

THE HISTORY OF THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THAILAND AND
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: A STUDY OF
DIPLOMATIC TENSION AND BALANCE IN
AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated

to my parents

Mr. Suckchai Champonote

Mrs. Sermsri Champonote

to my siblings

to my American parents

Mr. and Mrs. Reginald G. Temple

to John G. Saehang

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Thailand (pronounced tie-land), formerly known as Siam, is a small, torrid, and agreeable Southeast Asian kingdom about the size of France. One fact that helps make life agreeable for dwellers on the Central Plain of Thailand is the abundance of food, mainly rice, that grows there. The Central Plain consists chiefly of alluvial mud, bordering the Menam (River) Chao Phraya.¹

Thailand is situated in the Southeast corner of Asia. Its neighbors are Burma to the west and northwest, Laos and Cambodia to the northeast and east, and Malaya to the south. It has an area of 198,247 square miles.

Never a colony of any European power, Thailand is an independent, sovereign state, governed by a king and parliament. The capital is Bangkok, "City of the Angels"; this great city of the Plain is the only cosmopolitan city in this land of villages. Through the city flow goods entering Thailand from the capitals of world trade. Bangkok is also the cultural capital; all institutions of higher learning are

¹Noel F. Busch, Thailand: An Introduction to Modern Siam, 2nd ed. (New York: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1959), pp. 1, 2, 4, 5.

here, and foreign ideas and peoples first entered and influenced Thailand through this city. The national religion of Thailand is Buddhism and about three-quarters of the population are Buddhist. Thai is the national and official language.²

Before June 24, 1939, Thailand was known as Siam in European languages. The Portuguese were the first Europeans to reach this country in 1511. By the seventeenth century, Siam had become the generally accepted name for the country among Europeans.³ The country's history is divided into five major periods, all except the last, deriving their names from the capital cities of the time:

1. The Nanchao Era (c.650 A.D.-1253),
2. The Sukhothai Era (c.1253-1350),
3. The Ayutthaya Era (1350-1767),
4. The Bangkok Era (1767-1932), and
5. The Constitutional Era (1932-).

The Thai word for history means "biography of the Kings."⁴

²F. K. Exell, The Land and the People of Thailand (London: Adam and Charles Black. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1960), p. 93.

³Thailand- Official Year Book 1968 (Bangkok: Government House Printing Office), p. 10.

⁴Wendell Blanchard, Thailand: Its People, Its Society, Its Culture (New Haven: Hraf Press, 1958), p. 21.

Thailand's relationship with European nations dated more than two centuries before the time of European colonialization of the countries in the East. Thailand concluded a commercial agreement with Portugal, the first of its kind between Thailand and a European power. Portugal was to supply Ayutthaya with arms and ammunition; and, in return, the Portuguese received freedom of trade and religion in the Kingdom.⁵

The French appeared on the scene of Thai history in the reign of King Narai 1656-1688. The credit for opening relations between Thailand and France belongs to the French Catholic missionary bishop, Monsignor de la Motte Lambert.⁶

Europeans came to Thailand because of increasing interest in economy and religion. The English began to take interest in Ayutthaya after the founding of the East India Company in 1600. They arrived at Ayutthaya by the "Globe" in August 1612 and received a warm welcome. Thailand had sent the ambassadors to France in the reign of Louis XIV, but disagreements had erupted because France tended to demand too many concessions. She wanted King Narai and the people of Thailand to become Catholic, wanted Thailand to be one of her colonies, and also wanted freedom of trade and

⁵Thailand, p. 101.

⁶Ibid., p. 19.

commerce. The French government administrations sent soldiers and engineers to teach the Thai people how to use munitions and build military camps.

To Europeans, Thailand appeared to be a potential center for Asiatic activities (China) since she is situated between China, Japan, the Philippines, and also near the islands of the Cape of Malaya. There are two good bays with harbors. Too, she was strategically located on a vital naval strait, a passageway through which many of the ships of the world sailed. Thus, Louis XIV quickly selected Thailand as a potential Eastern stronghold from which he could fight England and Holland for commercial supremacy in the western Pacific and in Asia.

