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April 38

9/12

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DIVISION OF FAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

THE
F AMERICA
y 18, 1938. 13590

June 8, 1938.

JWB
MMH

Reference Bangkok's despatch no. 160, May 18, 1938, "Political Report for April".

In an interview granted by the Siamese Minister for Foreign Affairs and summarized in the Bangkok Times of April 25, it is reported in regard to the new treaties between Siam and foreign countries that the Siamese Minister for Foreign Affairs stated "in some respects the Japano-Siamese Treaty is more restrictive than our Treaty with Britain. Japanese are barred from owning land in Siam, while there are no restrictions whatsoever on British ownership." This statement is obviously inaccurate.

Division of
FAR EASTERN AFFAIRS
JUN - 4 1938
Department of State

Relations with Japan.

The Legation reports that it is informed that there is a large measure of opinion among the people that the Government is inclined to pay too much attention to Japanese complaints against Chinese boycott of goods in Siam. The president of the Yokohama Specie Bank is reported in the papers

as

892.00 P.R./109

FILED
JUL 21 1938

F/FG

From: Washington.

Edwin L. Neville
American Minister

Sir:

1/ I have the honor to transmit herewith the Political Report of the Legation for the month of April 1938.

Respectfully yours,

Edwin L. Neville
American Minister

Enclosure:
1. As stated.

800-Siam

ELN/tse

4

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DIVISION OF FAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

THE
AMERICA
y 18, 1938. 13590

as having stated at the last annual shareholders' meeting in Yokohama that through the equitable and appropriate measures adopted by the Siamese Government the influence of the Chinese boycott of Japanese goods had not caused substantial loss to Japanese trade. Furthermore, the Legation reports that the recent customs returns of Bangkok indicate that Japanese imports are again rising, which may or may not signify that the Chinese boycott in Siam has spent its force.

Division of
EASTERN AFFAIRS
JUN - 4 1938
Department of State

FE:Spencer:MJY

Washington.

Sir:

Edwin L. Neville
American Minister

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Respectfully yours,

Edwin L. Neville
American Minister

Enclosure:
1. As stated.

800-Siam

ELN/tse

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By MJP NARA Date 5/1/96

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1938 JUN 3 AM 11 36
DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Bangkok, Siam, May 18, 1938. 13590

No. 160

Subject: Political Report for April.

For Distribution Check
Grade | Yes | No
For | Excerpts as indicated
(ONI MID COMMERCE)
POLITICAL REPORT
APRIL 1938
JUL 20 1938
Division of FAR EASTERN AFFAIRS
JUN - 4 1938
Department of State
OFFICE OF THE ADVISER ON INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AFFAIRS
JUL 20 1938
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

1/ I have the honor to transmit herewith the Political Report of the Legation for the month of April 1938.

Respectfully yours,

Edwin L. Neville
American Minister

1/ Bangkok, Siam.
Date of comp
Date of mailing, (air mail): May 21, 1938

Enclosure:
1. As stated.

800-Siam

ELN/tse

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Bangkok monthly Political Report, April 1938.

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No. 84

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III. INTERNAL POLITICAL ACTIVITIES	3
IV. COURT OF LITIGATION	4
V. [illegible]	NIL
VI. GENERAL ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL CONDITIONS:	
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[illegible]	5
VII. ACTIVITIES OF AMERICAN COMMERCIAL INTERESTS	NIL
VIII. ACTIVITIES OF AMERICAN CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS	NIL
IX. PUBLICATIONS AFFECTING AMERICA:	
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POLITICAL REPORT

APRIL 1938

* * * * * * * * *

From:

Edwin L. Neville
American Minister

American Legation,
Bangkok, Siam.

Date of completion: May 19, 1938

Date of mailing,
(air mail): May 21, 1938

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Authority State Letter 11/72
By MBP NARA Date 5/1/96

REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Bangkok Monthly Political Report, April 1938.

