.A.

4-5-48

(ø Mutilated ø)

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DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

CABLEGRAM. **SECRET.**

JHP:HP

I.7588

DECYPHER FROM:

AUSTRALIAN CONSUL-GENERAL, BANGKOK.

Dated: 3rd May, 1948. 1800

Rec'd: 4th May, 1948. 8.50 a.m.

B.76. Confidential.

Your 86 - Siamese Political Situation.

Please confirm that I may deal with the Government on a de facto basis. I am of course continuing to participate in the Claims Committee activities.

2. Do you wish me to burn the boats by announcing your intention to withhold formal recognition or do you propose to keep the matter under review in the light of Government prospects of stability and its attitude in practice to the treaty and other international obligation? In the latter event should I make any announcement with regard to Ø

3. With de facto recognition some progress can probably be made in a round about way on lump sum negotiations but I can at present see no way of reaching final agreement with formal recognition. As lump sum settlement offers best and safest hope prompt settlement of war damage claims, which appear to be your chief practical interest in Siam, I would urge that this factor be given due weight in conjunction with other considerations.

External Affairs(attention)

Ø mutilated portion.

4th May, 1948.

Copies ...

Secretary

AS (")

MR

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DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. **SECRET.**

EGM:MD

I.7302.

DECYPHER FROM:

Dated: 1st May, 1948.
1746.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS,
L O N D O N.

Rec'd: 2nd May, 1948.

H.165. SECRET.

My telegrams H.153 of 26th April. SIAM.

United Kingdom Charge d'Affaires Bangkok has reported that together with his Indian, Chinese and Netherlands colleagues he formally acknowledged receipt on 30th April of note referred to in my telegram H.137, paragraph 3 thereby according recognition to new Siamese Government. United States Ambassador has done likewise and at the same time has asked for specific confirmation regarding Siamese Government's observance of treaty obligations etc.

The Swedish, Belgian and Swiss Consular representatives acknowledged recipt of note on 29th April.

MIN. & DEPT. EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.
" " " DEFENCE.

2nd May, 1948.

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DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

/EF

CABLEGRAM. I.7234

Dated : 29th April, 1948.
1930

Recd. : 30th April, 1948.
3.45 P.M.

DECODE FROM :

AUSTRALIAN CONSUL-GENERAL,
BANGKOK.

B73.

My telegram No. B.69. Siamese political situation. Sweden and Belgium have recognised the Government today April 29th.

India has instructed Charge d'Affaires to recognise without requiring any further assurances and not to delay beyond May 1st.

Siamese Government are showing reluctance to await written assurances by United States and United Kingdom, and take the view that their policy statement (see my B.70) should be sufficient. They are at present not prepared to volunteer further assurances but indicate that if assurances are formally requested in an acceptable manner they may consider giving them; they are not however disposed to entertain anything in the nature of a demand. Matter is still under discussion.

----oOo----

Min. & Dept. E.A. (Atten.) 30th April, 1948.

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DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

AGU/MAL.

I.7267,
Dated: 30th April,1948.
1830.
Rec'd: 1st May,1948.

DECODE FROM

AUSTRALIAN CONSUL GENERAL.

BANG KOK.

B.74. My immediately preceding telegram, Siamese political situation. The British, Chinese, Dutch, Danish, Swiss and Indian representatives are conveying recognition to-day April 30th by formal acknowledgement of letter from Minister for Foreign Affairs without requiring additional assurance.

The American Ambassador is also acknowledging letter do-day but is adding paragraph stressing the importance of observing treaty obligations and principles of United Nations and requesting specific confirmation of Government policy in that regard.

The text of the letters exchanged follows by air mail.

-=-=000=-=-

External Affairs.

1st May,1948.

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DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. SECRET.

O. 6094/5.

Sent : 29th April 1948.
5.45. p.m.

LB/MEB.

DECYPHER TO :

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR
COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS
L O N D O N. 111.

AUSTRALIAN CONSUL-GENERAL.
B A N G K O K. 26.

YOUR H151 SIAM.

We did not formally recognise the Khuang Government. We also propose to with-hold formal recognition from Pibul.

External Affairs. 30th April 1948.

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FOR THE SECRETARY.

SIAM - RECOGNITION OF PIBUL GOVERNMENT.

It is now clear that Marshal Luang Pibul Songgram has openly assumed ~~our aim~~ power in Siam. Following the coup d'etat of last November, he professed his intention of remaining out of politics; but he has now forced the Khuang Government out of office and formed his own cabinet which rests on military support.

This can only be regarded as an unsatisfactory development. Pibul was Prime Minister of Siam when the Japanese war broke out, and is therefore tarred with the brush of collaboration. He has always been regarded as untrustworthy and as having the makings of a dictator. The Cabinet which he has now established is reported to be drawn from his own military clique, with the balance made up of non-entities. It is a much less satisfactory cabinet than that of Khuang, which included a good many men of real integrity and was the nearest approach to a democratic cabinet that Siam has ever had. It had, moreover, obtained a solid vote of confidence from the Siamese Parliament.

Pibul's vote of confidence, on the other hand, does not represent the majority of the parliament, since about ~~forty~~ eighty members abstained from voting. There have been, moreover, vague rumours that even his own military clique have been making plans to get rid of him. But these rumours are still vague, but the odds at present seem to be in favour of Pibul's being able to remain in office and retain all real power in his own hands.

The question arises whether Australia should recognise Pibul's Government. Since we did not formerly recognise Khuang's Government, we should legally be even more disinclined to recognise this one. We could, if necessary, justify continued non-recognition on the legal ground that we do not approve of the manner in which the old constitution was rescinded and a new one promulgated last November. But this would be a somewhat legalistic argument. Our only real grounds for withholding recognition now would be that we do not think the new Government is stable enough to remain in power and run the country. If we intend to "write off" Siam completely, and have nothing more to do with the Siamese, we might also justify non-recognition on the grounds that we do not like Pibul or his Government or the way they came into power. But apart from the question whether we would be wise to do so (and in view of our present and future interest in South-east Asia, I do not think we would), it is doubtful whether we can cut ourselves off. If we pull out of Siam altogether, we have legally no means of binding ~~him~~ Siam to observance of our Peace Treaty. Neither can we continue as an active member of the Claims Committee, which as soon as a new government settles down, will be settling the outstanding tin and other claims of Australia and other countries against Siam. Moreover, we have day-to-day contacts with the Siamese Government even now; we often have to ask them for permission for our aircraft to land, etc.

If we withdraw Eastman these practical ~~difficulties~~ considerations will arise, and the result can only be to our disadvantage. In addition we shall, of course, be deprived of another useful source of political intelligence.

On the other hand, if we leave Eastman there, we are bound to drift into a sort of de facto relationship with the Siamese Government - even without positive recognition on our part. This is perhaps the best course for us to pursue, at least for the time being. The Siamese could make difficulties about it if they wished to, but the chances are that they will not. It will mean that Eastmans contacts with the Siamese Government will have to remain entirely unofficial. If he begins exchanging formal communications with them, it is likely that he will have put Australia in the position, according to international usage, of having formally recognised the Siamese Government. On the assumption, however, that he can still go on dealing informally with them, he should be able to carry out most of his present functions without committing us to de jure recognition. If difficulties crop up (as they may, e.g., when the ~~War~~ claims negotiations get under way), or if at any time we decide that there is no point in withholding full recognition any longer, we can review the position and determine in the light of circumstances whether we should grant de jure recognition.

It now appears that most, if not all, other governments represented in Bangkok are going ahead to grant de jure recognition without delay. They are all, of course, in a somewhat embarrassing position because they all recognised Khuang and do not like the new government or the way it has come into power.

I suggest the attached telegram be sent to London and Bangkok. (The former asked for our comments).

Seen by
Secretary
30/4/48

DRAFT TELEGRAM TO SECRETARY OF STATE FOR COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS

Repeated to Australian Consul-General, Bangkok.

No.

Date.

Your H131. Siam.

We now gather from your subsequent telegrams and from telegrams from our Consul-General at Bangkok that you have decided to accord formal recognition to Pibul's Government without further delay.

We do not like the prospect of Pibul's return to full political power nor the complexion of his government, even though change of government has taken place in accordance with formal constitutional procedures. Moreover, we do not yet feel convinced that political situation in Siam is sufficiently stable to ensure that Pibul can maintain his position.

As you know, we did not formally recognise the Khuang Government. We accordingly propose to withhold formal recognition from Pibul for the time being. We shall, however, review the matter from time to time.

Distribution:

Not yet approved

28.4.1948.

LRMcI. IR.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

JPW/JML

I.7028.
Dated: 26th April, 1948.
1730
Rec'd: 28th April, 1948.

DECODE FROM:

AUSTRALIAN CONSUL-GENERAL,
BANGKOK.

B.70. Paragraph 3 of my immediately preceeding telegram.

The following is translated extract of the Government's policy statement which was read to Parliament on 21st April, and conveyed by Third Person Note to all foreign representatives.

"The Government will maintain and foster good relations with foreign countries in all honesty of speech, will respect existing obligations to all countries and will collaborate with the United Nations in all respects for the ends of peace and justice. As regards foreigners resident in Siam efforts will be made to find ways to secure their whole-hearted co-operation with Siamese people to mutual advantage of both parties and to the end that Siamese and foreigners may live together in peace and amity."

Minister & Department E.A. (attn). 28th April, 1948.

404/26

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DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. **SECRET.**

..:MD I.7026.

DECYPHER FROM: Dated: 26th April, 1948. 1730.

THE AUSTRALIAN CONSUL GENERAL, BANGKOK. Rec'd: 27th April, 1948. 4.40.

B.69. IMMEDIATE.

My immediately preceding telegram.

Siamese Political Situation.

Understand that the State Department announced in Washington 23rd April that they would watch carefully the manner in which the Siamese carried out international obligations and treated American citizens and interests. Also that they were suspending for the time being their consideration of the Siamese request for release of Siamese gold frozen in Japan.

2. The United States Ambassador has now received instructions to acknowledge forthwith the letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs but to include the above statement inhis reply and to request an assurance in respect of the Siamese treaty and other obligations.

3. The United Kingdom Foreign Office also agree that the time has come to recognise Pibul. They have instructed the Charge d'Affaires that, if it is possible in a very short time to obtain written assurance from the Siamese Government covering the treaty and other obligations, he may wait until assurance is received. Otherwise assurances already included in Government telegram from Siam will be sufficient and he should acknowledge the letter forthwith.

4. The Siamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been advised informally of the assurances desired. On receipt of these ✕ will convey recognition by formal reply. If assurances not received by to-morrow United Kingdom Charge d'Affaires will not wait but will acknowledge letter forthwith.

5. Chinese, Dutch and Swiss representatives are expected to act concurrently with America and British. Indian Charge d'Affaires still awaits instructions.

494/26

MIN. & DEPT. EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (ATTENTION)

28th April, 1948.

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OUTWARD TELEGRAM - IN CYPHER.

IMMEDIATE
EXTERNAL
CANBERRA.

B67. My immediately preceding telegram. Siamese Political Situation.

American Ambassador is awaiting final instructions on question of recognition. I gather State Department feel that it is difficult to withhold recognition as PIBUL was appointed with due constitutional formality as result of resignation of KHUANG notwithstanding method by which resignation was obtained. Furthermore they fear that if they withhold recognition RUSSIA may steal a march on them by recognising Government immediately. They are therefore inclined to favour immediate recognition but are toying with idea of concurrent statement to effect that they are carefully watching developments and in particular Siam's attitude to international obligations. Difficult to see what purpose such statement would serve. Ambassador is urging delay of 3 weeks in recognition partly to preserve the decencies and partly to see whether PIBUL survives present session of Parliament in which he has at present only very narrow majority.

2. UK Embassy awaiting instructions.

3. France favours immediate recognition. Strangely enough so does China notwithstanding their fear of PIBUL. Holland will recognise concurrently with principal powers. Indian Chargè d'Affaires still awaiting instructions.

4. With exception of myself all foreign representatives have received formal letters of notification from Minister of Foreign Affairs and recognition would take form of formal acknowledgment of these letters. Letters make no specific mention of observance of treaty and other obligations but it is possible that some or all foreign missions may request assurances covering these obligations and those connected with United Nations.

5. Please advise what action I should take if and when I receive formal notification from Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Despatched 23/4/48.

Sent under
Siamese No C. 103/48
9 03/1/48

H51/3/1/1

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. **SECRET.**

BL/FF

I.6926
Dated 24th April 1948
1840
Recd. 25th April 1948
9 a.m.

DECYPHER FROM:

The Secretary of State for
Commonwealth Relations,
LONDON.

120. Important Secret. SIAM.

My telegram of today H.147 paragraph 5.

United Kingdom Charge d'Affaires in Bangkok will also keep in close touch with Australian Consul General to whom you will no doubt be sending instructions.

Min. & Dept of E.A. (attn)

27thApril 1948.

#51/3/1/1

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

BL/FF

CABLEGRAM. I.6719
Dated 21st April 1948
1335
Recd. 22nd April 1948
8.30 a.m.

DECYPHER FROM:

The Secretary of State for
Commonwealth Relations,
LONDON.

H.137 Confidential.

My telegram H131. SIAM.

On 15th April the United Kingdom Charge d'Affaires Bangkok received a note from the Minister for Foreign Affairs in Khuang's Government informing him of this resignation on 8th April which had been accepted by the Council of Regency. The note added that Khuang Government was only taking charge of normal affairs of Ministry until a new Government was formed. Neither the United Kingdom Charge d'Affaires nor the United States Ambassador (who received a similar note) acknowledged receipt of this communication.

2. Public announcement of the new Government was made on the afternoon of 15th April. The new Minister for Foreign Affairs is Major General Mom Chao Pridideb phongse, Pibul himself becomes Minister of Interior as well as Premier. The Charge d'Affaires reported that his impression was that Bangkok had become much more reconciled to the prospect of Pibul during the previous few days and that everyone hoped things would turn out well. Khaung's Party could not make up their minds whether or not they would vote against Pibul in the Assembly but Charge d'affaires considered that the new Government will obtain its vote of confidence when the Assembly meets.

3. On 19th April the Charge d'Affaires received a note for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs informing him of appointment by Royal Command of a new Council of Ministers with Field Marshal Pibul-Songgram as President of the Council. In taking charge of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the Minister gives an assurance that he will unfailingly exert every endeavour to maintain and strengthen close and friendly relations happily subsisting between the United Kingdom and Siam and hopes he may receive from the United Kingdom Embassy same co-operation and confidence accorded to his predecessor. Neither United Kingdom Charge d'Affaires nor United States Ambassador is acknowledging receipt of this note pending further instructions from their Governments.

Min & Dept of E.A.
" " Defence

22nd April 1948.

#51/3/1/1

DRAFT CABLE TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS.

LONDON.

NO.

DATE.

SECRET.

Your H. No.131. Siam.

As Australia has refrained from any formal act accepting the constitutional changes effected in Siam subsequent to the Revolution of November last, we would appear to have some pretext for withholding recognition indefinitely from Pibul's new regime notwithstanding the fact that the manner of its installation does not appear to be inconsistent with the present constitution.

2. Provided it (a) has secured a vote of confidence from its national parliament (b) has given evidence of its stability as a Government (c) has shown its readiness to respect basic human right s in its internal administration and (d) has undertaken to observe its treaty and other international obligations, a regime would appear to have established a prima facie claim to recognition as a Government by other Governments. When the Pibul regime has in our opinion complied with these provisions, we will give further consideration to the question of according it formal recognition if an act of formal recognition should then be necessary.

3. Recent political developments in Siam are not dissimilar from the political evolution of countries like Burma, the Philippines and Indonesia, where personalities reputed to have collaborated with the Japanese for nationalist and other purposes during the late war have attained to positions of political power. Nor does it appear that any country outside Asia can effectively in the near future alter the course of events in Siam.

Not Sent

4. In these circumstances the withholding of some form of recognition from any stable regime in Siam would simply tend to weake still further Australian and European influence in South East Asia and would lead to our foregoing whatever opportunities may occur for influencing such a Government.

5. In the circumstances it would seem appropriate to defer for an interval the question of the formal recognition of the Siamese Government and to consider the practicability and expediency of resuming informal relations with it as soon as evidence is available of its compliance with the four conditions mentioned above.

KTK/SAR
21/4/48.

452/8/1.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. **SECRET.**

...AL.