King Mongkut (Rama IV), King of Siam from 1851 to 1868, was, in fact, one of the great Asians of the nineteenth century. For seventeen years he steered his country through the conflicting pressures and territorial ambitions of France and England and set the course that preserved the independence of his country. Thailand remained the only country in Southeast Asia never to have fallen under European domination. Always there was evident in his life a deeply religious spirit that comprehended and believed in tolerance, an intellectual curiosity that caused a never-ceasing search for knowledge, and an unshakeable determination to serve the Siamese people. In him surged the turmoil arising from the

sudden impact of Western civilization colliding with an Eastern civilization. It was this turmoil within him which caused those inconsistencies and incongruities that made him so striking and fascinating a personality. Yet, through all his actions, there is clearly visible the guiding purpose of his reign: the preservation of the independence of Siam. He realized that this goal required not only careful diplomatic action abroad but also a modernizing of the country at home.⁷

Traditional political thought in Siam, as elsewhere in Asia, centered around the isolation of the country from foreign contacts, but Monkut saw what was happening to his neighbors and what had already happened to mighty China. He discovered for himself the technical superiority of the West, and he knew its power. Events forced him to be conscious of the aggressiveness of the West. Years later he expressed the problem of Siam succinctly and clearly:

Being, as we are now, surrounded on two or three sides by powerful nations, what can a small nation like us do? Supposing we were to discover a gold mine in our country, from which we could obtain many million catties weight of gold, enough to pay for the cost of a hundred warships: even with this we would still be unable to fight against them, because we would have to buy those very same warships and all the armaments from their countries. We are as yet unable to manufacture these things, and even if we have enough money to buy them, they can always stop

⁷Abbot Low Moffat, Mongkut, the King of Siam (New York: Cornell University Press, 1961), pp. 8-9.

the sale of them whenever they feel that we are arming ourselves beyond our station. The only weapons that will be of real use to us in the future will be our mouths and our hearts, constituted so as to be full of sense and wisdom for the better protection of ourselves.⁸

Monkut walked warily between England and France, the two countries he had most reason to fear, and he did all that he could to make his country known and understood abroad and to ensure respect for its sovereignty. He developed and carried on throughout his reign a voluminous correspondence with heads of state and influential men in other countries.

In addition, however, he realized that, both by legislation and example, he must effect such reforms in the laws, customs, and institutions of the country as would bring them in line with Western thinking and thereby minimize excuses for external interference. Under pressure from the European community, he quickly reduced the import duties, permitted the export of rice, and established an opium monopoly to ensure its control.⁹

Within a few years he voluntarily "opened" the country for foreign trade. He established a Royal Mint in

⁸Seni and Kukrit Pramoj, The King of Siam Speaks (Bangkok, 1948), pp. 1-2.

⁹G. E. Gerini, Chulakantamangala or the Tonsure Ceremony as Performed in Siam (Bangkok, 1893), pp. 93-137.

the palace for the issue of flat coinage "equal in every respect to the coinage of that State of Europe which is called France";¹⁰ these new coins would replace the bullet-shaped ticals and cowrie shells then in use in 1860. He promoted the construction of waterways and roads, substituting paid labor for the former feudal corveé, and he encouraged ship building. He employed Westerners as advisors, both to spread Western ideas and knowledge and, where necessary, to act as administrators. He sought equal justice for all before the law and curbed some of the privileges of the nobility which had set them above the law. He established an official Gazette and took the first steps to eliminate slavery. He enacted laws to improve the status of women and children and authorized the common people to look at the King.

It was in his relations with foreign countries that Mongkut achieved the most striking reversal of traditional ways. He was always very conscious of Western opinion.