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V. GOVERNMENT FINANCE	NIL
VI. GENERAL ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL CONDITIONS:	
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VII. ACTIVITIES OF AMERICAN COMMERCIAL INTERESTS	NIL
VIII. ACTIVITIES OF FOREIGN COMMERCIAL INTERESTS	NIL
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Luang Pradist, Siamese Minister of Foreign
Affairs, in an interview with the Daily Telegraph
Bangkok correspondent, emphasized that the recent
Siamese treaty was entirely concerned with
the establishment of Siam's sovereignty over her
customs.

"The Treaty does not contain any secret
clauses," said Luang Pradist. "We have made no
promises, and we have no understanding with Japan
obliging us to any kind of mutual assistance.

"In some respects," continued Luang Pradist,
"the Japan-Siam New Treaty is more restrictive
than our Treaty with Britain, since we are bar-
red from owning land in Siam, while there are no
restrictions whatsoever on British ownership.

"In Britain, Siam has a trusted, powerful
friend, England has contributed the most
valuable share to the modernisation of Siam.

"British advisers in the Siam have main-
tained for a quarter of a century past the high
prestige of their country.

"In the matter of her new financial
agreements, Siam is in close touch with London,"
concluded Luang Pradist."

The French and other treaties are not yet ratified. In the case of the French treaty, it seems that questions of border customs stations still need settlement, although there seems to be no question of principle involved. It is also fairly certain to be held up due to the extraordinary rise in the baht, whose legislative authorities have not yet acted.

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- 2 -

I. POLITICAL RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES.

Defence Activities (Nothing to Report).

II. POLITICAL RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES.

Treaty Situation

The treaties which Siam has been concluding with various Powers since last Autumn seem to have aroused some comment in the newspapers, some of which appear to have published statements to the effect that there were secret clauses in the Japanese treaty. In this connection the Minister of Foreign Affairs gave an interview to a correspondent of the London Daily Telegraph which was summarized in the Bangkok Times of April 25 as follows:

"Luang Pradist, Siamese Minister of Foreign Affairs, in an interview with the Daily Telegraph Bangkok correspondent, emphasised that the recent Japano-Siamese Treaty was solely concerned with the establishment of Siam's sovereignty over her own domains.

"The Treaty does not contain any secret clauses," said Luang Pradist. "We have made no promises, and we have no understanding with Japan obliging us to any kind of mutual assistance.

"In some respects," continued Luang Pradist, "the Japano-Siamese Treaty is more restrictive than our Treaty with Britain. Japanese are barred from owning land in Siam, while there are no restrictions whatsoever on British ownership.

"In Britain, Siam has a trusted, powerful friend. Englishmen have contributed the most valuable share toward the modernisation of Siam.

"British domains abutting Siam have maintained good neighbourly relations with us for many years.

"In the matter of her foreign financial operations, Siam is in close touch with London," concluded Luang Pradist."

The French and Dutch Treaties are not yet ratified. In the case of the French treaty, it seems that questions of border customs stations still await settlement, although there seems to be no question of principle involved, while the Dutch treaty seems to be held up due to the parliamentary situation at The Hague, where the legislative authorities have not yet acted.

Defence Activities

III.

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Bangkok Monthly Political Report, April 1938.

III. MILITARY POLITICAL ACTIVITIES.

April is one of the most active months of the year in Siam, the temperature seldom, if ever, rising below 70 degrees Fahrenheit day or night, and often being very much above 90. Under the past few years have increased apprehensions in Siam and have had these circumstances a high pitch of activity, political or other, can- considerable influence in causing the Siamese to look to their own not be expected. The heads of the Government Departments usually take defenses. During the month under review articles have appeared in the their vacations at that time, and there is usually not much going on press calling attention to Siam's neighbors, particularly Burma, where in the nation. In the rural districts the population appears to plug- the Government appears to have been making an effort to improve its her through the month. The ground is too dry and hard to plow and the defence forces. This, taken in connection with the interest which the weather is too hot for strenuously exciting and the whole country just French authorities are now taking in regard to the defence of Indo-China, waits for the rains which are due in May.

has given rise to a number of articles in the Siamese papers, one of The newspapers carried a number of rumors about the alleged which (City Star of April 13) referred to the Cambodian controversy with activities of Ministers of State and their plans for the future, but France in 1894, when Siam had to yield its suzerainty over Cambodia, and the rumors were denied. In one case [illegible] stated that it was hoped that such a thing would not occur again, and [illegible] that any fair minded person would consider that the building up of the to make arrangements for [illegible] and commerce; [illegible] family, who defence forces is only a self-defence measure, with a view to preventing were away, and the [illegible], the paper and photographs had [illegible] the recurrence of similar events.