I.6484.
Dated: 16th April,1948.
1500
Rec'd: 19th April,1948.

DECYPHER FROM

AUSTRALIAN CONSUL GENERAL.

BANGKOK.

B.64.

Paragraph 5 of my telegram B.61
Siamese(Political Situation).

This view adopted in forecast, by London with additional comment that there will probably be little practical alternative but to recognize Government after decent interval has expired. London is discussing with Washington Nanking and Paris on these lines.

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E.A.

19th April,1948.

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DRAFT CABLE TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS.

LONDON.

NO.

DATE.

Not Sent

SECRET.

Your H. No.131. Siam.

~~As Australia has~~ we have to our part refrained from any formal act accepting the constitutional changes effected in Siam subsequent to the Revolution of November last, we would appear to have some pretext for withholding recognition indefinitely from Pibul's new regime notwithstanding the fact that the manner of its installation does not appear to be inconsistent with the present constitution.

2. Provided it (a) has secured a vote of confidence from its national parliament (b) has given evidence of its stability as a Government (c) has shown its readiness to respect basic human rights in its internal administration and (d) has undertaken to observe its treaty and other international obligations, a regime would appear to have established a prima facie claim to recognition as a Government by other Governments. When the Pibul regime has in our opinion complied with these provisions, we will give further consideration to the question of according it formal recognition if an act of formal recognition should then be necessary.

3. Recent political developments in Siam are not dissimilar from the political evolution of countries like Burma, the Philippines and Indonesia, where personalities reputed to have collaborated with the Japanese for nationalist and other purposes during the late war have attained to positions of political power. Nor does it appear that any country outside Asia can effectively in the near future alter the course of events in Siam.

4. In these circumstances the withholding of some form of recognition from any stable regime in Siam would simply tend to weaken still further Australian and European influence in South East Asia and would lead to our foregoing whatever opportunities may occur for influencing such a Government.

5. In the circumstances it would seem appropriate to defer for an interval the question of the formal recognition of the Siamese Government and to consider the practicability and expediency of resuming informal relations with it as soon as evidence is available of its compliance with the four conditions mentioned above.

KTK/SAR
21/4/48.

452/8/1.

SIAM: Pibul's Constitutional Position.

On April 7, the Supreme Council of State accepted, with some reluctance, the resignation of his Government tended by Nai Khuang Aphaiwongse.

Khuang's resignation followed the receipt of an ultimatum from the "Military Party" the previous day, and Khuang's own realisation that he had no command over the sources of power as represented by the army, navy and air force.

Under these circumstances, Marshal Pibul was called upon by the Supreme Council to form a Government. His assumption of power accordingly showed conformity to constitutional procedure.

Article 74 of the November Constitution by which "the King shall appoint a Council of Ministers", omits the requirement in the old constitution (Section 66) that Ministers shall not be permanent Government officials. Article 37 provides that members of the House of Representatives shall not be permanent Government officials, but there is clearly no requirement that a Minister should be an Assembly Member (Article 76).

There is, consequently, no constitutional obstacle to Pibul, though chief of the Army, becoming leader of the Government.

The final constitutionality of a Government is established when it obtains a vote of confidence from the State Assembly. (Article 77).

The resignation of a Government is effected by Royal Command, or by the vote of non-confidence of the House of Representatives or by the failure to obtain a vote of confidence from the State Assembly (Article 78).

Coerced, the Khuang Government thus went out of office under the first of these three contingencies.

It is not insignificant that Pibul has come to governing power by means of a Constitution promulgated on 9th November, 1947, after the military coup in which he himself was the power behind the events. There was then no apparent legal basis for the dismissal of the Thamrong Government, the recission of the old constitution and the promulgation of the new.

This then provides the menacing background to the short rule of the seemingly well-intentioned Khuang Government, and the basis for the eventual emergence, through his own constitutional facilitation, of Pibul from covert to overt power and titular leadership of the Government.

F.E.46.
20.11.48.

DRAFT CABLE TO THE AUSTRALIAN CONSUL GENERAL, BANGKOK.

NO.

DATE.

SECRET. IMMEDIATE.

Your B.41, final sentence. You may inform the Siamese Government that, in our opinion, the relations obtaining between Australia and Siam do not call for a public act formally recognising the accession to office of the new administration, but that we have noted the determination of the Siamese Government to observe with care all its treaty and other obligations and its readiness to co-operate fully in the work of the United Nations.

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Not sent

KTK/SAR

24/3/48.

E.A. (Pacific 451/3/1/1)

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. **SECRET.**

I.6313
Dated 14th April, 1948
1700
Rec'd 15th April, 1948
8.30

DECYPHER FROM -

Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations,

LONDON.

H. No. 122. Confidential.

Siam.

My telegram H. No. 113 of 10th April.

Official announcement that Marshal Pibul had been called upon by Regency Council to form a Government was broadcast in Bangkok on night of 9th April. No public pronouncement has yet been made about composition of new Government. Most members of Khuan Government have apparently been offered jobs and have refused. Nondescript candidates are however reported to have been found for some portfolios.

MIN. & DEPT. E.A. 15-4-48
" " DEFENCE.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

E.

I.6214
Dated 13th April, 1948
1310
Rec'd 14th April, 1948
8.30

DECODE FROM -

Australian Consul General,
BANGKOK.

B. 62.

My immediately preceeding telegram. Siamese political situation.

United Press despatch says informed sources state United Kingdom and America are expected to recognise New Government despite their dislike of Pibul. These sources said so far official reports showed that the advent of Pibul was entirely constitutional and if later information bore this out, recognition was likely to continue. Khuang Government had been regarded as merely shadow Government working for Pibul and the emergence of Pibul as titular Prime Minister had been only a matter of time. However observers thought it likely that Siamese problem and requests for assistance would receive less favourable consideration than if someone else headed the Government.

E.A. 14-4-48

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Mr Marshall (E.E.A.)

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. SECRET.

SVF:EGM:

Dated: 13th April 1948
1310
Rec'd: 14th April 1948
8.30 A.M.

DECYPHER FROM:

AUSTRALIAN CONSUL GENERAL,
BANGKOK.

IMPORTANT.

B60.

My immediately preceding telegram. Concerning political situation.

Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs now confirmed that Pibul has been called upon to form a Government. His stated intention was to form a coalition and he offered the Deputy Prime Ministership to Khuang and other portfolios to 6 leading members of the latter's Cabinet. All declined.

After combing Bangkok for 3 or 4 days, Pibul has now produced a nondescript Cabinet of 25 members and it is expected that he will seek a vote of confidence on Thursday.

The new Minister of Foreign Affairs is Prince Pridi Devaistl, an elderly ex Colonel and ex Diplomat who was once Minister in Berlin.

E.A.

14th April 1948

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

O.5336
Dated 14th April, 1948
1530 hours.

SW:JSH

DECODE TO:

THE AUSTRALIAN CONSUL-GENERAL,
BANGKOK.

21.

Your B.46 of 19th March and B.54 of 7th April. We have not been able to obtain any nominations for technical advisers to the Committee either in respect of tin or general property claims.

We therefore concur in appointment of Shipley at estimated cost of £5,000 to be charged pro rata to all proven tin claims assuming of course that Siamese Government cannot be required to bear all or part of the cost.

Regarding general property claims, Australian War Damage Commission has mentioned the name of A.J. Kane, Chartered Accountant and partner in the firm of Lowe Bingham and Matthews, Hong Kong Chambers, Singapore, who served with Commission for four years. He occupied the position of Chief Accountant and Company Claims Investigator and had considerable experience in the investigation and assessment of a wide variety of claims. He would appear to be the type of man you are looking for and may be worth interviewing.

E.A.
TREASURY.

14th April, 1948.

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DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

CABLEGRAM. **SECRET.**

I.6083

NO'N:NO'N

DECYPHER FROM:

Dated 10th April, 1948
1942

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS,
LONDON.

Recd. 11th April, 1948
9 a.m.

H No. 112. CONFIDENTIAL.

My telegram 9th April H No. 108. SIAM.

The United Kingdom Charge D'Affaires reported 8th April that the United Kingdom Naval Attache had been informed by a reliable Naval source that the Navy is in no position to tackle th Army. The source said that 2,000 trained men were released on March 31st and all six operational ships are at sea on training cruises. Naval strength in Bangkok was now said to be 1,500 raw recruits, 800 marines and 300 trained reliable men; these would be useless against the other two services.

2. United Kingdom Charge D'Affa ires comments that Navy is likely therefore to sit on the fence as before though it may be significant that according to source quoted above a deputation of young naval officers called on Commander-in-Chief of the Navy on 8th April to complain of his inactivity.

MIN. AND DEPT. OF E.A.
MIN. AND DEPT. OF DEFENCE

11th April, 1948

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DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

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I.6101
Dated 10th April, 1948
2116
Rec'd 11th April, 1948
9 a.m.

DECODE FROM -

Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations,
LONDON.

H.113. My H.108 of 9th April.

The Siamese Assembly met on 8th April. The Premier read out the text of a letter of resignation submitted by the Government to the Council of Regency and announced the Government's resignation. The Session was then adjourned.

2. The text of the letter of resignation dated 6th April, as published in the press gives the facts as stated in my telegram under reference paragraph 3 second sentence. It ends with the following statement. (As translated)

"The majority of the Cabinet were of the opinion, in view of what had happened since the time of formation of this Government until and including the events to-day, that the Government must recognize the fact that it was not in a position to ensure conduct of public affairs in an effective and constitutional manner. The Government therefore begs leave to resign".

MIN. & DEPT. E.A.
" " DEFENCE

11-4-48

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DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. **SECRET.**

EGM:EGM:

I. 6012
Dated: 9th April 1948
0120
Rec'd: 9th April 1948
4.35 P.M.

DECYPHER FROM:

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR
COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS,
LONDON.

CONFIDENTIAL.

H 108.

My telegram 6th March H 60. Siamese political situation.

United Kingdom Charge d'Affaires Bangkok reported 7th April that he had been informed unofficially that Government had resigned.

2. The situation has been uneasy in Bangkok over the last 10 days. According to information reaching United Kingdom Embassy from Government sources on 6th April the Government was presented by "Military" with an ultimatum to resign. The Prime Minister thereupon called a Cabinet meeting and summoned leaders of the Navy and Air Force to ask for their assistance in dealing with this threat. Representatives of both services regretted they could not offer to help as they did not wish to see bloodshed. Cabinet then drafted a letter of resignation and the Prime Minister saw Prince Rangsit, the Senior Regent. Prince Rangsit asked the Prime Minister to delay the Government's resignation for 24 hours which he agreed to do. When the Prime Minister saw Council of Regency on 7th April they asked the present Government to carry on but he refused on the grounds that without support of the Army and Air Force or Navy, the Government was powerless. He finally persuaded Council of Regency to accept the Government's resignation.

3. Charge d'Affaires is reserving full comment though it seems that the Prime Minister's decision leaves the way open to Pibul to take power with some flavour of constitutionality. Even now, however, he may decide it is more expedient to put forward another to be Prime Minister, possibly General Adul.

4. It is uncertain what hand, if any, Admiral Thamrong has had in the present crisis. In conversation with the British Naval Attache, he denied that he was in any way involved but the Charge d'Affaires is sceptical of this assertion, particularly since Commander in Chief of the Navy said on 4th April that Thamrong was engaged in considerable backstair political activity.

MIN. & DEPT: E.A.
MIN. & DEPT: DEFENCE(Attention)

10th April 1948

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DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. **SECRET.**

TWWP:EGM:

I. 6025
Dated: 9th April 1948
1120
Rec'd: 10th April 1948
9 A.M.

DECYPHER FROM:

AUSTRALIAN CONSUL GENERAL,
BANGKOK.

IMMEDIATE.

B59,

My immediately preceding telegram, Siam. Political situation.

The Regency Council was unwilling to accept the resignation and asked Khuang to carry on. He explained that with no support from the Army, Navy or the Air Force, the Government felt that it could not carry on and he persuaded the Council to accept the Cabinet resignation en bloc.

2. At a special meeting of the Assembly yesterday, Khuang announced the resignation and read out the text of his letter to the Regency Council. The letter confirmed the course of events as those quoted in my telegram B57 and concluded as follows -

"The majority of the Cabinet felt that in view of the circumstances since the coup d'etat including the events of the last day of two, the Government must recognise the fact that it was not in the position to ensure the conduct of public affairs in the proper constitutional manner".

3. No official announcement yet as to the appointment of the new Prime Minister, but the Press reports that Pibul himself has obtained the Commission and is busy forming a new Government.

MIN., & DEPT: E.A.
MIN. & DEPT: DEFENCE.

10th April 1948

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. **SECRET.**

DBB/MAL.

I.5956.
Dated: 7th April,1948.
1750.
Rec'd: 9th April,1948.

DECYPHER FROM

AUSTRALIAN CONSUL GENERAL.

BANGKOK.

B.58.

My immediately preceding telegram. Siam. Political Situation.

As a result of further Cabinet meeting today the Government has lodged its resignation with the Regency Council. Ministry of Foreign Affairs think it possible that the resignation will not be accepted but in that event expect the Government to be turned too much by force. They could put up no resistance to forcible eviction.

2. It seems likely that the plan of the Military will be to install Adul as nominal Prime Minister with Pibul wielding the real power in the background until he deems time is ripe to take over the title as well.

---oOo---

Min and Dept. of External Affairs attention.

9th April,1948.

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DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. **SECRET.**

TWWC;EGM:

I. 5835
Dated: 7th April 1948
1440
Rec'd: 8th April 1948
11 A.M.

DECYPHER FROM:

AUSTRALIAN CONSUL GENERAL,
BANGKOK.

IMMEDIATE.

857.

My immediately preceding telegram. Siam. Political situation.

No official announcement made yet but following account given privately by the Minister of Finance fits in fairly well with the other known facts.

2. Khuang was visited yesterday morning by four Senior Army Officers who expressed dissatisfaction with the Government and demanded its resignation within 24 hours. Khuang demanded confirmation of the ultimatum in writing and signed by Pibul Kaoh and Cadin. Two of the party mentioned, after consultation with Pibul Kaoh called on Khuang last evening and confirmed the ultimatum.

3. Cabinet held a special meeting last night and asked the Commanders of the Air Force and the Navy for help in resisting Army pressure. The Commanders regretted they could not help as they wished to avoid bloodshed.

4. Cabinet therefore prepared draft resignation which Khuang submitted to Prince Rangsit last night. His Royal Highness said he had also received a visit from Kaoh and Cadin but advised Khuang to delay the resignation for one day.

5. Cabinet will hold a further meeting today after which it is expected Khuang will again tender resignation.

6. Kaoh and Cadin were leaders of November coup d'etat.

MIN. & DEPT: E.A. (Attention)

8th April 1948

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NEW YORK :

7. 3. 48.

SIAMESE GOVERNMENT RECOGNISED. From Washington it is announced that the U.S.A. has recognised the new government of Siam. The U.S. and other governments had withdrawn recognition, following last November 8th coup against the former Siamese government. Since that time, an interim government without recognition has been functioning.

N. Y.

7.

1151/3/1/1

Duplicate

Also in
1153/5/1
1153 2/1

Ref C43/48

11th March 1948

Memorandum for

The Secretary,

Department of External Affairs,

Canberra. A.C.T.

Siam-Political Situation

In confirmation of telegram B36 of 7th March from this Consulate-General, enclosed are:-

(a) text of note dated 26th February 1948 from Siamese Minister for Foreign Affairs

(b) text of draft note of acknowledgment proposed by United Kingdom Ambassador.

for Consul-General

COPY.

No. 2151/2491

Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Saranrom Palace,
26th February, 1948

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you, for communication to your Government, that the provisional Government whose appointment was intimated to you by the Note No. 12912/2490 dated the 12th November, 1947 having resigned on the 6th instant, His Majesty the King, through the Supreme Council of State acting in the capacity of the Council of Regency in accordance with Sections 7 and 74 of the Provisional Constitution, has graciously been pleased to re-appoint His Excellency Nai Khuang Apaivongse as President of the Council of Ministers on the 21st instant and a new Council of Ministers has been appointed also by Royal Command in accordance with Section 74 of the Provisional Constitution on the 25th instant as follows:-

Minister of Finance - H.S.H. Prince Viwatchai Chaiyant;

Minister of Foreign Affairs - Phya Srivisar Vacha;

Minister of Public Health - Rear-Admiral Lek Sumit, R.N.;

Minister of Defence - Lt.-General Luang Chatnakrop;

Deputy Minister of Defence - Captain Phya Vijit Joldhi, R.N.;

Minister of Agriculture - H.S.H. Prince Sithiporn Kridakara;

Deputy Minister of Agriculture - Colonel Nom Ketunut;

Minister/-

Monsieur John Francis Knox,
In charge of the Consulate-General for Australia,
BANGKOK.

