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MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THAILAND

Pote Sarasin

Pronunciation: POHT SAH-RAH-SIN

Should be addressed as: Your Excellency; or Mr. Minister

Should be referred to as: His Excellency Pote Sarasin; or National Development Minister. (Note that he is almost always referred to by his full name, Pote Sarasin.)

Pote Sarasin, Minister of National Development and Minister of Economic Affairs, has had a distinguished career in law, business, diplomacy, and government and is known as a good friend of the United States. He has endeavored to enhance Thailand's position as a strong, free nation in Southeast Asia. Widely respected internationally for his broad and sound knowledge of economics, international law and diplomacy, he is noted domestically for his integrity and has been responsible for many of the policies which have facilitated Thailand's impressive economic growth since 1963.

Pote Sarasin comes of an ethnic Chinese background, and enjoys his strongest following among businessmen in Thailand, most of whom are themselves ethnic Chinese and admire him for his honesty and sound economic sense. Although he has been frequently mentioned as a potential organizer of a Government political party, Thai military leaders seem reluctant to entrust that role to him, and he has never been active as a politician or had any organized political following. He served briefly as Prime Minister after Marshal Sarit seized power in 1957, but was denied a significant post during most of Sarit's rule and came into office after Sarit's death with the mission of "cleaning up" corruption in Government offices. He has done an outstanding job in fulfilling that mission.

Born on March 24, 1904, of a wealthy and prominent family, Pote Sarasin was educated abroad, attending the Wilbraham Academy in Springfield, Massachusetts in 1921-24 and studying law in London, where he was called to the bar in 1933. He served as Deputy Minister and later as Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1948 to 1950, and as Ambassador to the United States from 1952 to 1957. In 1957 he became Secretary General of SEATO, leaving that post to serve as Prime Minister of

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Thailand in the interim government which followed the 1957 military coup. He returned to the SEATO position in 1958, and served in that capacity until December 1963 when he was named Minister of National Development, one of the most important posts in the Government. In February 1968, he was also appointed as Minister of Economic Affairs.

EA/TB:CJNelson

April 1968

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