350 POL AFFAIRS (A-Z) (U) 1961

AIR POUCH
PRIORITY

OFFICIAL USE ONLY
(Security Classification)

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM: American Embassy BANGKOK

376
DESP. NO.

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON

December 27, 1960
DATE

REF: A-18, August 4, 1960

SUBJECT: Recent Discussions with Soviet and Satellite Personnel

There is forwarded herewith a series of memoranda of conversation which have taken place this fall between the U. S. Liaison Officer to ECAFE, Ben F. Dixon, and Soviet and Satellite diplomats or officers of international organizations which might be of interest to the Department.

The conversation with Wichrzycki is interesting in that he saw fit to criticize Khrushchev for his behavior at the United Nations in respect of Hammarskjold, while defending the "Iron Curtain" system as one with which he is prepared to live.

Another conversation with ECAFE Secretariat employee Soloviev took place upon his return from home leave. More recently a brief conversation with Soloviev concerned Jaanimets. Dixon showed him an American newspaper article containing an account of Jaanimets quitting Khrushchev's ship. Soloviev showed an interest in this and asked to borrow it. He glanced at a few lines and remarked, "This is very hard story". He added that he did not like defectors because, in spite of the political system, one should always stick to his home country. Dixon pointed out that Jaanimets was not a Russian but an Estonian whose country had relatively recently been brought under the Soviet system, and therefore Jaanimets did not consider himself a Russian or the Soviet Union his home. Soloviev repeated his view and, changing the subject, asked if the American Embassy were preparing for Christmas. He was told that individually the American families were preparing for it, fixing trees, and in many cases cooking special food. Soloviev replied that he remembered as a young child he went to church with his mother on Christmas Day and came back for a big dinner. After a while though, he said, all of that had been ended. There were still many old people, however, who celebrated Christmas. Everybody in the Soviet Union now celebrates New Year's in about the same way as Christmas was celebrated before.

In Embassy despatch No. 264 of November 3, 1960, there was reported an account by the Counsellor of the Soviet Embassy of the possibility of Soviet aid to the Lao Government of Souvanna Phouma. After that conversation, Dyukarev reverted to one of his favorite subjects, that of American planes over Russia, which evolved into a discussion of justice meted out to Powers as opposed to Colonel Abel. This

ECON:BFDixon:hs
SIGNATURE

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 949832

INFORMATION COPY

Desp - 376
350 Pol. Affairs - USSR
X 350 Memo of Conversation
12-27-60

memorandum of conversation, in which Dyukarev was in effect trying to imply that the Soviet system of justice was at least equal to that of the United States, is also enclosed. At the same time, Dyukarev also sought to explore the possible differences between the American and Thai Governments, which is the subject of another enclosure.

Finally, there is enclosed a copy of a memorandum containing observations made at the Soviet Embassy's celebration of October Revolution on November 7. One of the principal points of interest was that the Soviets had pretty well drawn the conclusion that the American Ambassador would not attend the celebration and that the reception of the two Americans who did attend was rather cool. This probably was an important factor in bringing on a formal call by the Soviet Ambassador shortly thereafter and Soviet efforts to encourage more social contacts with Americans.

For the Ambassador:

Ben F. Dixon
U. S. Liaison Officer to ECAFE

Department requested to make distribution as desired.

Enclosures:

5 Memoranda of Conversation
as stated.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 949832

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

November 14, 1960

Memorandum to: Ambassador Johnson

From: Ben F. Dixon

Subject: Soviet October Revolution Celebration, 1960

As you suggested, I attended the Soviet Embassy celebration of the "Great October Revolution" on November 7 where I found, in contrast to the weather, the atmosphere was somewhat chilly. There was no one to introduce me to the Soviet Ambassador. While I announced my name, he greeted me cordially. His wife was standing next to him, and by the time I got to her, it dawned on her who I was. She greeted me in a correct but cool fashion. No one made an effort to take me off into the party as the Soviets here quite frequently do.