Minister of Communications - M.L. Udom Snidwongs;

Deputy Minister of Communications - Nai Chom Charurat;

Minister of Commerce - Air Vice-Marshal Muni M.S. Vejyant Rangsrit;

Minister of Interior - Nai Khuang Apaivongse;

Deputy Minister of Interior - Nai Srisena Sombatsiri;

Minister of Justice - Phya Athakari Niphon;

Minister of Education - M.R. Seni Pramoj;

Minister of Industry - Captain Luang Subhajalasai, R.N.;

with the following Ministers without portfolio;-

M.L. Dej Snidwongs;

M.R. Kukrit Pramoj;

Nai Yai Switchat;

Nai Luen Phongsophon;

Nai Boontheng Thongsawat;

Nai That Phrommanop;

Nai Fong Sithitham;

Group-Captain H.S.H. Prince Rangsiyakorn Abhakara;

Nai Chawalit Apaivongse.

From the above you will see that I have again been appointed to take charge of this Ministry. His Majesty's Government will continue to observe with care all its treaty and other obligations, and, on my part, I desire to assure you that I shall earnestly strive to maintain and strengthen the friendly relations which have happily existed with your Government. I look forward, therefore, to our close and cordial cooperation.

I avail myself of this opportunity to express to you, Sir, the assurance of my high consideration.

(signed) Phya Srivasar Vacha

Minister of Foreign Affairs.

CONFIDENTIAL.

DRAFT TO

Minister of Foreign

Affairs.

Excellency:

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of Your Excellency's note No. 2143 of February 26, 1948, informing me, for communication to my Government, that the Provisional Government having resigned on the 6th instant, His Majesty the King of Siam, through the Supreme Council of State acting in the capacity of the Council of Regency, was graciously pleased to appoint His Excellency Nai Khuang Apaivongse as President of the Council of Ministers on February 21, 1948; that a new Council of Ministers has been formed; and that Your Excellency has been appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs. It is further stated by Your Excellency that the Government of Siam will continue to observe with care all its tfeaty and other obligations, and that Your Excellency will earnestly strive to maintain and strengthen the friendly relations

which have happily existed with my Government.

In reply, I am glad to inform Your Excellency that His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have taken due note of the fact that a new Administration has been formed under His Excellency Nai Khuang Apaivongse. Furthermore, my Government have noted that the Government of Siam will continue to observe with care all its treaty and other obligations and that Your Excellency will earnestly strive to maintain and strengthen the friendly relations which have happily existed between our two countries. Permit me to say that I shall be happy to cooperate with Your Excellency in the furtherance of friendly relations between our Governments and to add that the establishment of official relations with Your Excellency's Government is a matter of satisfaction to my Government and myself.

I avail myself of this first opportunity to express to Your Excellency the assurance of my highest consideration.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. **SECRET.**

NIC/MB

I.4597
Dated 14th March, 1948
0030
Recd. 15th March, 1948
8.30 a.m.

DECYPHER FROM -

The Australian Consul-General,
BANGKOK

B.41. Your telegram 19. Siamese Political situation.

From Eastman.

Except for Australia all countries represented in Siam have already recognised the new Government by replying to the Minister for Foreign Affairs in the agreed form. United Kingdom, American, Chinese, French, Netherlands and Indian representatives replied on March 6th. The remaining representatives replied one or two days later, with the exception of the Swedish Consul-General who replied on March 12th. No information as to the Russian attitude. The Russian Legation has not yet been formally established although two junior secretaries are already in Bangkok. The Russian Ambassador in London recently told the Siamese Ambassador informally that Russia would decide its attitude independently of other countries but he gave no indication what this attitude was likely to be.

2. The words "other obligations" in paragraph quoted in paragraph 2 of telegram H.16 from the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations and included in the Minister for Foreign Affairs' note were proposed by Ambassadors here with the intention of covering, inter alia, obligations undertaken as a member of the United Nations. In outline of policy announced in Parliament on March 1st, the Government specifically mentioned its intention of supporting the United Nations' policy and co-operating faithfully in all matters connected therewith. However, if you feel that a supplementary assurance from the Minister for Foreign Affairs on this point is necessary, I should have very little difficulty in obtaining it.

3. Overthrow of the Thamrong Government and the establishment of new constitution were largely achieved by force. Nevertheless, Khuang's confirmation in office resulted from popular election which showed no obvious signs of coercive measures employed by previous Governments. His Cabinet consists of many of the most eminent and honest men in Siam and there is every indication that they will endeavour to resist interference by any extremist groups. Having regard to the character and methods of opposition groups it is too early to estimate with confidence the Cabinet's expectation of life but at least we have prospect for next three or four months of doing business with the best Government Siam has had for many years and the kind most likely to honour its obligations. In view of this and the importance of early settlement of certain outstanding matters, I would appreciate further instructions by most immediate telegram.

E.A. (Attn.) 15th March, 1948.

RECOGNITION FOR SIAM. Three more countries have accorded recognition to the Government of Siam. They are Denmark, Norway and Sweden.

ND
10

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

O.3510
Dated 11th March, 1948
1650 hours.

M/.JSH

R&OCDE TO:

THE AUSTRALIAN CONSUL GENERAL,
BANGKOK.

19.

Your B.36.

You should not give any formal acknowledgement of the note at this stage. The Government in power came to power by force and, though there have been certain acts since to assert popular support, this is not sufficient evidence on which we should base any decision of recognition. The only test is whether Siam fulfills conditions of membership of the United Nations and there is no mention of this in Foreign Minister's note. While you should not make any formal communication to Siam Government, you are free to explain our attitude to other foreign representatives and seek their concurrence, meanwhile requesting them not to acknowledge note.

E.A.

12th March, 1948.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

FOR THE SECRETARY.

Recognition of Siamese Government.

It does not seem to me that the attached telegram meets the position.

2. It was announced in the press last week-end that the U.K., U.S., China, India, France and the Netherlands had recognised the Siamese Government. This indicated that all these Governments had formally acknowledged the Siamese Government's Note. Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland were expected to do so, and may have done so by now.

3. Our telegram suggests that the reason why we are not proposing to grant recognition is that the Siamese Government has made no mention in its Note of its intention to fulfill the conditions of membership of the United Nations. If this is the only test, it is open to the Siamese Government to give us an assurance along these lines in the expectation that we will then recognise it.

4. There is nothing in the United Nations Charter which requires the United Nations as a whole to take cognizance of changes of government in a member State. Membership of the United Nations is not membership of Governments but of States. The only way in which the United Nations can question the membership of a State once admitted to membership is ~~under~~ by invoking Article 6, which provides that a member which "has persistently violated the principles" of the Charter may be expelled by the Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council. Any move to expel, say, Siam would clearly call for a submission of a formal resolution based on past acts and not on mere distrust of future intentions. In other words, the United Nations is not concerned with what Government is in power in one of its member States so long as the State continues to observe the principles of the Charter. There would clearly be no support for a complaint that Siam has not observed the Charter since she became a member of the United Nations.

5. It seems to me, therefore, that we have now made our position more untenable than it was before. We might as well decide to grant recognition now, after extracting from the Siamese a promise to observe the principles of the United Nations Charter if we consider this necessary, as wait until the Siamese themselves offer this assurance and thus removes our only stated objection to recognition.

(12th March, 1948).

LRMcI/BVP

DRAFT CABLEGRAM TO -

AUSTRALIAN CONSUL-GENERAL,
BANGKOK.

No:

Date:

Your B.36.

You should not give any formal acknowledgment of the note at this stage. The Government in power came to power by force and, though there have been certain acts since to assert popular support, this is not sufficient evidence on which we should base any decision of recognition. The only test is whether Siam fulfils conditions of membership of the United Nations and there is no mention of this in Foreign Minister's note. While you should not make any formal communication to Siam Government, you are free to explain our attitude to other foreign representatives and seek their concurrence, meanwhile requesting them not to acknowledge note.

11th March, 1948.

JWB/BT.

Hugh McIntyre

E.A.

DRAFT TELEGRAM TO AUSTRALIAN CONSUL, BANGKOK.

NO:

DATE:

Your B33 and B36.

On his return from London Eastman may acknowledge Siamese Government Note in similar terms as those used by other Diplomatic and Consular Representatives.

(9th March, 1948).

LRMcI/BVP

DISTRIBUTION:

E.A.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

FOR THE SECRETARY.

Recognition of New Siamese Government.

The Foreign Minister of the new Siamese Government has addressed a Note to the Australian Consulate-General in the terms of the attached telegram B36. The Note contains an undertaking that the Siamese Government "will continue to observe with care all its treaty and other obligations", and looks forward to close and cordial co-operation between Siam and Australia.

2. Identical Notes have been addressed by the Siamese Government to representatives in Bangkok of other foreign Governments. A number of these representatives have already made a formal acknowledgment in the terms set forth in telegram B 36. The remainder are expected to do so, if they have not done so already.

3. This acknowledgment of the Siamese Note constitutes formal recognition, as normally required under international law, of a regime which has come into power by other than constitutional means. (Not only was the Dhamrong Government ousted by a revolutionary coup, but the constitutional frame work of government in Siam was subsequently altered).

4. No advantage is to be gained by Australia in withholding an acknowledgment of the Siamese Note. The Siamese Government promises to honour the peace treaty. Under that treaty it undertook "the payment to the Government of Australia of such compensation for loss or damage suffered in respect of the property rights and interests of all kinds in Siam of the Government of Australia and of Australians whether held by them individually or as members of firms, partnerships or companies as appears reasonable and adequate to the Government of Australia or to a Board, Committee or Commission approved by the Government of Australia". It also undertook to pay reasonable compensation to Australian citizens"for any loss or injury sustained by them either as a result of their detention or internment by the Government of Siam, and to the dependents of any such Australians whose death was occasioned by the acts of the Government of Siam or their agents of subjects". Australia is a member of the Claims Committee set up to work out all claims for compensation in respect of property and "personal prejudice". The Claims Committee is stillworking on this task, and expects soon to be in a position to present a claim to the Siamese Government. In the meantime the Siamese Government merely repeats the undertaking of its predecessor- to pay the claims when they are presented. No question of reparations or other outstanding issues from the peace treaty are involved. On the other hand there are positive arguments in favour of granting recognition without further delay:

(a) Australia has no longer any reason to treat Siam as anything other than a friendly country. Our policy in general has been to cultivate the friendship of the peoples of South East Asia and to encourage them to adopt the practices of democracy.

Seen - file
Secret Ltr

Of all countries in the area none has shown more zeal than Siam in trying to learn at least the forms of democracy.

(b) The new Government has come into power as a result of elections which are a reasonable facsimile of democratic elections and ~~do at least~~ has just secured a solid vote of confidence in Parliament.

(c) To ignore the Note, particularly when all other countries concerned are expected to acknowledge it, would look unnecessarily pointed and would be regarded by the Siamese as a gratuitous slight.

(d) Eastman will shortly have to have formal dealings with the Government of Siam in connection with the compensation claims.

I feel strongly that a telegram on the lines of the attached be sent to Bangkok.

(9th March, 1948).

LRMcI/BVP

DRAFT CABLE TO THE AUSTRALIAN CONSUL GENERAL. BANGKOK.

REPEATED TO AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER. LONDON.

NO.

DATE.

SECRET. IMMEDIATE.

Your B.33. You may join your colleagues in acknowledging in the same terms as they the note you have received from the Siamese Minister of Foreign Affairs. You may sign the acknowledgement "J. F. Knox for Australian Consul-General". If any difficulty arises, the United Kingdom Ambassador will surely be good enough to explain that during Mr. Eastman's absence you are acting in his stead.

451/3/1/1.

KTK/SAR

4/3/48.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

O. 3470.

/MEB.

Sent : 11th March 1948.

DECODE TO :

AUSTRALIAN CONSUL-GENERAL.
BANGKOK.

18.

Your B 36.
Matter is still under consideration here. Meanwhile you should take no action.

External Affairs.
11th March 1948.

Copies received

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FILE COPY

DRAFT TELEGRAM TO THE AUSTRALIAN CONSUL-GENERAL, BANGKOK.

NO;

DATE:

Your B 36.

Matter is still under consideration here. Meanwhile you should take no action.

(11th March, 1948).

LRMcI/BVP

Distribution:

E.A.

FILE COPY

DRAFT TELEGRAM TO AUSTRALIAN CONSUL, BANGKOK.

NO:

DATE:

Your B33 and B36.

On his return from London Eastman may acknowledge Siamese Government Note in similar terms to those used by other Diplomatic and Consular Representatives.

(9th March, 1948).

LRMcI/BVP

DISTRIBUTION:

E.A.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. SECRET.

TB.APH.

I.4104
Dated 4th March,1948
Recd. 5th March,1948

DECYPHER FROM -

Australian Consul-General,
BANGKOK.

B.36. SECRET.

Your telegram 17.

(a) Text of note from Siamese Minister as follows -

"Monsieur John Francis Knox in charge of Consulate General for Australia Bangkok.

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you, for communication to your Government, that the Provisional Government whose appointment was intimated to you by note number 12, 2/24/90 dated November 12th 1947 having resigned on the sixth instant, His Majesty the King, through the Supreme Council of State acting in the capacity of Council of Regency in accordance with sections seven and seventy four of the Provisional Constitution, has graciously been pleased to re-appoint His Excellency, Nai Khuang Apaivongse, as the President of the Council of Ministers, on 21st instant and a new Council of Minister has been appointed, also by Royal Command, in accordance with Section 74 of the Provisional Constitution, on the 25th instant as follows".

Then follows a list of the Cabinet Ministers, major variations from previous Cabinet advised my telegram B32. Resumes quote -

"From the above you will see that I have again been appointed to Chief of Staff of this Ministry. His Majesty's Government will continue to observe with care all its treaty and other obligations, and on my part, I desire to assure you that I shall earnestly strive to maintain and strengthen the friendly relations which have happily existed with your Government. I look forward, therefore, to our close and cordial co-ordination.

I avail myself of this opportunity to express to you, Sir, the assurance of my high consideration.

SIGNED :

PHYA SRIVISAR VACHA,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

(b) Text of draft note of acknowledgement as follows -

"Excellency,

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of Your Excellency's note number 2143 of February 26th 1948, informing me, for communication to my Government, that the Provisional Government, having resigned on the sixth instant, His Majesty the King of Siam, through the Supreme Council of State, acting in the capacity of Council of Regency, was graciously pleased to appoint His Excellency Nais Khuang Apaivongse, as President of the Council of Ministers on February 21st, 1948; that a new Council of Ministers has been formed, and that your Excellency has been appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs. It is further stated by your Excellency

/2.

that the Government of Siam will continue to observe with care, all of its treaty and other obligations, and that your Excellency will earnestly strive to maintain and strengthen the friendly relations which have happily existed with my Government.

In reply, I am glad to inform your Excellency that His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have taken due note of the fact that a new administration has been formed under His Excellency Nais Khuang Apaivongse. Furthermore, my Government have noted that the Government of Siam will continue to observe with care, all its treaty and other obligations and that your Excellency will earnestly strive to maintain and strengthen the friendly relations which have happily existed between our two countries. Permit me to say that I shall be happy to co-operate with your Excellency in the furtherance of the friendly relations between our Governments, and to add, that, establishment of official relations with your Excellency's Government is a matter for satisfaction to my Government and myself. I avail myself of this first opportunity to express to your Excellency the assurance of my highest consideration".

2. Procedure proposed to the Danish, Norwegian and Swedish Consul Generals and the Swiss Consul, by the United Kingdom Ambassador, and approved by other senior representatives, is as follows -

(a) Formal notes of acknowledgement from those representatives intending to accord recognition, should be despatched after, the new Government receives a vote of confidence.

(b) That these formal notes should be similar, if not identical, exact wording to be agreed to after receipt of communication from the Minister for Foreign Affairs. These notes to be dated and despatched on the same day and -

(c) That all Foreign Diplomats and Consular representatives according recognition, should call on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the same day, in order of seniority.