Minister explains to [illegible] Siam is [illegible] considerable

Anti-Japanese Boycott by Chinese in Siam. [illegible]

The boycott by Chinese residents of all Japanese products continues, and there is no apparent change from the situation described in the Legation's Political Report for March. Its practical effectiveness will be discussed in a later section of this report. Politically, the Siamese Government seems to be keeping its hands off, although the Legation is informed that there is a large measure of opinion among the people that the Government is inclined to pay too much attention to Japanese complaints. There may be some truth in this belief, as the President of the Yokohama Specie Bank is quoted in the papers as having stated at the last annual shareholders' meeting in Yokohama that through the equitable and appropriate measures adopted by the Siamese Government the influence of the Chinese boycott of Japanese goods had not caused substantial loss to our (i.e. Japanese) trade.

IV.

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III. INTERNAL POLITICAL ACTIVITIES.

April being one of the hottest months of the year in Siam, the temperature seldom, if ever, gets below 80 degrees Farenheit day or night, and during large portions of the day is often above 90. Under these circumstances a high rate of activity, political or other, cannot be expected. The heads of the Government Departments usually take their vacations at that time, and there is usually not much going on in the nation. In the rural districts the population appears to slumber through the month. The ground is too dry and hard to plow and the weather is too hot for community meetings and the whole country just waits for the rains which are due in May. The newspapers carried a number of rumors about the alleged activities of Ministers of State and their plans for the future, but the rumors were denied, in one case with considerable heat. The Minister of Economics was reported to be about to leave for nearby countries to make arrangements for improving trade and commerce; his family, who were away, saw the item in the paper and telegraphed him and the poor Minister complained to the Press that he was being put to considerable expense for telegraph charges to keep in the good graces of his own family, whom he had repeatedly told that he was not going on a trip. The Minister had apparently reached the stage when he felt that "there ought to be a law". Despite the heat, the city of Bangkok got itself a new Mayor in the person of Khun Smaharn Hitagadi, who was formerly a member of the National Assembly, and Deputy Finance Minister. The city of Dhonburi, situated on the west bank of the Menam river opposite the Capital will also have a new Mayor. Both these Municipalities have a common general Government under the control of a Commissioner, who remains unchanged.

IV.

VII.

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IV. COURSE OF LEGISLATION.

The Assembly was not in session during the month and no legislation was enacted.

V. GOVERNMENT FINANCE.

No developments to report.

VI. GENERAL ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL CONDITIONS.

Trade of the Port of Bangkok

During the month of March, 1938, imports into the port of Bangkok amounted to Ticals 8,695,034, compared with Ticals 10,962,726 in the corresponding month of 1937; during the period April, 1936 - March, 1937, imports amounted to Ticals 97,576,539, against Ticals 95,565,142 during the corresponding period ending March, 1938. During March, 1938, exports amounted to Ticals 11,465,826, compared with 10,675,480 during March, 1937, while exports for the period April, 1937 - March, 1938, were Ticals 102,919,568, compared with Ticals 124,085,390 for the corresponding period 1936-1937. It will be noticed that while March, 1938, marked a gain over March, 1937, the total exports for the period March - April 1938 were over Ticals 20,000,000 less than for the corresponding period 1936-37. The decrease was due primarily to decreased sales of Siamese rice abroad. This was reflected naturally in the decreased imports into Bangkok noted above. The export of Siamese rice during the present calendar year bids fair to be greater than last year, in which case a corresponding increase in the country's imports may be expected.

In the political report for April and in other reports attention was invited to the effect of the Chinese boycott on Japanese imports into Siam. While it is too early to make a definite statement, the Customs returns of Bangkok indicate that Japanese imports are again rising, which may or may not mean that the boycott has spent its force.

