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CONFIDENTIAL PART II OF IV

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

*Memorandum of Conversation*

DATE: January 29, 1973

1/29/73

SUBJECT: ASEAN, SEATO, ASPAC

PARTICIPANTS:

H.E. Anand Panyarachun, Thai Ambassador to the United States
Mr. Wichian Watanakun, Thai Embassy Counselor
Marshall Green, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs
Arthur W. Hummel, Jr., Deputy Assistant Secretary EA
Alf E. Bergesen, Acting Director for Thailand and Burma Affairs

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Ambassador Anand asked our views on the ASEAN meeting, noting the "very forthcoming" statement within the past few days by the Burmese Government. Mr. Green said he assumed the ASEAN ten-power conference now on the agenda would not take place before the International Conference on Vietnam now scheduled for the end of February. When, after that event, the ASEAN Conference should be held was up to the ASEAN countries.

With respect to SEATO, Mr. Green called Ambassador Anand's attention to his extensive statement to an Australian interviewer which emphasized the importance of SEATO to Thailand and the US, and promised him a copy. (Note: Sent to Thai Embassy January 29). He noted that the organization itself perhaps could be downgraded and that the SEATO meeting might be held

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in conjunction with the UN meeting in the fall either in New York or Washington. Ambassador Anand concurred that a lot of time was wasted at SEATO meetings. Mr. Green pointed out that Whitlam (Australia) and Kirk (New Zealand) had recently met and endorsed the Treaty.

In response to Ambassador Anand's inquiry about ASPAC, Mr. Green noted that we were not members. The Indonesians are not either but FM Malik recently implied that ASPAC should not be given up without giving way to another, perhaps broader East Asian non-military organization. PM Tanaka was now talking about some new Pacific or western Pacific organization; the United States was not taking an initiative. Ambassador Anand suggested that the ROC would gain prestige by withdrawing voluntarily from ASPAC to avoid further embarrassing that organization. Mr. Green suggested that the ROC might view such a solution""realistically" if presented with the problem by its friends, among whom the Thai are included.