The Danish, Norwegian and Swedish Consul Generals, and the Swiss Consul, have advised their Governments of the procedure proposed and are awaiting instructions. It is not expected that there will be any dissentients from the procedure proposed. The Portuguese Consul is absent from Bangkok and on his behalf the British Consul will acknowledge the note from the Siamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Official recognition will be conveyed by the Portuguese diplomatic representative to the Siamese representative in Turkey.

MINISTER & DEPT. OF E.A. (Attention)

8-3-48

SIAM: Britain, the United States, China, India, France, and the Netherlands yesterday officially recognised the Siam Gorvenment led by Khuang Aphaiwong.

Sydney Morning Herald

p. 3, — 8. 3. 48

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. SECRET.

THE QUOTATION OF THIS CABLEGRAM WITHOUT PARAPHRASE EXCEPT IN A SECRET DOCUMENT WILL COMPROMISE THE CYPHER USED, REGARDLESS OF CONTENT IT MUST ALWAYS REMAIN SECRET.

/EF

O.3115

Dated : 4th March, 1948.

DECYPHER TO :

THE AUSTRALIAN CONSUL GENERAL,
BANGKOK.

17. SECRET IMMEDIATE.

Your B.33. Please transmit (a) text of note sent to you by the Siamese Minister of Foreign Affairs, including actual form of words employed in addressing you personally and (b) text of draft note of acknowledgement proposed by United Kingdom Ambassador and approved by United States of America, France, China and Netherlands.

2. What procedure, if any, in this matter will the Danish, Norwegian, Portuguese, Swedish and Swiss Consuls follow?

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Min. & Dept. E.A. 4th March, 1948.

Copies to:
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DRAFT CABLE TO THE AUSTRALIAN CONSUL GENERAL. BANGKOK.

NO.

DATE.

SECRET. IMMEDIATE.

Your B.33. Please transmit (a) ~~actual~~ text of note sent to you by the Siamese Minister of Foreign Affairs, including actual form of words employed in addressing you personally and (b) text of draft note of acknowledgement proposed by United Kingdom Ambassador and approved by United States of America, France, China and Netherlands.

2. What procedure, if any, in this matter will the Danish, Norwegian, Portuguese, Swedish and Swiss Consuls follow.

451/3/1/1
KTK/SAR
4/3/48.

L. R. Mc. I.

Secret. 4.3.48.

Hum.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. **SECRET.**

MB

I.3825
Dated 2nd March, 1948
1550
Recd. 3rd March, 1948
8.30 a.m.

DECYPHER FROM -

The Australian Consul-General,
BANGKOK.

B.33 from Knox. IMMEDIATE.

Siam Political Situation.

Official communication addressed to me has been received from Siamese Minister of Foreign Affairs containing assurance in wording agreed to between Chinese British American Ambassadors, French Minister and Netherlands Charge d'Affaires. Khuang seeking vote of confidence and debate proceeding. In the event of his success foreign representatives above mentioned have agreed that formal notes of acknowledgement from foreign diplomats and consular representatives, undertaking to accord recognition, should be despatched on same day, and official calls on Minister for Foreign Affairs in order of seniority, likewise. In order that I may act in unison with other representatives, appreciate urgent cabled authority to act as mentioned in telegram No. 633 from Australian High Commissioner, London, to Canberra from Eastman, repeated Bangkok 3. Acting local rank of Vice Consul as requested by Eastman in telegram B.100, February 18th, 1947, appears necessary in connection with my duties here and lack of status, especially during the absence of Eastman.

E.A.

3rd March, 1948.

Copies received

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DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. **SECRET.**

RC:AH:MD

0.2666/7.

DECYPHER TO:

Dated 24th February, 1948.

HIGH COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE,
LONDON.

651.

AUSTRALIAN CONSUL GENERAL,
BANGKOK.

13.

SECRET. IMPORTANT.

Your No.633 to Canberra repeated to Bangkok No.3.

For Eastman.

Matter is under consideration here. No action contemplated before your return.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (451/3/1/1)

25th February, 1948.

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DRAFT CABLE TO THE AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER. LONDON.

REPEATED TO AUSTRALIAN CONSUL-GENERAL. BANGKOK.

NO.

DATE.

SECRET. IMPORTANT.

Your No. 633 to Canberra repeated as No. 3 to Bangkok.

For Eastman.

Matter is under consideration here. No action will be taken before your return.

L.R. McI

Hello.

Seen 24.2.48

KTK/SAR

24/2/48.

451/3/1/1.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. **SECRET.**

MD.APH.

I.3260
Dated 21st February,1948
1400
Recd. 22nd February,1948

DECYPHER FROM -

High Commissioner's Office,
LONDON

633. Secret. Addressed External 633, repeated to Australian Consul General Bangkok 3, from External. From Eastman.

SIAMESE POLITICAL SITUATION.

I concur with views expressed in C.R.O. telegram H. No.13 and with procedure proposed in C.R.O. Telegrams N. Nos. 16 and 54.

2. Procedure from Australian point of view is complicated by my absence and by fact that Knox has no Consular status. To avoid possibility of misconstruction however, it is important Australian Consulate General should act concurrently with other representatives in Bangkok and should not await my return.

3. If you approve, therefore, I would suggest you authorise Knox reply to Siamese Minister of Foreign Affairs in agreed wording and concurrently with other Foreign Representatives. Actual form in which he signs on my behalf would be settled by him in consultation with United Kingdom Embassy and possibly with protocol Department of Siamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

DEPT. OF E.A.

23-2-48

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DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. **SECRET.**

BL/hr

I. 3042.

DECYPHER FROM:

Dated 18th February, 1948.
2020.
Received 19th February, 1948.
12.00

SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS
L O N D O N.

No. 54. IMMEDIATE

My telegram H. No. 16 of today.

SIAMESE POLITICAL SITUATION.

United Kingdom Ambassador intends to explain proposed procedure to Danish Norwegian, Portuguese, Swedish and Swiss Consuls and has suggested that similar explanation should be given to Australian Consul General when he arrives in London on 19th February. This would enable Diplomatic and Consular Representatives of countries intending to accord recognition to follow uniform procedure. In this connection it is also suggested that all such Representatives should call on Siamese Minister for Foreign Affairs on the same day in order of seniority.

2. We will of course explain position to Mr. Eastman on arrival but it is possible of course that he may not have returned to Siam by the time action contemplated has to be taken. If therefore Australian Government agree that recognition should be accorded in the circumstances contemplated and approve generally the procedure in Bangkok which has been proposed they will no doubt send necessary authority to Acting Consul General to act on Mr. Eastman's behalf.

Min. & Dept. of External Affairs.
" " " Defence.

19th February, 1948.

Copies received:
Secretary ✓
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DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM.

TP:HP

TELEGRAM TO:

THE HONGKONG AND SHANGHAI
BANGKING CORPORATION,
BANGKOK.

O.2409
Sent: 19th February, 1948.
11.55 a.m.

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Afr	✓

U/N.

John Francis Knox of the Australian Consul-General's Office is authorised to operate on the Official Account of the Consulate-General during the absence of Col. Eastman.

....The Secretary,
Dept. of External Affairs.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

19th February, 1948.

451/3/1/1

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. SECRET.

BL:MC

I. 2906

DESTINED FROM:

Dated 17th February, 1948
1600
Recd 18th February, 1948
8.30.

SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS
LONDON

H. 13

H. No.13. My telegram H.No2. of the 16th February. Siamese Political Situation.

United States authorities have now approached us independently with proposals that we should act in similar sense to that indicated in my telegram under reference. They have taken soundings of Chinese and French Government which reveal that both favour this course. They have therefore suggested that United Kingdom Ambassador Bangkok should discuss withhis colleagues concerned there, question of most appropriate time and manner of recognition of New Siamese Government if it is of same complexion as present provisional Government and should advise as of result of his consultations.

Min. & Dept. E.A.
Min. & Dept. DEFENCE.

18th February, 1948

DRAFT CABLE TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS.
LONDON.

NO.

DATE.

SECRET. IMPORTANT.

Your H. No. 9. Siam.

Assuming that the new Government is substantially of the same political complexion as Khuang's provisional regime, we should feel disposed to instruct the Australian Consul-General at Bangkok to deal with it as with a government recognised de iure.

—

KTK/SAR
19/2/48.

451/3/1/1.

NOT SENT

J 3/48

DRAFT CABLE TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS.
LONDON.

NO.

DATE.

SECRET. IMPORTANT.

Your H. No. 9. Siam.

Assuming that the new Government is substantially of the same political complexion as Khuang's provisional regime, we should feel disposed to instruct the Australian Consul-General at Bangkok to deal with it as with a government recognised de iure.

—

KTK/SAR
19/2/48.

451/3/1/1.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. **SECRET.**

FF:NO'N I.2888/87

DECYPHER FROM: Dated 16th February, 1948
2205

THE SECRETARY OF STATE Recd. 17th February, 1948
FOR COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS, 2.55 p.m.
LONDON.

H No. 9. Secret. SIAMESE POLITICAL SITUATION:

The United States State Department have enquired views of United Kingdom Government on question or possible early recognition of Siamese Government when it takes Office after meeting of Siamese Assembly on 19th February. French Government have also been making similar enquiries as to United States Governments attitude, and United States have been discussing matter with Chinese Government.

2. General position is that new Government will be formed shortly after Assembly meeting and question of recognition of this Government is then likely to arise. Elections held at end of January gave Democrats 50 out of 100 seats in Lower House Independents 25 (10 of which are likely to support the Democrats) Co-operatives 16 and Extreme Right Party only 5 seats. It is expected that Nai Khuang Prime Minister of Provisional Government which has been in power since the Coup D'Etat who is himself a Democrat will be confirmed in his pregent position with at any rate most of his Colleagues.

3. Up to now not only we (in common with other Commonwealth Countries) but also United States, France, China and other powers have withheld recognition from present Government since it came into power unconstitutionally largely as a result of efforts of Luang Pibul the Ex Dictator who after the Coup D'Etat assumed position of Commander-in-Chief of all Armed Forces. He has since, however, reverted to position of Commander-in-Chief of the Army and appears likely to retain that position.

4. While we are reluctant to see Pibul remaining in a position of power he will at any rate in theory be as Commander-in-Chief of Army servant of the Government and not in political office. While in practice he will no doubt continue to wield considerable influence as did Nai Pridi when he was Senior Statesman it would clearly be difficult to show that this was the case or to give it as a reason for non-recognition. Moreover while before the war Pibul had backing of Germany, Italy and Japan but can hardly be in position without this backing to advocate policies likely to arouse opposition of important foreign powers. Indeed our present information is that he is anxious to remain on good terms with them. Since however it is impossible to be fully confident about his attitude it might serve as an indication of our doubts about his future activities if enquiries were made in Bangkok as to his intentions as soon as new Government is set up.

5. If however new Government when it assumes office is in fact of same complexion as present provisional Government under Nai Khuang we feel that our doubts about Pibul would probably hardly justify us in turning our faces from the new Government. It seems to us that it is in interests of United Kingdom and other Governments concerned to have friendly relations with Siam which are likely to be jeopardized if we continue indefinitely

....2/a policy

Copies received
Secretary ✓
AS (P) ✓
I ✓
ME
A
LC
PI ✓
Pac ✓
UN ✓
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Adm
A/c

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. **SECRET.**

policy of non-recognition. If on the other hand we recognise new Government we shall still be in position to make representations through normal diplomatic channels if they should act in manner inconsistent with their obligations whereas present absence of official contacts renders any such representations difficult. There does not for the time being seem to be any justification for belief that if recognition is granted the new Government will adopt policies unfriendly to United Kingdom and other Governments having similar interests.

6. It is not yet clear what precise procedure will be when new Government takes office but assuming that it notifies foreign missions in Bangkok of assumption of office formal acknowledgement by these missions of such notification would presumably be regarded as constituting recognition and as at present advised we are disposed to instruct the United Kingdom Ambassador to act in the manner indicated.

7. Should other British Commonwealth Governments have any comments to offer on course outlined above which we are communicating also to the United States and French Governments we should be grateful to receive them at earliest possible moment.

MIN. AND DEPT. OF E.A.
MIN. AND DEPT. OF DEFENCE

16th February, 1948

SIAM: RECOGNITION OF NEW REGIME.

1. On the 9th November, 1947, troops under the command of 1st Military area, Bangkok, overthrew the Siamese Government led by Rear Admiral Luang Thamrong Navasvasti. It is beyond question that this successful coup d'état was inspired, if not planned and directed, by Luang Pibul Songgram, one-time dictator and war-time Prime Minister of Siam.

2. By 11th November, one member of the Regency Council had issued a proclamation rescinding the old constitution and approving a new; and a temporary provisional govemment headed by Pibul had given way to a second provisional government led by Nai Khuang Aphaiwongse, leader of the Democratic party and a democrat. This government succeeded in eliciting support from many responsible elements within Siam including not only authentic liberals but also old Royalist, aristocratic and bureaucratic groups and families. It enjoyed, naturally enough, the support of the Army, whose activity had made possible Khuang's accession to office. Foreign observers had accordingly some grounds for fearing that real power would in the event be exercised by Pibul rather than by Khuang. However, Khuang's Government undertook to hold within 90 days from 11th November, elections for the new Lower House.

3. These elections in fact took place on 30th January and resulted in a victory for the revolutionary groups: the Democratic party won 54 of the 100 seats in the Lower House and it can expect support from 19 independent members. The Australian Consul-General, Bangkok, thinks ~~that~~ it ~~is~~ highly probable that Khuang will be appointed the new Prime Minister and and will choose a cabinet similar to the second Provisional Government.

4. On 12th November, 1947, we advised the Australian Consul-General, Bangkok, that our first impulse was to view without

favour the return of Pibul to effective power and that, until the situation became clearer we preferred to leave in abeyance the question of according recognition to the new regime. We also observed that, as far as Australia was concerned the question of recognition might not arise directly and affirmed that whatever its regime, Siam was obliged to respect her obligations under treaties and agreements.

5. On 20th March, 1948, the Consul-General received an instruction to the effect that he might in his discretion deal with the new regime as with a de facto government but in such a way as not to anticipate action in this direction taken by the United Kingdom and United States Embassies at Bangkok. The United Kingdom and the United States had even then begun to deal with the provisional government on a de facto basis.

6. Australian policy in relation to Siam should take into account the fact that recent developments in Siam are in keeping with political trends elsewhere in South East Asia. As in Indonesia, Burma and even the Philippines, the majority of the politically conscious elements in the community have ~~prepared~~ preferred a regime that puts national unity before all else and that disregards internal political divisions based primarily on allegations of co-operation or non-co-operation of citizens with the Japanese forces during the war in the Pacific.

7. As any further attempt on Australia's part to perpetuate in Siam political divisions that have ceased to have any roots in reality, would be quite ineffective, it is recommended that the Australian Consul-General at Bangkok be authorised to deal with the incoming Siamese Government as with the Government of a state enjoying de iure recognition. In the very near future it will be necessary for the Consul-General to approach the Siamese Government formally with a view to the early settlement of Australian claims for war damage against Siam.

P.46/49/14.
Memo. No.

CONFIDENTIAL.

MEMORANDUM TO:

The Australian Consul-General,
BANGKOK.

In observing political developments in Siam since the coup d'etat of 8th November last year, we have noted with interest the inclusion of Luen Sarabhaya in the present Government. We have also noted the informal correspondence which passed between you and Sarabhaya and we agree that, without doing anything to prejudice our final attitude towards the new regime, you should continue to remain on cordial terms with him.

On 9th January, 1948, Singapore radio broadcast a summary of a speech which Sarabhaya had made on the previous night. We understand that this speech was addressed particularly to Australia, and if you consider it desirable, you might even let him know unofficially that we should be glad to receive the full text of his remarks.

SECRETARY.

7/1/48 - 7.00 p.m. SINGAPORE. (NEWS CONTINUED)

THE SIAMESE MINISTER OF EDUCATION, Mr. Sarabhaya, will broadcast to Australia tomorrow from Bangkok radio. He will speak at 10,00 hours GMT on the 49 meter band. Mr. Sarabaya broadcast daily from Australia in Siamese after the fall of Singapore until the surrender of Japan.

F.
Relations with Aust.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
Read 19 JAN 1948
File No. P47/1/2

AUSTRALIAN CONSULATE GENERAL,
BANGKOK, SIAM.

No. C. 14/48.