In Mongkut's time the two Western powers with which he was most deeply concerned were England and France. Just as he had in the case of the British treaty, Mongkut, as soon as the treaty with France was concluded, proposed to send an

¹⁰Oscar Frankfurter, King Mongkut (Thailand, 1905), p. 192.

embassy to the French Court.¹¹ But although he walked warily and endeavored to maintain a correct balance between the two countries, Mongkut preferred the English to the French, and he increasingly felt that France was the greater potential menace. One of the principal reasons for this preference was the high caliber of the men Britain sent to Siam in the early days of the new relationship between the two nations. He had become close personal friends with several of them. On the other hand, the French representatives were men of quite different stamp. A second factor undoubtedly was Mongkut's facility in the English language. The third, and ultimately the most important factor, was the growth of French imperial ambitions and the swelling French desire to carve a great Asian colony out of Cochin China, Annam, Cambodia, Laos, the Shan States, Upper Burma, and, many have believed, Siam as well.¹² Thus, Mongkut revealed a distinct preference for England.

He was therefore the first king of Thailand to be able to write and converse in English, and the first king of the Bangkok period to open his country to Western

¹¹Moffat, p. 96.

¹²Ibid., pp. 103-104.

modernization. He left behind an abundance of autograph letters written to his English and European friends everywhere.¹³

In 1856, the United States of America closely followed the example of Great Britain by negotiating a new treaty with Siam. President Franklin Pierce appointed Townsend Harris (1804-1874), the American Consul-General to Japan, as the presidential envoy to Siam. Following his successful negotiations, he signed with Siam on May 29, 1856, a Treaty of Amity, Commerce, and Navigation which replaced the Treaty of 1833.¹⁴

The Bowring Treaty was the pattern for the pact which Napoleon III's envoy, M. de Montigny, signed with Siam in 1856. Identical treaties were concluded with Denmark and Portugal in 1858, with the Netherlands in 1860, with Prussia on behalf of the German Customs union in 1862, and with Sweden-Norway, Belgium and Italy in 1868.¹⁵

He organized a small army along European lines, consisting of a regiment each of infantry, artillery, and marines. The Infantry was in the beginning trained by an English officer, Captain Impey, who gave his words of

¹³Mom Luang Manich Jumsai, History of Anglo-Thai Relations (Thailand: Charemnit, 1-2 Erawan Arcade Bangkok, 1970), p. 43.

¹⁴Rong Syamanada, A History of Thailand (Thailand: Thai Watana Panich Co., Ltd., 1973), p. 121.

¹⁵Ibid.

command in English. Meanwhile the artillery was in the charge of the Second King Pinklao, assisted by another English officer, Captain Knox. For his navy, the King introduced steamships.¹⁶

Realizing the usefulness of English, the King was determined that his sons and daughters should acquire a good knowledge of the language. He engaged wives of the American missionaries to teach English to Chulalongkorn (his eldest son), and then employed Mrs. Anna Leonowens, an English widow from Singapore, as a teacher. Later he placed this son under the absolute authority of an English tutor, Robert Morant, but owing to Mongkut's death, this discipline lasted only a year and a half.

Mongkut was succeeded by his son, Chulalongkorn, who reigned for forty-two years, until 1910. A minor when his father died, he used the period prior to his formal accession in 1873 to read widely and to travel to Java and to India in search of knowledge of Western technology and administration as they were exercised in Asian countries. When he assumed control of the government, he greatly speeded up the modernization that his father had begun. An historian of Southeast Asia notes that the young king "realized forcibly that if his

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 122-123.

country were to preserve her independence she must, willy-nilly, put her house in order according to the prevailing European nations, or at least keep up the appearance of doing so."¹⁷

The changes instituted during his long reign were truly remarkable. One of the most far-reaching was his insistence that the children of royalty be educated by Western standards at the palace school. He also sent many of his sons to Europe for their education, and when they returned, used their assistance in accelerating the modernization of Siam. In addition, Chulalongkorn hired many foreign technicians and advisers to assist in this silent revolution until such time as Siam had enough trained people to do the job itself. Some of these advisers were given wide responsibilities and were honored accordingly by the King with noble titles.¹⁸

Siam's educational system had, in the past, been conducted entirely in the Buddhist monasteries. The missionaries were the first to introduce secular education of a more advanced type.