Tin Agreement

From time to time there have appeared press articles on Siam's desire to increase its exports of tin, but no evidence of concrete action is at present available.

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VII ACTIVITIES OF AMERICAN COMMERCIAL INTERESTS.

Visits of American Warships to Bangkok. Nothing to report.

VIII. ACTIVITIES OF FOREIGN COMMERCIAL INTERESTS.

Nothing to report.

IX. IMMIGRATION AND LABOR MATTERS.

Chinese Immigration

The situation in regard to Chinese immigration which was referred to in the Political Report from this Legation in April, remains practically unchanged. Chinese continue to arrive, and to a certain extent the Finance Department is not ill pleased, as a head tax is collected from each immigrant. It is only mass immigration, i.e. family units, which worries the Siamese authorities, as they are harder to assimilate.

X.

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Note: The present value of the tical, the Siamese unit of currency, is approximately U. S.

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X. MISCELLANEOUS.

Visits of American Correspondents - Kra Canal

The visit of the correspondents Mills and Gardner, referred to in the April report, resulted in a statement made by Mills to the newspapers at Penang that there was no truth in the allegation that someone was building or digging a canal across the isthmus. He said he had been all over the route on elephants, pack horses and donkeys and in motor cars, and there was nothing to be found but jungle.

892.114 Narcotics

Opium

Persistent rumors have appeared that the Government contemplates some new action against opium smugglers. The smuggling situation has grown so bad that small quantities of the drug found in the illicit trade cause no comment in the press. It seems that the illicit supply available is so large as to compete with monopoly opium.

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Note: The present value of the baht (or tical), the Siamese unit of currency, is approximately $0.46.

* * * * * * * * *

Telegrams forwarded by the American Legation at Bangkok to the Department of State during April 1938.

Symbol	Date	Subject
ELN/tse	9	Request for additional allotment for repairs to Legation building.
	"	Decision of Siamese Government to participate in Golden Gate Exposition.
	"	Transmission of requested information regarding [illegible] of females in Siam.

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Despatches forwarded by the American Legation at Bangkok to the Department of State during April 1938.

Number	Date	Subject
119	April 4	Visit of Siamese official to the International Petroleum Exposition.
120	" 5	Change of messengers.
121	" 5	Consular personnel, Mr. Esche.
122	" 5	Use of confidential codes and ciphers by Mr. Estes.
123	" 5	Commissioning of Mr. Estes as Vice Consul.
124	" 5	Receipts for registered mail.
125	" 9	Request for Department of Agriculture publications.
126	" 9	Oil Refinery in Siam.
127	" 9	Siamese-Japanese Relations (Strictly Confidential).
128	" 15	Visit of Siamese police officials to the United States.
129	" 16	Expediting of instructions calling for certain reports.
130	" 18	Nonparticipation of the Siamese Government in the Golden Gate Exposition..
131	" 18	Arrival of mail in bad condition.
132	" 16	Receipt of duplicate copies of press releases.
133	" 16	Diplomatic visa issued.
134	" 18	Political Report for March.
135	" 18	Participation of Siamese Government in New York World's Fair.
136	" 19	Transmission of Foreign Office Journal.
137	" 22	Application for Diplomatic passport.
138	" 22	Semiannual report of expenditures from representation allowance.
139	" 22	Siamese Budget.
140	" 25	Receipt of lampshades in damaged condition.
141	" 25	Possible failure to receive instruction no. 115.
142	" 25	Simple leave for Mr. Seibert.
143	" 25	Registration of Elizabeth Sai Redfield.
144	" 19	Siamese law controlling sale of medicine.
145	" 25	Non-immigrant visas issued.

* * * * * * * * *

Telegrams forwarded by the American Legation at Bangkok to the Department of State during April 1938.

Number	Date	Subject
8	April 1	Request for additional allotment for repairs to Consulate building.
9	" 9	Declination of Siamese Government to participate in Golden Gate Exposition.
10	" 16	Transmission of requested information regarding home states of nationals in Siam.

* * * * * * *