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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

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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.

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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. Moskov, 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

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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

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the only one I had seen was Dyukarev. 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".

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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.

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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?"

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FROM : American Embassy BANGKOK

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

REF :

June 7, 1960

SUBJECT: Soviet Liaison Officer's Views on Soviet Education and Housing

On the night before his departure, Aleksey Korolyev, Soviet representative to ECAFE, was entertained at dinner by the French representative to ECAFE. After dinner the subject of languages elicited the fact from Korolyev that only three or four out of the Soviet Embassy speak Thai. He said that he and most of the officers at the Russian Embassy were too old to start learning a new language. When he was growing up, Korolyev said, the Soviet educational system did not provide adequate instruction in languages. However, in the last few years attention is now being paid to languages, and there are now institutes all over Russia teaching every imaginable language. Thus the young officers the Soviet Embassy here is now getting invariably know two or three languages, and, increasingly here, Thai. Digressing, Korolyev said that things are not like they were in the old days. He said the younger generation was lazy. When he was a child, parents were constantly cautioning their children not to study so hard and to get a bit of relaxation. Korolyev says that today students are lazy and do not care. Parents have to urge them to study, but their attitude is, "Oh, my father makes a good salary, so I don't have to bother." Although today's students do not deserve it, the instruction is better organized (since the disappearance of the "cult of personality") so that education is more readily assimilated than it was in Korolyev's day.

The conversation subsequently turned to housing. Korolyev, again blaming the "cult of personality", said that previous housing efforts were misdirected. In Moscow, for example, they built skyscrapers such as the Foreign Ministry, which was obviously a mistake. Any city with as much land available as is in Moscow does not need to build a structure over four or five stories high. Improper concepts about housing have now been rectified, and as a result the Soviet Government is attacking the difficult housing problem effectively. The new construction is of a permanent nature and results in first-class housing. Once constructed, they will last almost indefinitely. He estimated the housing problem would be entirely solved within six or seven years. When some doubt was expressed as to this estimate, Korolyev insisted firmly. He said in his own case, he could have previously used his own money to secure housing, but instead of that, the Government built housing, and for $50.00 a month he got a very fine apartment.

For the Charge d'Affaires ad interim:

Floyd L. Whittington
Counselor of Embassy
for Economic Affairs

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