I walked over to K. L. Kelin who was cordial but turned his back to pursue another conversation. A. M. Mitin, the Commercial Counsellor, was pleasant but made no effort to keep up any kind of conversation. Mr. V. V. Noskov, Information Officer, spoke very briefly but not enough to keep the conversation alive. Turning away, I bumped into P. K. Romanchuk, Assistant Liaison Officer to ECAFE, who started a long series of statements in English which, however, failed to convey any ideas or sense. After it terminated, I began a conversation with the Polish Trade Delegate, Mr. Kwasniewski, the first person of any compatibility I had encountered there. He was in quite a relaxed and friendly mood. After exchange of courtesies, I suggested that the headline of Friday reporting a coup d'etat in Moscow had overthrown Khrushchev seemed quite a curious item, especially so when it came almost simultaneously with what appeared to be a capitulation by Peking to the Russian school of dogma. Kwasniewski said that the rumor had originated both from London and Austria. He was inclined to think there might be something to it. As for the Chinese, he said that I must realize that this was only a question of interpretation and not an issue. He changed the subject and asked if I were going to Nepal to the Highways meeting or to Colombo for the Water Resources meeting. I replied that we had a tight budget situation with respect to travel to conferences and that generally I did not attend conferences outside of Bangkok. He laughed loudly and said, "I bet there are some going from Washington". I told him there might be, and he replied that this was similar to the socialist order of conducting affairs and suggested that the U. S. Government seemed to be socialist in this respect.

Mr. Savushkin gave a cautiously friendly greeting but wanted to discuss U-2's and spies. I eschewed participating in such a match and sought out M. C. Soloviev, ECAFE Secretariat, who was quite friendly and talkative as well as lightly intoxicated. He repeated his usual theme about how nice it was to have Soviets and American citizens together, meeting one another. I congratulated Mr. Barashkov of Exportkhleb and Mr. Y. K. Sidarov, Information

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 949932

Officer, on their singing at the United Nations night performance. They were both pleased all over themselves and talked warmly of Russian singing. One of the two stated that there had been a large conference of artists going on at the Embassy in the preceding few days. I asked the nature of the conference. He replied, "Dancing, singing, writing and other kinds of art". I asked if a public performance would be given by Russian dancers or painters because I was sure many people would enjoy this. He began to grow rather evasive about the artists. I asked if the artists had come to hold a seminar for the Thais to attend or participate in discussions at the Embassy as a regional conference of artists, but he grew more reticent and gave no real answer.

By this time the party was drawing to a close, and Dyukarev, who usually is pleased to strike up a conversation, had not done so. Dyukarev was talking to the "Bangkok World" Editor, Mr. Berrigan, who apparently had enjoyed the party enough to be relaxed to a considerable degree. The Soviet Ambassador had already signalled to him to take his place in the receiving line because he was apparently planning to leave the party. Berrigan was speaking to Dyukarev in such an intense way that Dyukarev was unable to answer his Ambassador's summons. As I drew near, it seemed that Berrigan had been asking questions about Soviet aid and trade to Thailand. The point of contention, however, was too obscure for me to catch on in my brief overhearing. The Soviet Ambassador finally sent openly for Dyukarev to come, which brought the exchanges with Berrigan to an end. However, this was not before he had told Berrigan, who tried to introduce me, that I was his "best friend", a term usually employed to describe Andrew Ness.