MEMORANDUM for: 12th. January, 1948.

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

Siam - Political Situation - Broadcast to Australia by LUEN SARABHAYA.

Nai Luen Sarabhaya, Minister of Education in the Provisional Government, has forwarded to me the attached transcript of a talk broadcast by him to Australia (by arrangement with the Shortwave Division of the Commonwealth Department of Information) on 8th January 1948.

I have forwarded a further copy of this transcript direct to the Shortwave Division.

2. As I have mentioned before, I regard Sarabhaya as a genuine upright and intelligent man. I feel that the views expressed in the talk may be accepted, in general, as sincere and well-informed, though they may be coloured to some extent by his own political idealism, the persecution which he himself suffered at the hands of so-called Democracy in Siam and his admiration for democratic practice in Australia.

3. The subject matter of the talk has been covered in despatches and reports which I have forwarded to you from time to time and, in general it calls for no further comment from me at this stage.

Sarabhaya is quite correct in saying that the Provisional Government itself is quite separate from Pibul and contains virtually none of his followers. It is also correct to say that there has been little sign recently of direct interference by Pibul in political matters.

Nevertheless, the circumstances in which the Provisional Government came into power and the unique influence which Pibul wields over the Army combine to give him the real power in the land at the present time, if he wishes to use it. Pibul has promised not to interfere in politics, and the Provisional Government has stated bravely that it would not tolerate such interference; as to this one can only await developments.

In any event Pibul's present relations with the Provisional Government become relatively unimportant in view of the elections to be held in the next few weeks.

CONSUL-GENERAL.

Encl: 1.

A TALK ABOUT COUP D'ETAT

8th. NOVEMBER 1947

BROADCAST TO AUSTRALIA

BY

LUEN SARABHAYAVANIJA, MINISTER OF EDUCATION,

ON THURSDAY 8th. JANUARY 1948

AT ~~14~~ 21 O'CLOCK (BANGKOK TIME)

~~20~~ 24 O'CLOCK (AUSTRALIAN EASTERN TIME)

THROUGH WAVE-LENGTH 49 AND ~~363~~ 57 METERS.

* * * * * * * * * * * * *

Good evening Australians !

Last week I read some cuttings from the Australian papers regarding the recent Coup d'Etat in Bangkok, Siam, and found that the news conveyed by their correspondents was not a true interpretation of the events.

Under the circumstances, as one who has worked in the British Ministry of Information, Singapore, and lived in Australia for 4 years in the dark period of the last war, full of trials, doubts and difficulties, I feel it my duty to clear up any misunderstanding that might have arisen.

It is right to say that the Coup d'Etat was carried out under the auspices of Field Marshal Phibul Songgram at the instance of the officers who had planned the Coup. It is also a fact that Phibul has a lot of influence in the army and he has been able to control the hot-headed amongst the officers, who could no longer stand by and see those in power abusing their offices and robbing the people. But the impression that since the Coup the government has been formed under Phibul and that he has since been ruling with a strong hand clearly shows that the actual situation in Siam has not been really understood. Those who are in this country will bear me out that the promoters of the Coup and the Government which has been formed and is still functioning since then are two entirely different bodies and consist of totally different persons.

The conditions which led up to the Coup should also be realized. Directly after the war Mom Rajawongse Seni Pramoj, who was the Siamese Minister in Washington at the outbreak of the war in Asia and who did not hesitate to denounce the Phibul Government on its surrender to the Japanese and who, in fact, was the

founder of the Free Thai movement, was invited by Pridi to return to Siam and form a new Government. He came and found that the members of the Government which he was invited to form were already chosen for him and he had, in fact, free choice in only two members of the Cabinet. When subsequently he found out that he was not given full freedom in the administration of the country, he resigned. Khuang Aphaiwongse, who was responsible for the resignation of Phibul as Premier and thus made possible the institution of Free Thai movement in Siam, was then invited to form the next government. Knowing full well the attempt of the government clique to keep the power in their hands for their own purposes, he broke away from them and enlisted in his cabinet certain men of experience and integrity who would not join the governing clique because they chose to be independent rather than submissive. Seni Pramoj also joined Khuang. This Government, which was then quite popular with the people, did not long prosper. It was clear that the said government meant to clean up the scandalous maladministration that was then prevailing. A law was submitted by members of the former government clique to control the selling of all essential commodities and their prices. Experience has shown that with the means then available such control would only result in the disappearance of the commodities in mention and the increase of corruption. Hence when the Assembly of the People's Representatives adopted the said law, the Khuang Government resigned. Pridi then formed the Government consisting of most members of the Governing clique. He started the formation of political parties. The Democrat Party was then formed and Khuang was invited to head this party. While the Pridi Government was in office, His Majesty King Ananda died under very mysterious circumstances. The communiques in regard to the King's death were, to say the least contradictory and unsatisfactory. The press comment on them was muzzled through censorship and many editors were arrested. One of them was shot dead in the street and no arrests whatever were made. It was then the time for electing some 80 new members of the People's Representatives. Owing to their own action the Government then was very unpopular, and it was obvious that if nothing was done the democrats would win the election. The election was

due to be made on the 5th. of August 1946. On the 29th. July 1946 the Ministry of the Interior issued an order to all the provincial authorities condemning the democrats, branding them revolutionists, and instructing the administrative officials to warn the people not to elect the democrats. This order was read out in the Government radio and issued as handbills throughout the Kingdom. There was clearly intimidation in the election and yet nothing could be done. The result of the election was that the majority of the members elected were those who had shown themselves favourable to the Government. It is to be noted, by the way, that in the big cities such as Bangkok, the democrats were elected. The Pridi Government, however, became so unpopular that it had to resign. Rear Admiral Thamrong Navaswasti, head of the Constitutional Party under Pridi's influence, formed the next Government, and many of the former members of the Pridi Government were re-appointed. Corruption then became rife. There was great public outcry against the Government both in the newspapers and amongst the people. Through the members elected under the influence of coercion and intimidation as above stated, the Thamrong Government had been able to maintain a majority in the Assembly. At this period the Government called in certain kinds of bank-notes and it became necessary to exchange the old notes called in for new ones. The Government entrusted members of the Assembly who supported them with large sums of money consisting of new notes ostensibly for the purpose of taking them to the country to facilitate the change of the old notes. But most of the members who took the money did not act correctly. Instead of taking the bank-notes to the people to be exchanged, they acted otherwise. In consequence they could not return these sums. Even now in certain cases the sums due are still unpaid. I only cite this matter only as an instance of what was then happening. There are other matters, sometimes of even more aggravating nature. In spite of the public dissatisfaction and outcry the Government did not resign and there was then no legal means to oust it.

Hence the Coup. In itself a Coup is undesirable. It is not constitutional and it is against all principles of democracy. Here we presuppose the existence of real democracy, democracy such as is in existence in Australia.

But think of the true situation. In the conditions above stated, I wonder how you Australians would react.

The criticism levelled at the Coup d'Etat is that Phibul used his influence to overthrow the Government by unconstitutional means against all principles of democracy, all of which is perfectly true, if the Government in power is itself a democratic one. But if it is not, what then ? What if the democracy is a sham one, claiming it is democratic by virtue of a Constitution drawn up in the interests of one party.

Regarding the King's death, Pridi and Thamrong governments were unable to trace the culprits. The public were indignant with the perfunctory investigations of the two governments. The cost of living had sky-rocketed, even the price of rice which is our staple food as well as the main product of Siam was higher than in Australia. This was due to bad control of rice smuggling which was rampant and connived at by high officials.

In spite of glaring cases of scandals and graft, obvious to Siamese and foreigners alike, the packed house continued to support the Government, because the graft and scandals were perpetrated by their supporters with the connivance of the Government. It was an impossible state of affairs. To bring about the fall of the Government by constitutional means required the Siamese people to suffer these conditions for two years longer. One result of the Coup has been to bring to light scandal and graft on the part of members of the Government itself.

After the Coup many houses were searched including several ex-Ministers, the authorities found a large quantity of weapons and ammunition as well as a plan to overthrow the Constitutional Monarchy for proclaiming Republic on the 30th. November.

The Minister of Finance, with the cognisance of the Premier, actually refused a tender of 8 millions to give it to one of their friends for 25 millions. I hope we shall be able to nip this dirty deal in the bud. But think what would have happened if they had gone on with this sort of things for two more years. The country might have been mined by a set of crooks posing as democrats.

That was the state of affairs, which loyal army officers felt they had to put a stop to and entrust the Government into more worthy hands. In their own mind they were acting in the interest of the country and at great risk to themselves. After the Coup, they did not take on the job of Government. Instead Khuang Aphaiwongse who is the most popular figure amongst the people here was asked to take on the task of governing the country.

When Khuang Aphaiwongse, the present Prime Minister, was asked by His Majesty to form the Cabinet, he was assured solemnly by Phibul and his subordinates that the Army would not interfere with the government and would give a free hand for its administration. Thus the present interim Government was born which includes Prince Sithiphorn Kridakorn as Minister of Agriculture, whose witty pen Geoffrey Sawer, Sub-dean of the Melbourne Faculty of Law used to appreciate. Seni Pramoj the former Siamese Minister in Washington, who had the great moral courage of going against his Government and organising the Free Thai movement in U.S.A. on the very second day of the Pacific War, is also a member of the Government as Minister of Justice.

Other Ministers include Phya Sri Visarnvacha as Minister of Foreign Affairs and myself as Minister of Education. It is interesting to note that Seni Pramoj's niece and Srivisarn's son are now schooling in Melbourne. I assure you that the Cabinet Ministers are all liberals and I shall be the first man to resign from the Cabinet if it occurs to me that dictator regime steps in the path of democracy.

Dr. Evatt, the Australian Minister of External Affairs, who is famous in giving eloquent speech defending small nations during various international conferences, used to declare at times that Australia had a say in the affairs of South East Asia. This has induced me to have a frank talk with you - dear dinky die Australians, whose nature I know so well that they love peace, freedom and fair-play from the bottom of their heart. So try to understand the real state of affairs and give us a chance to prove ourselves.

A HAPPY NEW YEAR AND GOOD WISHES
FOR THE BEST OF EVERYTHING.

Goodnight Australians.

451/3/1/2

CANBERRA. A.C.T.

PERSONAL.

28th January, 1948.

Dear Bill,

Luen Sarabhaya, Minister for Education in the Siamese Provisional Government led by Khuang, has been writing on quite an informal level to Allan Eastman in Bangkok and has from time to time expressed himself somewhat strongly concerning alleged reactions of the Australian Embassy in Washington the the present Siamese regime.

In one letter to Eastman, Sarabhaya wrote as follows:-

"I have also learnt with regret that Australian representatives in Washington also misapprehended the Siam situation by believing the false malignant statements made by a certain Siamese outcaste there, because I regard Australia as my second home and I do not like Siamese people to prejudice her unreasonably."

Do you know what Sarabhaya is hinting at?

With kind regards,

NOT SENT Yours sincerely,

W.D.Forsyth, Esq.,
Counsellor,
Australian Embassy,
WASHINGTON. U.S.A.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
Rec'd 13 JAN 1948
File No.

QUADRUPLICATE.

Gr. 453/2/1

Australian Consulate-General,
BANGKOK.

Ministerial Despatch No. 1/48. 8th. January 1948.

Sir, SIAM - Political situation.

I have the honour to submit the following report on the political situation in Siam since my despatch No. 24 of 20th. December 1947.

2. Moves by the new Government.

There is little fresh to report on this aspect except that continued publicity is being given to the Govern--ment's anti-corruption drive. Further details of alleged rice scandals in the South have been revealed and further criminal prosecutions are promised. The Government also claims to have uncovered a large scale racket on the railways; trucks of goods alleged from time to time to have been destroyed by fire are stated to have found their way into the provincial markets, to the satisfactory profit of local railway officials.

Nai VICHIT LULITTANONDH, former Minister of Finance, Nai THONGPLAEO CHOLBHUMI, former Deputy Minister of Finance, and Nai THONG KANTHATHARN, former Deputy Minister of the Interior, are still held in the Light Sentence Gaol. The former is charged with plotting resistance and the latter two with having hired assassins to murder Nai SUVIJ BHANDUSETH (see my memorandum No. C 223/47 of 13th. August 1947.)

It wasannounced on 5th. January that the Special Commission on the Constitution had recommended that the revised Constitution should be drafted by a Constitutent Assembly of 40 members, half to be selected by Parliament from the general public and half to be selected from Parliament itself ; this Assembly would be given 120 days to complete the draft and it would be dissolved automatically when both Houses of Parliament met in joint session to consider formal approval of the Constitution.

3. Preparations for elections.

At a rally of the Tharmathipat Party held on 25th. December and attended by about 3,000 people, Luang VICHIT VAHHAKARN made a spirited defence of PIBUL's war-time government. He announced that his party had entered 63 candidates for the elections.

4. PIBUL.

PIBUL has announced that he will resign his post of Commander-in-Chief of the Army on 29th. January.

4. Prospects of armed resistance.

THAMRONG continues to play Tweedledum.

On 23rd. December it was reported that the Military Command had issued a warrant for THAMRONG's arrest on a charge of plotting resistance. This was immediately denied and it may or may not be true. In any event the report filtered through to THAMRONG who forthwith sent an emissary to the

Pers 1-9-12

Min. Desp. 1/48. BANGKOK.

British Ambassador saying that this was the last straw and that he had definitely decided on armed resistance in the early hours of 26th. December. The emissary claimed that the C-in-C of the Navy had agreed to remain neutral.

26th. December came and went in an atmosphere of profound calm. Late that night, however, the British Naval Attache was invited to another secret rendezvous with THAMRONG who gave him the following messages ~~xxxxxthe~~ for the Ambassador :

(a) that the false alarm on 26th. December had been due to the emissary having misunderstood and having exceeded his instructions ;

(b) that there would be no armed resistance before 15th. January ;

(c) that the C-in-C of the Navy had not yet decided on his attitude ;

(d) that the present Provisional Government are in a shaky condition ; when they totter he will give them a push to ensure their fall ;

(e) a strong contingent of Marines had been moved to Bangkok for THAMRONG's use when required ;

(f) that he had been invited to call and see PIBUL and was considering whether to accept.

It has since been reported in the press that THAMRONG did see PIBUL who claimed that politics were none of his business and advised him to see KHUANG. There is no confirmation that THAMRONG has yet seen KHUANG.

The British Embassy has had no further messages from THAMRONG but the C-in-C of the Navy advised the American Naval Attache on 2nd. January that THAMRONG was now planning armed resistance in the provinces between 15th. and 25th. January in order to embarrass the Provisional Government during the elections.

6. Attitude of foreign Governments.

On 30th. December Reuter reported a statement in Parliament by the U.K. Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs in terms of the agreed text mentioned in para 9 of my despatch No. 24 of 20th. December 1947.

On 7th. January the Swiss Consul in Bangkok informed the Siamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs that his Government extended de facto recognition to Siam's Provisional Government.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

A. J. Eastman
CONSUL-GENERAL.

The Right Honourable
H. V. Evatt, K.C., M.P.,
Minister of State for
External Affairs,
CANBERRA..... A.C.T.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
Rec'd 19 DEC 1947
File No.

SW: 5249

December 17, 1947.

Director-General of Information,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

I heard today from Mr. Aston that one of the Siamese in Melbourne has received a letter from Sian giving the names of the new Cabinet, copy of which I have attached. You will observe that our former Thai announcer, Mr. Luen Sarabhaya, is now Minister of Education.

T. P. Hoey.
Director.

Copy - Secretary,
Department of External Affairs,
CANBERRA.

SIAMESE CABINET

Premier	Kuung Aphai
Foreign Affairs	Phya Srivisan
Finance	Prince Wiwat
Agriculture	Prince Sitiphon
Education	Phya Saraphai
Justice	Mom Rajawong Seni
Interior	Luang Srinart
Communications	Mom Luang Udom
Commerce	Mom Luang Det
Public Health	Luang Soopachalascu
Food Control	Phra Wate

.....

DUPLICATE.

CONFIDENTIAL.

AUSTRALIAN CONSULATE GENERAL
BANGKOK.

No. C 304/47.

28th. November 1947.

Memorandum for :-

The Secretary,

Department of External Affairs,

CANBERRA.....A.C.T.

SIAM - POLITICAL SITUATION.

Enclosed for your information are copies of a personal letter which I have received from LUEN SARABHAYA, who is Minister for Education in the KHUANG Provisional Government.