¹⁷Daniel George Edward Hall, A History of Southeast Asia (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1955), pp. 583-584.

¹⁸Donald E. Nuechterlein, Thailand and the Struggle for Southeast Asia (New York: Cornell University Press, 1965), p. 17.

In 1891 Prince Damrong was sent to study educational methods in Europe, and on his return a government Department of Education was set up. This agency later became the Ministry of Public Instruction. Its initial task was to improve primary education, and it did so by adapting the monastic school buildings to educational needs and providing learning facilities. The English language was considered the best medium for higher education.¹⁹

Siam had no universities in Chulalongkorn's day, and only a very few Siamese proceeded to British universities. There were, however, departmental schools for training in specialist fields, a service school, a military and naval cadet school, and law and medical schools. The great developments in education were to come after Chulalongkorn's death.²⁰

Waterways were the main mode of transport in Siam and rulers who gave their attention to the improvement of communications concentrated on cutting canals to link up rivers and creeks rather than on roads. Villages were built along the banks of waterways. Provincial towns were simply larger settlements on a maze of waterways with many houses on floating pontoons. When Chulalongkorn came to the throne,

¹⁹Hall, p. 588.

²⁰Ibid., p. 589.

Bangkok had hardly any streets, earning for herself the title of the Venice of the East. The best roads were simply bullock-cart tracks usable in the dry season, or mountain tracks for pack animals. Under such conditions the railway age was late in arriving. Chulalongkorn first became aware of the importance of railways through the British efforts to survey routes from Burma to western China. But the first railway in Siam was not completed until 1893.²¹

Before the crisis of 1893, the relationship between Siam and France was tense, because the two countries disputed over the frontier of their territories on the left bank of the Mekong River. The Siamese tried to negotiate with the French over the latter's claims, but the negotiations were to no avail. Increasing frontier incidents finally led to open warfare between the two countries.

In 1893 France laid claim to all territory east of the Mekong River. Britain did not reject this claim but only raised with the French the question of Siamese rights in the area. Without active British support, Siam's position was hopeless. France then exploited various incidents in Laos and demanded that the Thai evacuate all territory east of the Mekong River. The Siamese offered to submit the dispute to arbitration, but French forces from Vietnam moved across

²¹Ibid., p. 586.

the border and began to occupy Siamese territory. Siam appealed frantically to Great Britain for help, but London counseled moderation and asked Siam not to provoke the French into a war. France knew, however, that the Siamese were helpless to stop her advance and in a show of force sent several warships to the mouth of the Chao Phraya River early in July 1893. There is some dispute as to whether or not the French naval commander received instructions to remain outside the mouth of the river. When the French ships did proceed up the river, the Siamese fortress at Paknam fired on them. The French returned the fire and casualties were suffered on both sides. After this exchange, the French were in a commanding position.²²

The French government issued an ultimatum to Siam which demanded three things:

1. Evacuation of all territory east of the Mekong, from the river basin in northern Laos down to the Cambodian borders;
2. payment of an indemnity of three million francs;
3. punishment of the officers responsible for the firing on French ships at Paknam.

²²Idem, A History of Southeast Asia (London, 1954), p. 607. Hall concluded that "the Siamese committed the serious blunder of firing the first shots in the encounter" and thereby "played into the hands of the French."

Siam was willing to accept the latter two points but asked for negotiations on the border questions, because much of the territory demanded by France had been under Siamese control for many years. Even France had recognized Siam's rights in Luang Prabang (territory east of the Mekong) several years earlier. In desperation Siam pleaded with Great Britain to intercede and ask France to moderate her demands.

