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SECRET

PRIME MINISTER OF THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND

Thanom Kittikachorn

Pronunciation: TAH-NOHM KITTY-KAH-CHAWN

Should be addressed as: Your Excellency

Should be referred to as: His Excellency Field Marshal Thanom; Prime Minister Thanom; or in full as in title of biography.

Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn became Prime Minister of Thailand for the second time on December 9, 1963 following the death of his predecessor, Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat. He also continued to hold the portfolio of Minister of Defense which he was first assigned in September 1957. Under Prime Minister Thanom's leadership, Thailand has enjoyed exceptional prosperity and unity, and has taken a strong stand with the Free World against Communist aggression in Southeast Asia.

Thanom rose to leadership in the Thai army as a close associate and supporter of Sarit. When he previously served as Prime Minister in 1958, he was overshadowed by Sarit and was regarded as relatively weak and indecisive. However, he established a reputation for honesty and integrity, and this has helped to enhance the prestige and stability of his government since he succeeded Sarit. One notable action contributing to this reputation was his authorization of a public investigation of corruption under his predecessor and the resultant confiscation of misappropriated amounts from Sarit's estate totaling about $20 million. Thus, Thanom has enhanced his reputation for honesty and strengthened his regime since 1963 to the point where it now seems unlikely that he could be displaced by any competing military leader.

Thanom was born August 11, 1911, in Tak Province of northern Thailand; attended the Royal Thai Military Academy from 1920 to 1929; and served as a career Army officer, often in military education assignments, until 1947. He became Commanding General of the politically important First Army Area in 1954, after serving as Thai member of the Joint Military Armistice Commission in Korea. Successively named Deputy Minister of

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Cooperatives in 1955 and Deputy Minister of Defense two years later, he became Minister of Defense in September 1957. Following Field Marshal Sarit's coup d'etat, he served as Prime Minister until October 1958, when Sarit took over the Prime Ministership and made Thanom his Deputy. Thanom has traveled extensively outside Thailand, including trips to the United States in 1951 and 1959 and visits to many other countries.

In 1931, Thanom married Chongkol Krabuanyuth, and he is known as a loyal family man. They have six children including two sons, the elder of whom is married to a daughter of Deputy Prime Minister Praphat and is now serving with the Thai Air Force in South Vietnam.

EA/TB:CJNelson

April 1968

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