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TO : Department of State

FROM : Amembassy BANGKOK

DATE: August 3, 1970

SUBJECT : Editorial on Thai-U. S. Relations

REF :

The enclosed translation of an editorial from the influential Thai language newspaper Siam Rath is significant not only for the concern it shows about the dependability of the United States as an ally -- and this is expressed in unusually strong terms -- but for the fact that it attacks not the United States Government, which is depicted as simply following its own interests, as is to be expected, but the Thai Government for unwisely allowing itself to become so dependent on the United States. Opposition attacks on the government using this theme may be expected to become more common so long as the present atmosphere persists.

UNGER

Enclosure:
Translation from Siam Rath

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Translation from Siam Rath, July 28, 1970

## THAI NEWS IN THE UNITED STATES

At least two news reports concerning Thailand are making headline news in some newspapers in the United States.

The first, published in daily newspapers, is a report that Thai Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman has remonstrated with Mr. Leonard Unger, American Ambassador to Thailand, regarding the weak attitude of the United States toward the Vietnam war and the fighting in Cambodia. This report was published under the headline, "Thailand points out America's weak point, that it is near collapse."

The second that had no headline was published in Time magazine dated July 20, 1970. It was a report on Thai economy and the action of the Thanom government in increasing taxation on over 200 kinds of goods, in order to use increased revenue to strengthen armed forces because dependence cannot be felt fully in protection by American military forces, due to United States policy being vacillating.

A comparison of these two news reports, jointly with comments on news in several Thai newspapers, will show that Thailand is "annoyed with itself." The reason is because after the end of World War II, all Thai governments have proclaimed that Thailand is a member of the Free World and they have promoted very close ties with the United States, finally deluding themselves into believing that the United States is willing to sink or swim with Thailand. This led to Thailand being jeered at, during the time of the Pibulsonggram government, as having the status of the 50th state of the United States (America had 49 states at the time).

When Nixon became President and he announced his Vietnamization plan and started the withdrawal of American troops, Thailand was still deluded by ordinary diplomatic language. When President Nixon sent American troops into Cambodia, Thailand felt increasingly certain that the United States would not desert Southeast Asia. It was not even realized that the sending of American troops into Cambodia was not in order to protect the Cambodian people, or the Laotian people, or the Thai people, but that it was in order to provide increased security for the lives of some Americans in Saigon. The sending of troops into Cambodia was in order to play for time in order to withdraw American troops, as planned.

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A main characteristic of "politics", regardless whether they are at national level or international politics, is that politics concern conflict of interests of individuals, or of parties, or of nations.

The United States has been pouring out unlimited money, assets, weapons and troops in the Vietnam war. During the past nine years (January 1, 1961 to July 1, 1970) it has lost 42,858 GI's and 282,503 have been wounded. During recent times, the American people have become fed up with having to wage war half the world away from their own country, thus making them feel that waging war in Southeast Asia is not obtaining results justifying losses suffered.

Several prominent American politicians, who formerly supported the waging of war in Vietnam, have had to change their policy when the American people displayed steadily increasing discontent about the war, and they are now opposing and condemning the war. This can be seen from a recent report that Senator Edward Kennedy is concentrating on winning popular votes from the platform of internal politics, while foreign policy, including Southeast Asia and Thailand, is of much lesser importance.

Thai government in the past have placed far too great hope on dependence on the United States, completely overlooking the fact that the United States will support the Thai government and help protect Thailand only to the extent that it is in its interests to do so. Should it be felt that results obtained are not justified, American policy will be changed. This is why the present Thanom government is faced with the problem of national security now.

Thailand, especially the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister's Office, ought never to have felt "over-confidence" in the attitude of countries that are our friends. They should have studied and analyzed the attitude and trends of all friendly countries throughout. Furthermore, Thailand ought to have concentrated always on measures to become as self-dependent as possible, thus being prepared and ready to stand on its own feet when any country of the Free World pulled out or drew apart.

The action taken by the Thanom government in increasing taxation unexpectedly is a measure to remedy the problem faced temporarily only. Furthermore, increasing taxation will cause many other minor problems. If Thai government has planned suitable measures from the start to remedy the problem that would be faced, in order to make Thailand self-dependent in the end, instead of feeling over confidence in dependence on other countries all the time, there would have been no need for Thai government leaders to damage national prestige by remonstrating with the American government, or the government of any other country.

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