Britain did indeed become alarmed as the Siamese situation appeared to be drifting toward war. The Court of St. James sent several warships to the Gulf of Siam to demonstrate England's interest in the dispute. She also asked France for an explanation of her intentions; but after obtaining a promise that Siamese independence would be respected, Britain urged Siam to accept the French demands.

The Siamese government had delayed its decision in the hope that Britain could influence the French, so the latter proceeded to blockade the Chao Phraya River. Siam finally capitulated in August 1893, but now France decided to increase the price for peace and demanded that Siam also evacuate all armed forces from the provinces of Siemrat and Pratabong, which had once been part of Cambodia. The French government also demanded that Siam withdraw her forces twenty-five kilometers from the west bank of the Mekong River; pending the withdrawal, French forces occupied the

Southeastern Siamese province Chantabun. In October 1893, a treaty (the Franco-Siam treaty) was finally agreed upon. It embodies all these concessions that France had been demanding, and the Siamese were bitterly disappointed over the lack of support from Great Britain in their hour of need.²³

Soon afterward Britain and France negotiated to determine their spheres of influence in Southeast Asia, but efforts to create a buffer zone in northern Laos came to naught. For a time it appeared that these two nations might be drawn into a war over rival claims in the area, and that Siam might be caught in the middle. However, in 1896 Britain and France reached an agreement that gave France all territory east of the Mekong, in upper Burma, and in Laos; and both nations then agreed to guarantee the independence of Siam in the Chao Phraya Valley.²⁴

In assessing Chulalongkorn's foreign policy, it can be said without contradiction that although he had lost 90,000 square miles of territory to the French and the British, he succeeded in preserving the independence of the country, and he did this in spite of all the threats and pressure that had been brought to bear upon him. If Siam were to be compared to a man and the lost territory to limbs,

²³Nuechterlein, pp. 18-19.

²⁴Hall, p. 610.

the King would sacrifice the limbs and keep the heart of the man so as to help him to live on. Thus Siam gained morally by this physical loss, in that she became a more compact and homogeneous country.

It can also be stated without exaggeration that Chulalongkorn brought vast progress to Siam. In Hall's words, "the fact remains that the real progress that was made possible only through the exercise of his absolute power." His forty-two years' reign--the longest in Thailand history--ended on October 23, 1910, amidst the unfathomable sorrow of the Thai people who still humbly refer to him as the "Beloved Great."²⁵

²⁵Syamanada, pp. 144-145.

CHAPTER II

EARLY THAI-AMERICAN RELATIONS

The use of the terms "Thailand" and "Siam" to denote the country and "Thai" and "Siamese" to describe the people may be puzzling to a reader unfamiliar with the background of this country. Actually, the Thai people have always called themselves the "Thai" and their country "Muang Thai" or "Land of the Thai." The terms "Siam" and "Siamese" have been used during recent Thai history largely by foreigners. After 1939, when the name of the country was first officially changed to Thailand, foreign spokesmen have increasingly used the terms "Thai" and "Thailand," although many writers, especially British, still adhere to the traditional terms "Siam" and "Siamese."¹

The change of name to Thailand by Premier Pibun Songgram reflected his ambition to extend his country's frontiers by taking advantage of Japanese power and hostility to Western colonial rule in Asia. The name Thailand was abandoned in 1945 by the pro-Allied free Thai government in order to expedite peace negotiations with Britain, but it was revived in 1948 when Pibun returned to power.

¹Frank C. Darling, Thailand and the United States (Washington, D. C.: Public Affairs Press, 1965), p. 6.