2. I have a high opinion of SARABHAYA's honesty and sincerity and I do not doubt that he genuinely believes that PIBUL was not one of the original promoters of the coup but was brought in a few hours after the coup had taken place. I think myself that this explanation is not at all unlikely but the point is probably not of great importance ; the fact is that PIBUL arrived at a position of power in the new regime and the question is whether he will retain that position or leave the new administration to carry on without interference. I have little doubt that the KHUANG Government would like to dispense with PIBUL as soon as they feel sufficiently safe to do so but, even if PIBUL is sincere in his professed intention to withdraw from the field, it is not easy at present to see how he could do this without seriously weakening the position of the new regime and inviting a counter--coup. I shall discuss this aspect privately with SARABHAYA in the near future.

3. I am not entirely clear about SARABHAYA's reference to " foreign powers". It is probable that RUSSIA is one of the powers intended, though he may also be referring to the fact that the British and American authorities engineered the escape of PRIDI and three companions (see my memorandum No. C 302/47 of 24th. November). I mentioned in the latter memorandum that one of the companions was a naval officer (VAJARACHAI) who was allegedly wanted by the police in connection with the King's death ; an unconfirmed report in one of the Siamese newspapers on 26th. November stated that another of PRIDI's companions was Dr. THONGPLAEO CHOLBHUMI who is wanted by the police in connection with a shortage of 5½ million ticals in the accounts of the Food Drive Organization. (See page 2 of my despatch No. 22 of 24th. November 1947.) If this latter report is true the anger of the new administration can readily be understood.

I will sound SARABHAYA out on this point also when I see him.

A. J. Eastman
CONSUL-GENERAL.

F.
Relations with Australia
Orig. Lodged on pol. ed. P46/47/4

(C O P Y)

21 Ruamrudi Road,
26th Nov. 1947.

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Colonel Eastman,

It is very kind of you to send me a letter of the 24th. Nov., the contents of which I have noted with many thanks. I know it would be impolitic for you to reply to me in the very first few days of the Coup d'etat, as the protagonist of the episode is Phibul - a man whom the Allies considered as a Japanese collaborator with somewhat of dictatorship. They were right to a certain extent. But, personally, I would like to tell you that real promoters of the events are not Phibul at all. They are a group of senior Army officers who could not tolerate to see their country go to the dogs - coldly assassinating their beloved King, full of corruptions and waiting the Government to resign or be put off through the channel of false democrary. Nearly all of them have no ambition of taking the rein of power, willing to put the Government into the hands of integrity and ability well-known to the public. After they seized the power they disagreed in some point-of-view, and had to invite Phibul to straighten their dissent. Khuang was invited to form the cabinet. I would say - not boasting - that Khuang is the proper man for the time being and he is the only soul who can successfully rally every party to save the country and prevent the suspected tide of dictatorship.

Public enemies - among them are communists and admirers of foreign powers - have tried their best to give wrong information to the Allied powers that we would be pulled by the military string, which, in fact, is not at all. I for one, as well as nearly all in the Cabinet would not yield to any undemocratic tendency, and I will be the first man to resign from the Cabinet if we were to be treated as puppets. I am quite sure that the Siamese public would be shocked to learn with indignation one day if some facts of action being done by foreign powers be disclosed to them.

I have also learnt with regret that Australian representatives in Washington also misapprehended the Siam situation by believing the false malignant statements made by a certain Siamese outcaste there, because I regard Australia as my second home and I do not like Siamese people to prejudice her unreasonably.

Hoping you are now recovered from your strenuous work.

With my best regards to Mrs. Eastman.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) L. Sarabhaya.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

CABLEGRAM.

TOP SECRET.

THE QUOTATION OF THIS CABLEGRAM WITHOUT PARAPHRASE EXCEPT IN A SECRET DOCUMENT WILL COMPROMISE THE CYPHER USED. REGARDLESS OF CONTENT IT MUST ALWAYS BE GIVEN SECRET.

JEO/JEO

DECYPHER TO --

O.19321/22/23

SECRETARY OF STATE
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NEW ZEALAND,
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AUSTRALIAN CONSUL GENERAL,
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SECRET. IMPORTANT.

Your D. No.882 paragraph 6. In an aide-memoire handed to Australian Consul General Bangkok on 21st October, Siamese Government requested Australian Government to consider revision of Australia-Siam Final Peace Agreement of 3rd April, 1946. We have not yet taken any action of this request and would prefer to postpone further consideration of it until more precise proposals for a settlement of war claims against Siam emerge from current discussions and until public opinion in English-speaking countries has had an opportunity of calmly assessing the character and stability of the new regime in Siam.

2. In any event it is our considered opinion that the Siamese should settle outstanding claims under existing agreements, whether by offering a lump sum in whole or part settlement or by Claims Committee procedure before either the United Kingdom Government or the Australian Government formally undertake to revise those articles in their respective agreements with Siam which deal with matters other than claims.

3. Whilst in theory the United Kingdom Agreement of 1st January, 1946, might be revised without necessarily involving any amendment of our Final Peace Agreement of 3rd April, 1946, in practice a successful revision (from the Siamese point of view) of the United Kingdom Formal Agrement might make it difficult for us to postpone indefinitely, as was our original intention, the Siamese request for a revision of our Agreement. In these circumstances, we are inclined to the view that at the present time the United Kingdom Government and the Australian Government should jointly advise the Siamese Government that they are prepared to consider in the near future the revision or amendment of their respective agreements with Siam to the extent only that some overall claims settlement might be expeditiously reached and that any question of revising non-claims articles in the two agreements must await the outcome of a satisfactory claim settlement.

4. Within a very short time we hope to be able to advise you of our attitude (a) to the proposal for a lump sum settlement by Siam of outstanding claims and (b) to give some indication of the amount of Australian claims. But we should in any case expect that Siamese assets frozen in the United Kingdom or elsewhere in the Commonwealth or Colonial Empire would be available for the satisfaction of all British (including Australian) claims, on a basis that would ensure equitable distribution among the countries concerned.

P46/49/14

E.A.)P.45/49/15)
TREASURY
DEFENCE
19th November, 1947.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. SECRET.

KV/PM. I.92568.

Dated: 16th November, 1947. 1940.
Recd.: 17th November, 1947. 8.30 a.m.

DECYPHER FROM -

The Australian Consul-General,
BANGKOK.

B.220. SECRET. Your telegram 72.

1. Thanks for your observations and solicitude.

2. Arrangements made for Australians in Bangkok to shelter in the British Embassy compound if necessary. These plans also cover evacuation in case of extreme emergency. Unnecessary at this stage to make special arrangements for tin miners in the south.

3. Can see no legal basis for rescission of the old Constitution and promulgate the new one. Will forward as soon as possible Constitution with detail commentary.

E.A. (P.46/49/1A) 17th November, 1947.

Pub/49/14

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. SECRET.

KV/PM.

I.22358.

DECYPHER FROM =

Dated: 13th November, 1947.
1845.
Recd.: 14th November, 1947.
8.30 a.m.

The Australian Consul-General,
BANGKOK.

B.216. SECRET.

My telegram 208, paras. 4 and 6. London has replied approving of the British Ambassador's remarks to Pibul's representative and indicating that they are consulting closely with Washington.

Pending talks with Washington and further developments here they are unable to give the British Ambassador specific direction but agree that he should continue to deal with the new Government on de facto basis.

Copies to:
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ACTING MIN. & DEPT. OF E.A. (ATTN.)
MIN. & DEPT. OF DEFENCE

14th November, 1947

BB

Pub/49/14.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. **SECRET.**

NN.BL.

I.21140
Dated 25th October, 1947
1230
Rec'd 27th October, 1947
8.30 a.m.

DECYPHER FROM -

High Commissioner's Office,
LONDON.

295. Canberra repeated to New York 32.

Chifley from Beasley.

Repeated to Evatt.

Your telegram 337. Siam.

Siamese Ambassador called on me on 24th October and stated he had come "on his own initiative" to let me know that Siamese Government had presented an Aide-Memoire to Australian Consul General in Siam suggesting a revision of Peace Agreement between Siam and Australia. He said that Agreement had practically been fulfilled but that question of claims was a difficult one and it was desirable in view of Siamese Government to settle claims by a lump sum payment as soon as possible.

2. Ambassador suggested that as United Kingdom and India were also involved it might be most convenient (although he had no instructions on this point) for preliminary negotiations to be carried on in London for a revision of Agreement. I said that I had heard that Siamese Government was requesting revision but that matter raised many difficult questions for Australia which would have to be very carefully considered as there were many claimants and considerable amounts involved. I told him that I would report conversation to you.

3. Ambassador said that when he put proposal for revision to Foreign Office he was told that matter would involve much consideration by United Kingdom Departments and consultations with Australia and India.

4. I think that Siamese realise that our attitude on revision will probably be tougher than that of United Kingdom and that they therefore think that it might assist to overcome our resistance if conversations took place in London.

5. Otherwise our conversation was very general dealing with spoiling of crops this year, smuggling of rice, gratitude for Australia's support for Siamese admission to United Nations, importance of cultural relations between Siam and Australia (for example education of Siamese students in Australia) and wish of Siamese Minister for Foreign Affairs that Dr. Evatt should visit Bangkok on his way back to Australia.

BB
P46/49/14

A/MIN. & DEPT. E.A. (P45/49/15) 27-10-47

P46/49/14

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM **SECRET.**

PC/EC.

I. 23597.
Dated: 29th November, 1947.
1210
Rec'd: 29th November, 1947.
6p.m.

DECYPHER FROM:
Professor Copland
E.C.A.F.E.
MANILA.

8. PRIORITY.

Session on 26th devoted firstly to admission of cambodia and laos and later to lengthy discussion on admission of Siamese delegates. Cambodia and Siam were admitted to associate membership with nine votes in favour and Russia abstaining. Grounds of abstention were that there was insufficient information regarding the political status of the territories.

2. On Siam British proposed admittance of delegates as observers pending a clarification of the status of Siamese Govt. This was supported by France and Russia. The U.S. moved an amendment favouring full membership but on the understanding that such a decision did not imply recognition by the Commission or by member governments of the present Siamese Government. This was supported by the Philippines, China and the Netherlands. Some argument took place as to whether acceptation of credentials did not imply some recognition of the Siamese Government. Acting on the assumption that it did I voted against the American amendment. The vote was U.S. Philippines, Netherlands, China in favour of full membership, U.K., Russia, France, Australia against full membership and India and Pakistan abstaining. The chairman announced that rules of procedure required a vote to be taken again at the next meeting.

3. At the morning session on the 27th the debate on Siamese admission continued and finally general agreement was reached on the motion that Siamese delagation be admitted with full rights of membership, it being maintained that admission does not imply any step corresponding to diplomatic recognition of the present Siamese Govt. by governments members of the commission. Russia voted negatively and France abstained.

E.A.

1st December, 1947.

F.
Political.
Aust. Policy to Siam.
P46/49/14

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DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. SECRET.

[redacted]C:NO'N

O.19472
Sent 20th November, 1947

DECYPHER TO:

THE AUSTRALIAN CONSUL GENERAL,
BANGKOK.

74. Secret. Important.

Our 72 para 2.

On 15th November Luang Dhamrong's Minister of Communications was informed by United Kingdom Ambassador that his instructions were to deal with the new regime on a de facto basis for the time being and that his United States colleague was acting similarly.

2. You may in your discretion deal with the new regime as with a de facto government but in such a way as not to anticipate action in this direction taken by the United Kingdom and United States Embassies.

DEFENCE
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
TREASURY

21st November, 1947

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Draft Telegram

Australian Consul-General, Bangkok

Secret Important

Our 72, para. 2.

On 13th November Luang Dhamrong's Minister of Communications was informed by United Kingdom Ambassador' that his instructions were to deal with the new regime on a de facto basis for the time being and that his United States colleague was acting similarly.

2, Accordingly you may in your discretion deal with the new regime as with a de facto government but in such a way as not to anticipate action in this direction taken by the United Kingdom and the United States Embassies.

P46/49/14

Defence
Treasury

20/11/47

KTK

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. SECRET.

JED/JED

DECYPHER TO --

THE QUOTATION OF THIS CABLEGRAM WITHOUT PARAPHRASE EXCEPT IN A SECRET DOCUMENT WILL COMPROMISE THE CYPHER USED, REGARDLESS OF CLASSIFICATION. IT MUST ALWAYS REMAIN SECRET.

O.19321/22/23

P46/49/14

SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS,
LONDON.....310

PRIME MINISTER OF
NEW ZEALAND,
WELLINGTON.....255

AUSTRALIAN CONSUL GENERAL,
BANGKOK.....73

SECRET. IMPORTANT.

Your D. No.882 paragraph 6. In an aide-memoire handed to Australian Consul General Bangkok on 21st October, Siamese Government requested Australian Government to consider revision of Australia-Siam Final Peace Agreement of 3rd April,1946. We have not yet taken any action of this request and would prefer to postpone further consideration of it until more precise proposals for a settlement of war claims against Siam emerge from current discussions and until public opinion in English-speaking countries has had an opportunity of calmly assessing the character and stability of the new regime in Siam.

2. In any event it is our considered opinion that the Siamese should settle outstanding claims under existing agreements, whether by offering a lump sum in whole or part settlement or by Claims Committee procedure before either the United Kingdom Government or the Australian Government formally undertake to revise those articles in their respective agreements with Siam which deal with matters other than claims.

3. Whilst in theory the United Kingdom Agreement of 1st January, 1946, might be revised without necessarily involving any amendment of our Final Peace Agreement of 3rd April, 1946, in practice a successful revision (from the Siamese point of view) of the United Kingdom Formal Agrement might make it difficult for us to postpone indefinitely, as was our original intention, the Siamese request for a revision of our Agreement. In these circumstances, we are inclined to the view that at the present time the United Kingdom Government and the Australian Government should jointly advise the Siamese Government that they are prepared to consider in the near future the revision or amendment of their respective agreements with Siam to the extent only that some overall claims settlement might be expeditiously reached and that any question of revising non-claims articles in the two agreements must await the outcome of a satisfactory claim settlement.

4. Within a very short time we hope to be able to advise you of our attitude (a) to the proposal for a lump sum settlement by Siam of outstanding claims and (b) to give some indication of the amount of Australian claims. But we should in any case expect that Siamese assets frozen in the United Kingdom or elsewhere in the Commonwealth or Colonial Empire would be available for the satisfaction of all British (including Australian) claims, on a basis that would ensure equitable distribution among the countries concerned.

Copies: AS (P) E ME A

E.A.)P.45/49/15)
TREASURY
DEFENCE
19th November,1947.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

MW.AFH.

CABLEGRAM. **SECRET.**

Dated 12th November, 1947

DECYPHER TO -

Australian Consul-General,
BANGKOK.

These cables are on P45/49/2 Pt 3.

72. SECRET. IMMEDIATE.

Your telegrams 208 to 213 inclusive received entire, 207 corrupt. Desire express appreciation of comprehensive reporting and hope that recent events have occasioned you, your family and staff no undue anxiety. Assume that, if civil war should eventuate, liaison with U.K.Embassy will ensure safety of Australians in Siam.

2. Our first impulse is to view without favour return of Pibul to effective power. Until the situation clears, we prefer to leave in abeyance the question of according recognition to the new regime. In any event, so far as Australia is concerned, this question may not as such arise directly. We should however be glad of advice as to the formal legality, if any, of the constitutional measures adopted to instal the provisional Government, and particularly as to whether the Regency Council and the monarch were competent to dismiss Luang Dhamrong Mawasat or able legally or politically to disclaim responsibility for what appears to be the abrogation of the old constitution.

3. Your B.212. Australia would adopt attitude of strict neutrality in the event of Pridi's initiating direct armed resistance. Whatever regime emerges, Siam must respect obligations under treaties and agreements.

DEPT. OF E.A.(P46/49/14; P45/49/2Pt.3) 13-11-47

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P46/49/14

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Draft Telegram

P46/49/14

Australian Consul-General,
BANGKOK.

Secret. Immediate.

Your telegrams 208 to 213 inclusive received entire, 207 corrupt. Desire express appreciation of comprehensive reporting and hope that recent events have occasioned you, your family and staff no undue anxiety. Assume that, if civil war eventuates, liaison with U.K. Embassy will ensure safety of Australians in Siam.