After that, I was very quietly approached by Mr. N. P. Koshin of Soviet Export Film who, like most of the Soviets at that time, seemed to be extremely relaxed. Mr. Koshin drew on a serious mien and said what had obviously perplexed most of the Soviets that evening: "Where is the American Ambassador?" I replied that he was unable to come to the reception. Koshin remarked that he was sorry he was not well. I replied that the Ambassador was extremely well but that the Soviet Ambassador had never called upon him, obviously because the Soviet Ambassador had only recently arrived in Bangkok. Protocol therefore precluded Ambassador Johnson's attending such a reception until formalities had been attended to. Mr. Koshin asked when the United States Independence Day occurred. I told him that the anniversary of the "Great American Revolution" was celebrated on July 4. He looked very inquiring and said, "What is the Great American Revolution?" I told him we had won our independence from colonial status and also told him of the Declaration of Independence in 1776. This seemed to be news to him. He asked who was invited to the American National Day parties. I replied, "Other members of the diplomatic community, Thai friends and members of the American community". He wanted to know if any Soviets were invited. I replied that we invited the three or four top people from each Embassy. He asked if any Soviet had been present at our last National Day. I told him

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 949932

the only one I had seen was Oyukarev. I departed shortly thereafter but found no one at the gate to whom to say goodbye.

Generally, the Embassy front lawn was pretty full. Mr. Whittington was standing roughly in the mid-part of the garden, speaking to those who passed by. I circulated around the area and found that there were very few Thais present. Some people who had been standing near Thai officials had learned that although the Ambassador gave the toast in Thai, most of the people, including the Thais, thought he was speaking in Russian. One or two commented on the fact that he had apparently given the toast in Russian. There was a group of four or five rather young Thai men whom I. E. Yefremov and two of the other Soviets were making a good deal over. They were walking back and forth collecting a bottle of vodka, a large plate of caviar, and the young men, saying, "We go off together and have vodka and caviar," while at the same time the young Thai gentlemen appeared to be quite willing to go along.

Generally speaking, the reception was attended by the diplomatic community, all the upper levels of the ECAFE Secretariat staff, and the business community including Americans, British, Danish, Dutch and one Thai businessman. One of the most persistent remarks made by Indians, Egyptians and other Asians or neutralists concerned the question of Soviet aid to Thailand. Why did Sarit do it, was this to go through, and if so, what would we do? Several suggested that Sarit was doing this out of spite because the United States had not gone along with him in his views re Laos. First Secretary Grewal of the Indian Embassy said he had been encouraged by the evolution of a more sensible U. S. attitude in Laos. He advised that we "get on with it" in South Vietnam as well as Thailand, taking a line which would assure continued U. S. influence. He concluded by saying the Americans should keep their eyes open. In response to the questions on Soviet aid, I tried to play this down by pointing out that the Thais had been receiving Soviet aid previously, mentioning specifically the cobalt unit, and that I thought this was mostly an effort to make "old hat" look "new".

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 949932

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

Participants: Semyen Dyukarev - Counsellor of Soviet Embassy
Aleksey Korolyev - Soviet Representative to ECAFE
Mrs. V. K. Ahuja - Wife of Counsellor of the Embassy of India

Ben F. Dixon - U. S. Liaison Officer to ECAFE

Date: October 30, 1960

Subject: Soviet Interest in U.S.-Thai Relationships

I encountered Dyukarev and Korolyev while talking to Mrs. Ahuja at the Sports Club pool, and we engaged in general conversation. When Mrs. Ahuja departed, Dyukarev made a slow but steady transition in the conversation to refer to some of the recent interviews of Sarit and Thanom by the "Bangkok World". He asked if a difference of view existed between the Governments of Thailand and the United States concerning the developments in Laos. I replied there was no basic difference of opinion. He answered that he could read very well, and that the "Bangkok World" had contained an account of an interview with Sarit when he said something to the effect that for reasons of its own the United States had decided to resume aid to Laos. He referred to other remarks in the press made by Thanom, Praphat and Thanat, tending to substantiate the fact that there was a difference of opinion between the United States and the Thai Government. I reasserted the idea that the United States and Thailand had basically the same viewpoint. However, there were on some few particulars understandably minor differences of opinion. This was not unusual among democratic countries where minor differences were tolerated and accepted. Because he continued to stress this subject, I asked if there were ever any differences of opinion between the Soviet Union and its allies. When Dyukarev replied in the negative, I said that I had gathered the impression that in contrast to the minor differences between the United States and Thailand, there existed between Chinese and Soviet Communists a rather serious difference of opinion on such basic Communist subjects as peaceful co-existence, the inevitability of war, and the like. Dyukarev dismissed this lightly by saying that it wasn't necessary to pay attention to those kinds of differences. He said it represented internal differences between political parties such as the Republican and Democratic Party in America.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 949932