When Americans and Europeans had made contact with Siam early in the nineteenth century, the Thai people had been governed for more than five centuries by an absolute monarch whose authority extended to all civil, military, and religious affairs.²

The only contact between Siam and the West prior to the nineteenth century occurred when European maritime nations began their incursions into Asia for trade, religious converts, and power. The first contact between the United States and Siam occurred as a product of the expanding American trade with China and the East Indies early in the nineteenth century. There is little information on the first Americans to set foot in Siam, but in all probability the early trading vessels plying the waters of the Orient first learned of this remote kingdom through their trade at Hong Kong and Singapore, and some of the more adventurous Yankee sea captains sailed to Bangkok to see what trade they could obtain. Somchai Anuman Rajadhon (Professor at the University in Thailand) has stated that trade relations with Americans were established in 1818 during the reign of King Phra Lertla, the second ruler of Chakkri dynasty, who

²Walter F. Vella, The Impact of the West on Government in Thailand (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1955), pp. 317-320.

appeared somewhat less suspicious of Western traders than his predecessors.³

This early trade consisted largely of exchange of firearms for sugar, rice, and other produce of the country. In spite of these early profitable contacts, commercial relations between the two countries were hampered after the accession of King Nang Klao in 1824; he retained a strong suspicion of Western nations and restored the traditional policy of isolation.

Trade relations flourished briefly after 1851 when King Mongkut ascended the throne and opened his country to extensive contact with the West. For several years prior to the American Civil War trade between the United States and Siam expanded rapidly and by 1858 equalled the British-Siamese trade. The Thai imported large numbers of steam engines from the United States that were used in rice mills and a new fleet of merchant vessels. Increasing competition from Great Britain and Germany caused American trade to decline rapidly after the Civil War, and it did not again assume a significant role until after World War II.⁴

Protestant missionaries had been arriving since the 1830's from the United States. Their evangelical efforts had

³Somchai Anuman Rajadhon, "Early Siam-United States Relations," Saranom Magazine, May 1955, p. 61.

⁴Darling, pp. 12-13.

little success but throughout the nineteenth century they did much to acquaint the rulers and people with modern technological and social innovations.⁵ The American Baptist Mission became interested in Siam, and the first group of missionaries travelled to Bangkok in 1833. They were soon joined by the Presbyterians, among whom were Dr. Dan Beach Bradley and his wife. At first they confined themselves to propagating their religion to the Chinese, but not wishing to neglect the Thais, they began to give medical help and treatment to them. They introduced vaccination against smallpox into the country. So at that time the Thais took all the American missionaries to be medical doctors and called them "moh." Some of them were genuine medical doctors, but others might have received a doctorate only in divinity from America.

In addition to their medical work, they had shared in the dissemination of modern knowledge. Dr. Bradley and his associates pioneered the establishment of the first printing press in Bangkok in 1835. They bought their type of the Thai alphabet from Singapore, where it was cast at the printing press of the London Missionary Society. An official at Penang, Captain James Low, had studied Thai and had written a Thai grammar for the Europeans and published it at

⁵George B. McFarland, "Historical Sketch of Protestant Mission," Saranom Magazine, May 1955, p. 61.

Calcutta in 1828. The American missionaries concentrated on printing books on Christianity, published a newspaper, The Bangkok Recorder, and in 1839 they printed 9,000 copies of a royal edict on the prohibition of opium smoking for the Thai government.

The Bangkok Recorder, appearing first in 1844, had a short life. King Rama IV (Prince Mongkut while still a monk) had ordered a printing press to be set up at Wat Bowonniwet (Temple), where he took up residence. It was the first printing press owned by a Thai and competed with the American press in publishing Buddhist books. By Rama IV's command, a government printing press was established for its own use and in 1858 began to print the Royal Gazette or Rajkitchanubeksa, which is issued weekly. The printing press has in fact been one of the contributing factors to the advancement of Thai education.⁶

One of the most important channels through which America influenced Siam during the nineteenth century was the intimate personal relationship that developed between the missionaries and Prince Mongkut, who eventually became king and opened the country to the West. While he was serving as a Buddhist monk, Mongkut was tutored by Reverend Jesse Caswell in the study of English and science. With other

⁶Syamanada, p. 115.

missionaries he studied mathematics and astronomy. This experience gave him an intense interest in the advances of the Western world. It was undoubtedly instrumental in causing him to reverse the traditional policy of isolation and open his country to increasing intercourse with the West.⁷