NOT SENT IN THIS FORM

2. Australian public opinion is not well-disposed towards return of Pibul to effective power. Until the situation clears, we prefer to leave in abeyance the question of according recognition to the new regime. In any event, so far as Australia is concerned, this question may not as such arise directly. We should however be glad of advice as to the formal legality, if any, of the constitutional measures adopted to instal the provisional government, and particularly as to whether the Regency Council and the monarch were competent to dismiss Luang Dhamrong Nawasat or able legally or politically to disclaim responsibility for what appears to be the abrogation of the old constitution.

3. Your B. 213. We strongly support the action of the U.K. Embassy in its effort to obtain guarantee of immunity for Pridi and other Siamese who rendered assistance to the Allied cause.

4. Your B. 212. It would be impracticable for us to adopt any other than an attitude of strict neutrality in the event of Pridi's initiating direct armed resistance. Whatever regime emerges, Siam must respect obligations under treaties and agreements.

P46/49/14

P46/49/2 Pt 3 KK

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. **SECRET.**

NVP.BL.

I.19580
SC 145
Dated 1st October, 1947
2320
Rec'd 3rd October, 1947
2.50 a.m.

DECYPHER FROM -

Australian Consul General,
BANGKOK.

B187. Immediate.

Your telegram No. 59 (C) received 1800 hours October 1st.

2. The Minister for Foreign Affairs is in New York and the Prime Minister, who is concurrently acting as Minister for Foreign Affairs, is absent from Bangkok. On the receipt of your telegram under reference I therefore called on the Foreign Adviser and Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs at their homes.

3. The Foreign Adviser considered as the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs were absent it was unlikely anyone available in Bangkok would take the responsibility of giving instructions to the delegation in New York of which the Minister for Foreign Affairs is head.

4. The Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, however, professed adherence ø to agreement to proposal and promised to send instructions to the delegation to support Australian candidature. I stressed imminence of election and difference in time zones between Bangkok and New York. He promised to send urgent telegram this evening.

5. For reasons mentioned by the Foreign Adviser I doubt whether the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs' "instructions" could amount to more than a suggestion.

E.A.

3-10-47

ø Mutilated

RP
for
P46/49/14

(C) Refers to request that Siam should support Australia's election to Security Council, UN.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. SECRET.

MW:HP

O.16573
Sent: 1st October, 1947.

DECYPHER TO:

AUSTRALIAN CONSUL-GENERAL,
BANGKOK.

59. MOST IMMEDIATE.

Australia will be a candidate for election to the Economic and Social Council by the United Nations General Assembly to-day or to-morrow. Please make every effort to have instructions sent to Siamese representative in New York to cass one of their six votes for us.

2. Please report reaction most immediate.

--- BB.

P46/49/14

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS(UN47/GA/33)

1st October, 1947.

Copies :
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DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CABLEGRAM. SECRET.

~ / NS

I. 11913
SC 173
Dated 14th June 1947
1110
Received 14th June 1947
8-52 p.

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Decypher from

The Australian Consul General,
BANGKOK

(via Singapore)

B. 146. Your telegram 40 13th December.

Exchange representation.

I am receiving continual questions. Can any further information be given as to when decision might be expected.

E.A.

16th June 1947.

see on this matter file P46/49/18 "Siamese Representation in Australia"

Aust Ge Pol to Siam

3.10

Extract from Min Statement 6/6/47

SIAM.

125. In accordance with the relevant articles of the Australian Peace Agreement with Siam, an "ancillary" agreement for the setting up of a Joint Claims Committee consisting of representatives of the Australian, the Indian and the Siamese Governments was concluded on 6th January, 1947. The committee has since had several meetings and its members are now considering the detailed principles governing the manner in which claims against the Siamese Government are to be presented and adjudicated. The principles will be settled in the near future.

Aust Rel P46/49/14

126. Action has been taken to set up in Australia, within the Department of the Treasury, administrative machinery for handling claims of Australian citizens against Siam, and for rendering assistance to the Australian Consul-General, Bangkok, who is the Australian member of both the Joint Claims Committee and the Tin Commission mentioned below.

127. In view of the world shortage of tin, the United Kingdom, the United States and the Australian Governments agreed some time ago that exports of this commodity from Siam should be facilitated. A Tin Commission consisting of representatives of Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States and Siam was therefore set up in Bangkok in December, 1946, to supervise the export of metallic tin and tin ore from Siam. An essential part of the agreement setting up the Tin Commission made provision for the assumption by Siam of responsibility for the payment of compensation in respect of tin ore removed during the war from the properties in Siam of Australian and United Kingdom mining Companies.

(5) SIAM

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2/6/47. Draft for Minister's speech. GSB.

Extract from a report of 9th March, 1947,
from the Australian Consul-General, Bangkok.

The Indian Ambassador designate to China, Mr. K.P.S. Menon, and staff, arrived in Bangkok on 1st March en route to China. They left for Nanking on the following morning.

It was announced that Col. E.T. Heslop, at present Commander of British Troops, Siam, had been appointed Military Attache to the British Legation. He will take up this appointment on termination in the near future of his present duties.

(The following appointments of Naval and Air Attaches were announced during February:-

Capt. S.H. Dennis, R.N., formerly NOIC and Naval Liaison Officer, Bangkok, to be Naval Attache;
Group-Capt. G.C. McMullen, formerly Commander, RAF Station, Bangkok, to be Air Attache.)

It has been announced that Luang Arthakitti-Kamchorn (Nai Kraeng Banomyong), at present Siamese Minister to Sweden, has been appointed concurrently Siamese Minister to Russia. It is probable, however, that he will relinquish the former post as soon as he has presented his credentials in Russia. (Luang Artha is a brother of the Senior Statesman, Nai Pridi Banomyong).

Two secretaries at the Siamese Legation in Paris are being transferred to Moscow and three chancellors have been selected in Bangkok and will leave for Russia at about the end of the month. It is reported that the Legation in Russia will be functioning by about the middle of April.

The name of the Russian Minister to Siam has not yet been announced and there is no information at present available as to when the Russian Legation here will open.

The Siamese press carried a cable by Reuters from Canberra to the effect that the Australian Government proposes to invite thirteen countries, including Siam, to attend a regional conference to be held in Australia.

P46/49/14

orig on file
p 46/49/18

For: The Minister

REPRESENTATION OF SIAM IN AUSTRALIA

On several occasions between March and September of this year, theSiamese have informally raised the question of an exchange of diplomatic representatives with Australia. The Siamese have now formally reqasted us to receive a Minister as their representative in Australia.

2. It is not considered that we should at this stage agree to this Siamese proposal, on the grounds -

(a) that we have already been obliged, for administrative reasons, including expense and shortage of staff, to defer an exchange of Ministers with several nations with whom we have had very friendly relations for a long period; and

(b) that an exchange of Ministers between Australia and Siam would consequently give offence to those nations, especially as they would be aware that relations between Australia and Siam had been interrupted during the war;

(c) that we desire time to review the whole position of Australian diplomatic representation abroad and particularly in South East Asia, where we have, for example, only a Consulate-General at Manila and where we are considering the question of resuming consular representation at Batavia.

3. On the other hand, the Siamese would probably accept with alacrity an assurance from us of our willingness to receive a Siamese Consul-General in Australia. Such an assurance on our part would not involve any of the difficulties mentioned in paragraph 2 supra and would certainly elicit from the Siamese a measure of good-will and not inconsiderable commercial advantages.

4. In the circumstances, it is recommended that the Siamese be informed that, for the reasons indicated above, we wish them not to press for an exchange of Ministers at this stage but that early in 1947 we should be pleased to accept a Consul General as the representative of Siam in Australia.

5. The following detailed considerations support the foregoing recommendation:

(i) Siam is the only independent State in S.E. Asia (with the exception of the very recently established Republic of the Philippines).

(ii) Siam has a tradition of resistance to Chinese encroachment, a factor in the future development of S.E. Asia of some importance to Australia. China is, however, now busily strengthening her position in Siam.

(iii) Siam's population is increasing and the country holds an important place in the economic life of S.E. Asia. Commercial opportunities for Australia already exist there and may be expected to grow if fostered.

.../(iv) A Favourable

(iv) A favourable attitude by Siam towards regional co-operation between the various governments and administrations in S.E. Asia would no doubt be desired by Australia in view of our expressed interest in the possibility of such co-operation.

(v) If Australia wishes to exert direct influence in S.E. Asia, it would appear to be useful to cultivate relations with Siam.

(vi) China, the United States and the United Kingdom appear to be contending for influence in Siam and this seems to have obliged the United Kingdom to treat Siam more mildly than would be warranted by Siam's alliance with Japan in the Pacific War.

(vii) As the Siamese are apparently assured of friendly American interest and (partly in consequence of this) also of U.K. assistance, they are unlikely to pay much attention to Australia unless Australia shows a disposition to cultivate friendly relations. The time seems to be past when any useful result would be achieved by approaching the question of Australian-Siamese relations from the position that Siam is a defeated enemy. (We have in fact made peace with Siam). The view that Siam is a potential friend of some future importance would be a more fruitful approach.

KK/CO
Canberra.
2nd December 1946.

APPENDIX

Extract from the speech of the Governor-General at the opening of the first Session of the Eighteenth Parliament of the Commonwealth on 6th November, 1946:

"Following the conclusion of the final peace agreement with Siam, which was negotiated by Australia as a party principal, the Government has been concerned to secure the full protection of Australian interest in Siam. An Australian Consulate-General has been established at Bangkok.

P46/49/14

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

CANBERRA.

Mr Watt

The attached reviews of relations with Siam in the 12 months since the end of the Pacific war ~~was~~ calls for no immediate action but may be useful at some stage. It suggests a reorientation of general policy.

WSM.

Should you think it useful to send copies to Singapore, Bangkok & Nanking for comment at Department - Chancery level?

P

~~REF~~ IF

AUSTRALIAN SIAMESE RELATIONS

Relations with Siam during the twelve months since the end of the Pacific war are summarised in the attached memorandum.

It is submitted that our relations with Siam might usefully be reviewed in the light of the following considerations:-

1. Siam is the only independent State in S.E. Asia (with the exception of the very recently established Republic of the Philippines).

2. Siam has a tradition of resistance to Chinese encroachment, a factor in the future development of S.E. Asia of some importance to Australia. China is, however, now busily strengthening her position in Siam.

3. Siam's population is increasing and the country holds an important place in the economic life of S.E. Asia. Commercial opportunities for Australia already exist there and may be expected to grow if fostered.

4. A favourable attitude by Siam towards regional co-operation between the various governments and administrations in S.E. Asia would no doubt be desired by Australia in view of our expressed interest in the possibility of such co-operation.

5. If Australia wishes to exert direct influence in S.E. Asia, it would appear to be useful to cultivate relations with Siam.

6. China, the United States and the United Kingdom appear to be contending for influence in Siam and this seems to have obliged the United Kingdom to treat Siam more mildly than would be warranted by Siam's alliance with Japan in the Pacific War.

7. As the Siamese are apparently assured of friendly American interest and (partly in consequence of this) also of U.K. assistance, they are unlikely to pay much attention to Australia unless Australia shows a disposition to cultivate friendly relations. The time seems to be past when any useful result would be achieved by approaching the question of Australian-Siamese relations from the position that Siam is a defeated enemy. (We have in fact made peace with Siam). The view that Siam is a potential friend of some future importance would be a more fruitful approach.

WDT. 17/9/46.

~~EF~~/IE

NOTES ON AUSTRALIAN-SIAMESE RELATIONS

The following is a brief summary of our relations with Siam since the close of hostilities last year:-

1. The United Kingdom concluded a final Peace Treaty with Siam on 1st January, 1946, and followed it promptly with a declaration of peace and the re-establishment of diplomatic relations. The Australian agreement concluded on that date was a preliminary one only and provided for the negotiation of a final agreement within a period of approximately three months. This procedure involved the prolongation of the state of war between Australia and Siam after peace had been established with United Kingdom, and India. The U.S.A. of course had remained at peace with Siam. The Siamese were thus given the impression that we were reluctant to settle our differences promptly and to establish friendly relations.

2. Negotiations on the final Peace Agreement were begun about 26th February.

3. Our final Peace Agreement, when presented, contained a clause (Article XI) which was not covered by the preliminary agreement. This was not well-received by the Siamese. The clause also excited opposition from U.S.A. and representations from U.K. and France on the grounds that it would limit Siam in its foreign relations, and that it would infringe Siam's sovereignty.

4. The final peace agreement was signed on 3rd April, 1946, but the Peace Proclamation was not issued until 10th May, 1946.

5. U.K. and U.S.A. agreed to sponsor Siam's candidature for U.N.O. Siam several times requested us to do likewise. Mr. Officer stated that he "was sure that the Australian Government would, when the time came, give favourable consideration" to supporting such candidature.

6. In March, 1946, Siam approached us with regard to procuring from the Northern Territory a number of water-buffalo to replace the severe losses suffered through floods, depredations of the Japanese, etc., during the war years. The building up of buffalo stocks was urgent having regard to the proposed drive for rice to meet famine conditions in other parts of SEA. We replied that buffalo-hunters and lessees were disinclined to contract for the supply of these animals, that difficulties arose in connection with dipping and testing for disease, and that the proposal was hedged with so many difficulties that it did not seem to be a practical proposition.

7. In May, 1946, the Prime Minister of Siam approached us in connection with the supply of 300,000 bottles per month, with a possible increase to 500,000 per month at a later date, required for a proposed expansion of the local whisky trade in Siam. No Australian manufacturer was prepared to tender for their supply.

8. During April the Australian representative at Bangkok was authorised to approach the Siamese to offer them 365,000 yards of waterproof cloth which was available from surplus army stocks. Siam accepted the offer. We later asked the Siamese to agree to the diversion of a large part of this material to Malaya.

9. While Mr. Officer was in Siam the Siamese approached him with a request for the grant of a credit by Australia, to be spent exclusively in the purchase of goods in Australia. This proposal was in furtherance of a desire expressed by the Siamese for the development of trade with Australia in preference to U.K., U.S.A. and other countries. No definite decision has been conveyed to the Siamese, but at a meeting on 4th July

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between representatives of Treasury, Commerce and External Affairs it was decided not to proceed with the proposal unless further examination showed strong political grounds for granting the credit. At that meeting the Department of Commerce and Agriculture opposed the grant of the credit on the grounds that Australia was short of the supplies which Siam was likely to want and that the long-term advantages of the proposal were intangible. The question is standing over until the Australian representative has an opportunity of further discussion with the Siamese and reports on the position.

10. The Siamese have throughout shown a desire for actively friendly relations with Australia, to exchange missions and to develop trade. There has, however, been no Australian representation in Siam since 23rd May. No decision has yet been taken on the question of permanent and reciprocal representation, but the Siamese have accepted the appointment of an Acting Consul General on a temporary basis without commitment as to future relationship. They have not as yet raised again the question of Siamese representation in Australia.

REMARKS:

It appears from the above that we have pursued for the twelve months since the cessation of hostilities a policy of snubbing Siam by ignoring Siamese approaches and refusing Siamese requests. This may be regarded as a necessary phase in Australian-Siamese relations, designed to make the Siamese aware that Australia is not disposed lightly to forget her association with Japan, the consequent dangers to Australia, and the sufferings of Australian prisoners on her soil. It is, however, desirable to consider whether this object has now been sufficiently secured and whether Australian policy towards Siam should not enter a new phase designed to secure long-term advantages, political, strategic and commercial. It may be observed that there would be little gained by our having emphasised our displeasure at Siam's unfriendly conduct in the past if we did not intend to try to gain advantages from a friendly attitude by Siam in the future.

Sept. 46.

CABLEGRAM.

PEC/WEO

Decode from

Australian Political
Liaison Officer,
TOKYO.

I.22769
NR 1932
Dated 17th September, 1946
1020
Recd. 17th September, 1946

387 IMPORTANT.

Wild's evidence will probably finish September 17th. The Burma Thailand railway report has been put with evidence and commented on by Wild. Since Wild's arrival 26th further reports dealing with prisoner of war atrocities have been discovered. The report on the massacre of Chinese at Singapore in February 1942 has been put in the evidence and commented on by Wild. The other reports are being translated. They refer to prisoner of war atrocities in every ∅ area.

Wild and Davis will go to Singapore probably September 18th. Tavvener phase likely to begin on September 18th. Suggest you arrange the witnesses do not leave Australia until after you have read the record of the Wild evidence and seen 27 further reports.