BFDixon:hs

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

Participants: Semyen Dyukarev - Counselor of Soviet Embassy
Aleksey Korolyev - Soviet Representative to ECAFE
Ben F. Dixon - U. S. Liaison Officer to ECAFE

Date: October 30, 1960

Subject: Powers vs. Abel

Following discussion of another subject, Dyukarev reverted to a favorite subject and asked if the United States was still sending planes over Russia. He also mentioned the presence of an atomic submarine near the Soviet Union. This was said in a jocular but half-serious way. I did not attempt to answer this. However, he continued about the Powers' trial, commenting that Powers had been given a very just trial. I told him that from a brief acquaintance I doubted that the Soviet court system was a system of justice but was more in the nature of a police administration. Colonel Abel, on the other hand, the well known Soviet spy, had received a scrupulously correct trial in which all his rights were respected and given a genuine defense. As far as I could see, no effort was made to defend Powers. Simply, an accusation was made, and Powers and his lawyer asked for mitigation. Dyukarev said that Able had never confessed, and this made it clear that he was an American "plant". I congratulated Dyukarev on having learned something about Abel, recalling that in a previous conversation he said that he had never heard of Abel. Dyukarev replied that he was an American "plant" and that the trial was a sham. I replied that it was proved beyond question of doubt that Abel was an espionage agent and that, if Dyukarev would like, I would attempt to get a copy of the proceedings of the trial and present them to him to read and judge himself. He declined by saying, "What would this help?"

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 949932

BFDixon:hs

Subject: Return to Bangkok of M. C. Soloviev, Soviet ECAFE Secretariat member; his views on Soviet-American relations

Participants: M. C. Soloviev - Soviet ECAFE Secretariat Member

Ben F. Dixon - U. S. Liaison Officer to ECAFE

Date: October 12, 1960

I was greeted in the corridors of the Sala Santitham by M. C. Soloviev of the Minerals Section of the Industries Division of ECAFE who returned on October 9 to the ECAFE Secretariat after home leave in the Soviet Union. Mr. Soloviev said that he had a very pleasant leave, hunting and fishing in the country not far from Moscow where his mother-in-law lived. August had been an extremely pleasant month, but September was cold and rainy. His wife had completely regained her health and was back in Bangkok with him. He said that the little over two months he spent in Russia had greatly improved his general physical and mental outlook. He hoped that the effects of the leave would sustain him awhile in this miserable and debilitating climate. He did not have an opportunity to visit his son who is 21 years of age and is a member of a minerals research party. Soloviev explained that he was a mining engineer in the vicinity of their home, Irkutsk, but that his son was a hydro geologist, which fields are very close.

In the city of Moscow Mr. Soloviev found "many many" Americans. An American woman sat next to him on the plane to Tashkent. She told him that she was glad to learn that the Russian people were not bad as she had imagined them to be, but quite friendly and helpful towards her. Mr. Soloviev said that everywhere he went in Russia all people liked Americans. It is only the top American politicians, the President and the American Representatives to the United Nations (he did not mention names) "which the Russian people are not liking". He then launched into his favorite thesis that the little people in a country can never have a "say-so" in the affairs of state, and that we were all subject to the whimsies as well as the decisions of our leaders. I made an effort to point out that the little people in the United States freely selected their Representatives and President. As a matter of fact, our legislators as well as the President were closely responsive to the feelings and wishes of the American people. Soloviev changed the subject by expressing the usual hopes for peace between our two countries and the improvement of living standards.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 949932

BFDixon:hs

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

Subject: Wichrzycki's Views on Khrushchev's Actions at General Assembly; and Hammarskjold's Statement