In 1833, President Andrew Jackson appointed Edmund Roberts as the first American envoy, whom the Thais called "Emin Rabad" meaning "a nobleman from America." American merchant ships were already calling at Bangkok occasionally to sell arms, hardware, and cotton goods and to load sugar and timber. Roberts' mission was to place the United States of America on a basis of equality with other nations trading in Siam. He had met almost no difficulty in negotiating a treaty with the Thai Ministers of State, since he made no demand for extraterritorial rights and limitation of import duties. The first treaty between Siam and the United States of America was concluded on March 20, 1833. It was a Treaty of Amity and Commerce, and its main purposes were to establish "a perpetual peace between the United States of America and the Magnificent Kingdom of Siam," and to enable the Thais and the Americans to hold commercial

⁷Darling, p. 13.

intercourse "as long as Heaven and Earth shall endure."
Under the treaty, American merchants trading in Siam "shall respect and follow the laws and customs of the country in all points," and American vessels "shall pay in lieu beam."

It should be noted that Siam was the first country in the Far East with which the United States entered into treaty relations. The Treaty of 1833 was signed eleven years before the Treaty of Wanghia between the United States and China and twenty-one years before the Treaty of Kanagawa between the United States of America and Japan. The Treaty of 1833 did not fulfill the expectations of American merchants who soon wanted trading conditions similar to those in China, which were accorded to them under the Treaty of 1844.

President Zachary Taylor therefore commissioned Joseph Balestier as a special diplomat to Bangkok. He was reported to be well informed on the Oriental way of life, since he was an American merchant and Consul at Singapore. On March 24, 1850, he arrived by a warship at the mouth of the Chao Phya River, with instructions to secure more favorable terms by a new treaty with Siam and to establish a consulate in Bangkok. He tried to get quick results from Thai authorities, but the negotiation between the two parties broke down completely. In the opinion of the Thai people, he was not a skillful diplomat like Edmund Roberts. Any

preconceived idea about Siam which he had developed at Singapore served him no useful purpose, as he did not understand Thai customs and manners.⁸

The United States established permanent diplomatic relations with Siam in 1856 when Townsend Harris negotiated a new commercial treaty before taking his post as the first United States Consul-General in Japan.⁹ He wanted to include in the treaty the provisions for extraterritoriality and fixed tariffs so urgently desired by the British and other European nations.

The American diplomat encountered some reluctance by Mongkut to deal with the representative of a republic; the florid correspondence exchanged between the King and Queen Victoria had intensified his desire to deal only with other royal heads of state. Harris tactfully upheld his position as the representative of a sovereign nation, enjoying equal status with Great Britain, and he insisted that the Americans receive the same privileges as the British. He succeeded in obtaining a treaty similar to that negotiated by Great Britain, and the United States was also granted the privileges of extraterritoriality and fixed tariffs.

⁸Syamanada, pp. 115-116.

⁹Dennett Tyler, Americans in Eastern Asia (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1922), p. 348.

During the reign of King Chulalongkorn (Rama V), the missionaries extended their efforts to the northern provinces where they initially encountered the hostility of the local rulers. On one occasion the Prince of Chiangmai (northern province) executed two Thai Christians and threatened the same punishment for other Christian converts in his province. The missionaries appealed to King Chulalongkorn to uphold the provisions for religious freedom contained in the treaty negotiated in 1856 between Siam and the United States. The king thereby issued his famous "Edict of Religious Toleration," a portion of which stated:

That whoever wishes to embrace any religion after seeing that it is true and proper to be embraced, is allowed to do so without any restriction. . . . That there is nothing in the laws and customs of Siam, nor in its foreign treaties, to throw any restriction on the religious worship and service of any one.¹⁰

This act was the first attempt by a Thai ruler to define a civil right for his people.¹¹

In addition to these activities, the missionaries became increasingly active in the fields of education and public health where they aroused a greater understanding of the need of the people.