Min. and Dept. E.A.

18th September, 1946

∅ Mutilated

KK Have you seen. May not be relevant to our policy minute WDT 19/9

Copies received
Secretary ✓
AS (F) ✓
K
MB ✓
A
LO ✓
PI ✓
Pac ✓
NN
EB ✓
Adm

A.N.H.
Please check
WDC

(Will the Japanese report on the Singapore massacre be ready before the B-Trial is finished in Tokyo yesterday or the day before?)

P&C 19/9

~~KK~~/IE

AUSTRALIAN SIAMESE RELATIONS

Relations with Siam during the twelve months since the end of the Pacific war are summarised in the attached memorandum.

It is submitted that our relations with Siam might usefully be reviewed in the light of the following considerations:-

1. Siam is the only independent State in S.E. Asia (with the exception of the very recently established Republic of the Philippines).

2. Siam has a tradition of resistance to Chinese encroachment, a factor in the future development of S.E. Asia of some importance to Australia. China is, however, now busily strengthening her position in Siam.

3. Siam's population is increasing and the country holds an important place in the economic life of S.E. Asia. Commercial opportunities for Australia already exist there and may be expected to grow if fostered.

4. A favourable attitude by Siam towards regional co-operation between the various governments and administrations in S.E. Asia would no doubt be desired by Australia in view of our expressed interest in the possibility of such co-operation.

5. If Australia wishes to exert direct influence in S.E. Asia, it would appear to be useful to cultivate relations with Siam.

6. China, the United States and the United Kingdom appear to be contending for influence in Siam and this seems to have obliged the United Kingdom to treat Siam more mildly than would be warranted by Siam's alliance with Japan in the Pacific War.

7. As the Siamese are apparently assured of friendly American interest and (partly in consequence of this) also of U.K. assistance, they are unlikely to pay much attention to Australia unless Australia shows a disposition to cultivate friendly relations. The time seems to be past when any useful result would be achieved by approaching the question of Australian-Siamese relations from the position that Siam is a defeated enemy. (We have in fact made peace with Siam). The view that Siam is a potential friend of some future importance would be a more fruitful approach.

WAST. 7/9/46.

Let's send to Office with young Fisher
subject to obtaining S'pore comments
& thinking comment at Diplo-Conference
Send.
WAST

KK/IE

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4 copies for Secy Pacific

Australian - Siamese Relations

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DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,

CANBERRA.

In reply quote No.

KK/IE

NOTES ON AUSTRALIAN-SIAMESE RELATIONS

The following is a brief summary of our relations with Siam since the close of hostilities last year:-

1. The United Kingdom concluded a final Peace Treaty with Siam on 1st January, 1946, and followed it promptly with a declaration of peace and the re-establishment of diplomatic relations. The Australian agreement concluded on that date was a preliminary one only and provided for the negotiation of a final agreement within a period of approximately three months. This procedure involved the prolongation of the state of war between Australia and Siam after peace had been established with United Kingdom, and India. The U.S.A. of course had remained at peace with Siam. The Siamese were thus given the impression that we were reluctant to settle our differences promptly and to establish friendly relations.

2. Negotiations on the final Peace Agreement were begun about 26th February.

3. Our final Peace Agreement, when presented, contained a clause (Article XI) which was not covered by the preliminary agreement. This was not well-received by the Siamese. The clause also excited opposition from U.S.A. and representations from U.K. and France on the grounds that it would limit Siam in its foreign relations, and that it would infringe Siam's sovereignty.

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6. In March, 1946, Siam approached us with regard to procuring from the Northern Territory a number of water-buffalo to replace the severe losses suffered through floods, depredations of the Japanese, etc., during the war years. The building up of buffalo stocks was urgent having regard to the proposed drive for rice to meet famine conditions in other parts of SEA. We replied that buffalo-hunters and lessees were disinclined to contract for the supply of these animals, that difficulties arose in connection with dipping and testing for disease, and that the proposal was hedged with so many difficulties that it did not seem to be a practical proposition.

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It appears from the above that we have pursued for the twelve months since the cessation of hostilities a policy of snubbing Siam by ignoring Siamese approaches and refusing Siamese requests. This may be regarded as a necessary phase in Australian-Siamese relations, designed to make the Siamese aware that Australia is not disposed lightly to forget her association with Japan, the consequent dangers to Australia, and the sufferings of Australian prisoners on her peril. It is, however, desirable to consider whether this object has now been sufficiently secured and whether Australian policy towards Siam should not enter a new phase designed to secure long-term advantages, political, strategic and commercial. It may be observed that there would be little gained by our having emphasised our displeasure at Siam's unfriendly conduct in the past if we did not intend to try to gain advantages from a friendly attitude by Siam in the future.

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Notes on Australian - Siamese Relations | 4 copies

The following is a brief summary of our relations with Siam since the close of hostilities last year :-

1. Whereas UK concluded a final peace treaty with Siam on 1 Jan 46, and followed it promptly with a declaration of peace and the re-establishment of diplomatic relations, our agreement concluded on that date was a preliminary one only and provided for the negotiation of a final agreement within a period of approximately 3 months. This "taking two bites at the cherry" and prolongation of the state of war after peace had been established with UK, India, and, of course, the USA, caused puzzlement to the Siamese and gave the impression that we were reluctant to settle our differences promptly and to resume friendly relations.

2. No steps were taken by us to initiate negotiations on the final peace agreement until I returned to Siam on approx 26 Feb.

3. Our final peace agreement when presented contained a clause (Article XI) which was outside the terms of the preliminary agreement, which was not well-received by the Siamese and which excited strong opposition from USA on the grounds that it would tie Siam down in its foreign relations with other countries, notably USA, and that it would infringe Siam's sovereignty.

4. Whereas UK and USA readily agreed to sponsor Siam's candidature for UNO, and although Siam several times requested us to do likewise, the furthest we did was for Mr. Officer to state that he "was sure that the Australian Government would, when the time came, give favourable consideration" to supporting such candidature.

5. Although the final peace agreement was signed on 3 Apr 46, no peace proclamation issued until 10 May 46.

6. In March 1946, approached us with regard to procuring from the Northern Territory a number of water-buffalo to replace the severe losses suffered through floods, depredations of the Japanese etc. during the war years. The building up of buffalo stocks was urgent in connection with the proposed drive for rice to meet famine conditions in other parts of SEA. We reported that buffalo-hunters and lessees were disinclined to contract for the supply of these animals, that difficulties arose in connection with dipping and testing for disease and that the proposal was hedged with so many difficulties that it did not seem to be a practical proposition.

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10. The Siamese have throughout shown themselves keen to develop actively friendly relations with us, to exchange missions on a Ministerial level and to develop large-scale trade. Notwithstanding this, we made no attempt between 3 Apr and 8 Aug to establish

There has however been no Australian representation in Siam since 23rd May.

No decision has yet been taken on the question of permanent

and reciprocal representation, but the Siamese have accepted the appointment of an acting Consul General on a temporary regular representation in Siam ; we have maintained no representative there since 23 May ; and the proposition which we have now asked the British Legation to put to the Siamese is that of temporary Aust consular representation in Siam with no reciprocal Siamese representation in Australia and with no commitments as to future relationship. They have not as yet raised again the question of Siamese representation in Australia.

begin without

11. In short, in spite of positive approaches by the Siamese towards a development of relations~~xxx xxxxxx~~, we have taken several steps which might be interpreted as unfriendly, we have complied with none of the Siamese requests to us , we are making no efforts to improve our relations or to ~~dxvxxxx~~ avail ourselves of the considerable trade opportunities, we are unwilling to accept Siamese representation here and the Siamese will not be slow to realize that the sole purpose of our temporary, non-reciprocal and without-prejudice representation in Siam is to extract substantial moneys from them for war damage claims.

12. While admitting that there may have been good reason for some or all of our actions mentioned above, I feel that the combined effect on the Siamese must be that of a well-calculated snub and that, unless we take some positive friendly action in the near future, the Siamese will give up courting us and will concentrate their whole attentions on USA. If this occurs it may be most difficult for us in later years, when we are anxious to develop markets and to increase our political influence in SEA, to make up the ground which we have lost by our present conduct.

AE
Canberra 2/9/46.

Remarks

It appears from the above that we have pursued for the twelve months since the cessation of hostilities a policy of snubbing Siam by ignoring Siamese approaches and refusing Siamese requests, designed to make the Siamese aware that Australia is not disposed lightly to forget her association with Japan and the sufferings of Australian prisoners on her soil. It is however desirable to consider whether this political object has now been sufficiently secured and whether Australian policy towards Siam should not enter a new phase designed to secure long-term advantages, political, strategic and commercial. It may be observed that there would be little gained by having emphasised our displeasure at Siam's unfriendly conduct in the past if we did not subsequently at some stage try to gain advantages from a friendly attitude by Siam in the future.

a necessary phase in Australian-Siamese relations

the consequent dangers to Australia and

Memorandum.

FIC Border dispute.

1. The following is a brief summary of recent developments and the present situation in respect of the above dispute.

2. Towards the end of 1945 both UK and USA notified Siam that they did not recognise the validity of the territorial readjustments made between Vichy and Siam in 1941 under the mediation of Japan.

3. Sporadic and half-hearted steps were taken early in 1946 towards bilateral discussions between France and Siam, but no progress was made towards a solution.

4. It has been clear throughout that no Siamese politician is prepared to take the initiative in returning any or all of the disputed territories to France and equally clear that there is little likelihood of France agreeing to any bilateral arrangement which does not provide for such return.

5. Siam has shown a preference since the end of last year for the dispute to be decided by an international body, but the unofficial complaint to UNO on 27 May in respect of the border incidents was the first positive step in this direction.

6. As no progress was being made towards solution of the question by negotiation between Franch and Siam, USA proposed on or about 14 June to urge the French to state publicly that, if the territories were returned, they would be prepared to proceed in a friendly manner with Siam to a revision of the boundary question on the merits; if the French did this, USA would be prepared to urge the Siamese to return the territories forthwith.

7. UK countered with a proposal for a joint approach to Siam in the first instance urging the immediate return of the territories.

8. On or about 17 June the Siamese Assembly gave approval for an application by Siam to place the dispute formally before the Security Council. On or about 13 July the formal reference was made by the Siamese. On 18 July a Siamese Delegation was appointed to present the Siamese case and it left for Washington on 7 Aug.

9. On or about 15 July USA decided against a joint UK-USA approach to the Siamese to urge the immediate return of the territories.

10. At about the same time France, UK and USA began to favour the idea of referring the question to the International Court rather than to the Security Council.

11. On 1 Aug, as a result of agreement with the French, the USA Minister in Bangkok was instructed to submit to the Siamese the

proposal contained in telegram D 757 for the reference of the question to the International Court. The first Siamese reaction was not favourable but they subsequently indicated informally and unenthusiastically that an agreement might be reached in principle on the point.

12. On 27 Aug, as a result of a further border incident, France asked USA to regard as suspended their good offices in respect of obtaining Siamese concurrence in bringing the question before the International Court.

Commentary.

Reference to the Security Council.

13. France does not favour this. (See telegram from Paris Legation of 7 June 1946 and French Information Service of 3rd June.

14. Hints have come from the Siamese side that, if they can reach some suitable secret agreement with the French, even if return of the territories is involved, and if such agreement is published as the decision of the Security Council, Siam will accept it gracefully - the basis of such suggestion being that there is really no objection to the return of the territories provided the responsibility for such decision can be shifted onto the shoulders of someone other than the Government.

15. For the following reasons I am disinclined to take this suggestion seriously:-

(a) the leader of the Siamese Delegation to UNO (H.R.H. Prince WANWAITHAYAKON) is the most capable and crafty negotiator Siam possesses;

(b) a prominent member of the Delegation is KHUANG APHAIWONG whose family are hereditary overlords of a large part of the disputed territories and who therefore has considerable financial interest in their retention; furthermore KHUANG is an embittered critic of PRADIT's Govt and unlikely, without very good reason, to join in a conspiracy with PRADIT to surrender the territories and to deceive the public into believing that such action resulted from an uninspired international decision;

(c) the suggestion hardly squares with the calculated press campaign inspired by the Siamese Govt to whip up public feeling on the subject.

(d) Pradit's Govt has now resigned and a new Govt has not yet made any pronouncement of policy on the question.

16. My own impression is that the Siamese may be prepared, as a last resort, to come to such an agreement, but that the first action of their Delegation will be extensive lobbying in Washington to sound out the feelings of the United Nations and to win the maximum of sympathy for their point of view. If they find an adequate number of important well-wishers, I feel that they will make no serious attempt to reach agreement with the French but will press for a formal investigation and decision by the Security Council. If they find a preponderance of opinion against them, however, I consider it possible that they will adopt the course mentioned in para 15 above.

Reference to the International Court.

17. As a result of the latest French pronouncement the proposal seems to have bogged down. It is unlikely to receive any encouragement from the Siamese as:-

(a) reference to the Court would give the Siamese no opportunity for lobbying;
(b) the domestic publicity given to the proposed reference to UNO would make it awkward for them to explain a reference of the dispute to a separate body;
(c) the conditions mentioned in telegram D 757 would be unpalatable.

Australian attitude.

18. Apart from indicating to London that we do not recognise the validity of the 1941 treaty, Australia has not yet committed itself to any declared policy on the question.

19. The French Legation approached us in June with a request that we should urge the Siamese to return the territories. No action has yet been taken on this request.

20. I recommend that we withold any public statement of policy until the matter clarifies itself a little further and in particular until some advice is received as to any progress in the talks between the French and Siamese Delegations at Washington. Not having shown our hand before, I feel that there is no urgent need to commit ourselves now without the advantage of knowing the trend of the present talks.

21. At the same time it is obviously desirable to have a tentative policy formulated in case developments in the near future make it necessary for us to intervene.

22. It is axiomatic that the basis of such policy should be non-recognition of the formal legality of the 1941 treaty on the grounds of duress by Japan. Greater difficulty arises, however, in deciding on the best practical steps to adjust the matter.

23. USA has declined to join U.K. in urging the immediate return of the territories by Siam and U.K. appears to have abandoned that proposal in favour of a decision by the International Court. In the circumstances it would be inappropriate and ineffectual for us to approach to Siamese lonehanded with such a proposal, notwithstanding the French request.

24. The solution would obviously be for the Siamese and French Delegations in Washington to reach an agreement which would subsequently receive the formal endorsement of the Security Council. This is still a possibility.

25. If no such agreement is reached, it is considered that a full dress investigation by the Security Council would involve several dangers:-

(a) the awkward necessity to take sides formally between an old friend (France) and another nation of great future importance in S.E.A. (Siam) which has shown strong desires for the development of friendly relations with us;

(b) the fact that this would invite the active participation of Russia and China. Neither of these nations has yet announced any policy on the question.

(c) the fact that the decision would probably go off on grounds of power politics rather than on the merits of the dispute.

26. The proposed submission of the question to the International Court would overcome most of these objections, and should provide an acceptable solution provided the real issue is put fairly before the Count. From the latter point of view the terms of reference proposed in telegram D 757 are unsatisfactory in that the only question at issue would be the bold and technical legality of the 1941 treaty.

Recommendation.

27. It is recommended that, if the matter comes before the Security Council without any agreement having been reached between the French and Siamese Delegations, we should:-

(a) express our formal non recognition of the legality of the 1941 treaty;

(b) urge that the International Court should forthwith proceed to examine and adjudicate upon the territorial issues in dispute in terms of the real situation divorced from legal and historical claims on both sides and taking into account such factors as effective protection of basic human rights, efficiency in government, security, economic geography, ethnography and the autonomy which France is now conferring on Cambodia and Laos within the Indo-China Federation (Compare telegram D.631 of 19th June); and

(c) suggest that, on France and Siam agreeing to be bound by the decision of the Court, we should agree to support Siam's candidature of UNO.

For papers dealing with Australian policy towards Siam or special visits, see

file P45/49/4 Siam – Financial & Economic
P45/49/6 – Siam – Commercial Relations with Australia
P45/49/12 " – Australian Representation
P45/49/16 " – Australian Treaty of Peace
P46/49/5 " General Trade Commission
P46/49/6 " – Joint Claims Committee
P46/49/12 " – Admission to U.N.
P45/48/7 Indo-China – relations with Thailand

17.9.46

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MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

SIAM 453/3/1/1

FILE No.:

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