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30 DEC 68 21 24Z

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Origin

Info:

ACTION: Amembassy BANGKOK

STATE

1. Under heading "Are They Robbing Us Blind in Thailand" Parade Magazine Dec. 29 carries story by Jack Anderson which includes following points:

a) Thai are profiting from US, but there is little US can do about it;

b) "American-built roads have crumbled . . . and American made locomotives have broken down . . .;"

c) Negative aspects of R&R presence in Bangkok are cited;

d) Nam Phong airfield and RTAF flying school story are dredged up;

e) ETO monopoly practices listed replete with quotations from US officials;

f) Siam Cement profits from American aid are cited with tie-in to Crown Property Bureau, which administers the holdings of "Thailand's swinging King Bhumibol, a figurehead in this military dictatorship;"

g) At end, article notes in passing that RTG "at least is trying to plug the holes."

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2. Full text being cabled by USIA.

3. Comment: As Anderson and Pearson noted in their column of Dec. 18, 1967 "American diplomats appear frustrated and furious over American newspaper stories and have complained in despatches to Washington that the US press seems to be working against them. The press alienates sensitive Asian leaders faster than the diplomats can placate them . . .. Even Thailand's King Bhumibol, strongly pro-American, has got his back up at times over US press reports."

END

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