Participants: Mr. F. Wichrzycki -- ECAFE Transport and Communications Division

Ben F. Dixon -- U. S. Liaison Officer to ECAFE

Date: October 5, 1960

At a reception given by the French Delegation to the Sixth Session of the Economic Development and Planning Working Party on October 5, I was approached by Mr. F. Wichrzycki of the Transport and Communications Division with whom I exchanged greetings. I asked Mr. Wichrzycki what he thought of the statement by the Secretary General in his defense. Mr. Wichrzycki, whose English is very colorful, said that he would tell me but first he wished to give a few words of explanation. He said that it must be understood that he was from the "Iron Curtain". He was not able to keep up with all the proceedings of the General Assembly, but he assumed that the things being said by the West were "very strong" against "my Iron Curtain people". He had heard Khrushchev speak many times, and he is a magnificent and stirring speaker. He said in effect that he believed Mr. Khrushchev had been carried away in making the accusations against Hammarskjold. Regardless of what brought on Hammarskjold's remarks, he felt very proud of what Hammarskjold had said. Wichrzycki thought it was a "strong and honest" statement. Unless the UN had a strong and honest man running the Secretariat, it could never fulfill its functions. He said that he regretted that Mr. Khrushchev had been so "fiery" at the UN and reiterated his previous appraisal of Khrushchev's conduct, but this time it was more in the vein that he was afraid Khrushchev had gotten "too big for his breeches". This, he commented, sometimes unfortunately happens.

I remarked to Wichrzycki that many people said that Khrushchev was behaving this way for internal political reasons. Either he was trying to satisfy other segments of the Communist Party in Russia who did not want peaceful co-existence, or he was taking a sufficiently extreme position so that the Chinese Communists would not complain. I commented that while this might excuse in some measure Mr. Khrushchev's personal conduct, nevertheless it seemed a very bad omen if he was trying to accommodate himself to extreme views rather than to moderate them. Mr. Wichrzycki said that the Soviets wish to do anything to avoid a war and that this was also true of the Chinese Communists. I commented that the Chinese Communists have continually acted in a very aggressive fashion. Tibet and forays into India were the most recent examples. Mr. Wichrzycki said that the Communist Chinese were reckless but nevertheless wanted peace. He suspected that this was simply a tactic on the part of the Soviets. He said as an example he had a very kind dog who would "lick the hand of stranger". Occasionally, if he wants to create the impression, he puts a heavy chain on the dog, holds him tight, and pretends that he is a very fierce dog. This, he said, was the situation of Russia and China. "It is for propaganda."

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 947932

"Dear sir", continued Mr. Wichrzycki, "will you permit me to make one little propaganda for Iron Curtain". He then stated that most of his adult life as an engineer had been spent outside of Poland. When he had lived in Poland before the war, there were hundreds of thousands of people without jobs and lacking the necessities of life. When he came back to Poland after the war, he was berated by the Communist Government for having served the "imperialists". He had answered that he did not work for the imperialists but the people of Poland. He said that people, not governments, used bridges. If he made bad bridges for the imperialists, how could he learn his trade or be useful to Communist authority? He said that things in Poland were wretched for years after the war. However, for the last five or six years the strenuous effort put into restoring Poland had paid off dividends. Now everyone has the basic necessities of life, and everyone could go to school. There are no more rich people, but like himself the leaders and professional people have had a perfectly adequate and comfortable life. He himself, when he got old, would be given a suitable pension, and he had nothing to worry about. "This, dear sir, is why I am for Iron Curtain." I pointed out to him that many other countries had gone through reconstruction in raising the standard of living while preserving individual liberties. He replied that he had no objection to any other country deciding for itself what to do. However, under the circumstances he believed that the Iron Curtain solution had come to Poland and was working for the benefit of the people, and he was satisfied with it. He had two sons who were grown, had good jobs and were happy in Poland.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 949932