¹⁰Anna Leonowens, The English Governess at the Siamese Court (London: Arthur Barker, Ltd., 1870), p. 45.

¹¹Darling, pp. 13-14.

Concern with education stemmed from the needs of the royal service; interest in Western education was understandably utilitarian. The beginnings of educational development trace back to Mongkut's reign, but it was under Chulalongkorn that a systematic pattern was first conceived, beginning in 1878, when the King authorized the establishment of the King's School, or Suan Anand, under the direction of an American missionary, the Reverend Samuel G. McFarland.¹²

In this school the son of princes and nobles were to be educated, although other students were also to be allowed to participate in the five-year program designed by Reverend McFarland. The initial enrollment of 130 included 12 princes and many sons of officials. In 1891 Suan Anand School became Sunandalaya College. At the time, it had 278 pupils, and 13 teachers, a library of several hundred volumes, and perhaps 1,500 alumni employed in government offices and Bangkok business houses.

In 1893 Sunandalaya College was abruptly converted into a girl's school by the Department of Education as the consequence of the opposition of Robert Morant, de facto headmaster of English-oriented Suan Kularb or Raja Kumara College (a second royal school which had been established in 1883), educational adviser to the government and tutor to the

¹²Bertha B. McFarland, McFarland of Siam (New York: Vantage Press, 1958), pp. 48-56.

Crown Prince. Suan Kularb now became the first government school planned specifically for the education of the sons of commoners.¹³

A foundation for medical education was established in the 1880's with the creation of Siriraj Hospital in 1888 and the opening of a medical school under the auspices of the Department of Education in the following year. In 1891 Dr. George McFarland, a son of the Reverend Samuel McFarland, an American missionary renowned in Thailand, was engaged as superintendent of the hospital and principal of the medical school.¹⁴ Another son, Edwin McFarland, invented the first typewriter suitable for the Thai language. The missionaries also published additional newspapers in Bangkok which eventually encouraged the development of a local press.

The influence of the missionaries declined rapidly in the twentieth century as the government assumed an increasing role in the field of social welfare and nationalism became a powerful political force. In spite of their declining role on governmental affairs, the missionaries have continued their excellent work in Siam; they have

¹³William J. Siffin, The Thai Bureaucracy Institutional Change and Development (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1966), p. 57.

¹⁴McFarland, "Historical Sketch," p. 14.

likewise continued to enjoy the respect of the government and the people.¹⁵

A unique opportunity to establish more cordial relations between the United States and Siam occurred in April 1879 when ex-President Ulysses S. Grant visited Bangkok briefly while making a world tour. He was received with great honor by Chulalongkorn and treated as a state guest. During his visit the former president stressed the need for more intimate relations between the two countries. In a formal speech he encouraged the King to send Thai students to the United States for higher education.

I hope that in America we shall see more of the Siamese, that we shall have embassies and diplomatic relations, that our commerce and manufactures will increase with Siam, and that your young men will visit our country and attend our colleges as they now go to colleges in Germany and England. I can assure them all a kind reception, and I feel that the visits would be interesting and advantageous. I trust that your reign will be happy and prosperous, and that Siam will continue to advance in the arts of civilization.¹⁶

In responding, Chulalongkorn pointed out that he desired to send more of his subjects to the United States. The Thai monarch made an address before the former president.

Siam has in many years past derived great advantages from America, whose citizens have introduced to my

¹⁵Darling, p. 14.

¹⁶John Russell Young, Around the World with General Grant 2 (New York: The American News Company, 1879), p. 247.

kingdom many arts and sciences, much medical knowledge and many valuable books, to the great advantage of the country. Even before our countries were joined in treaty alliance, citizens of America came here and benefitted us. Since then our relations have greatly been of advantage to Siam; and recently the improvement has been still more marked."¹⁷

The ensuing era of good feeling between the two countries caused the United States in October 1882 to elevate its diplomatic mission in Bangkok from a consulate to a legation. The United States thereby became the first nation to raise its diplomatic representative to the level of a minister, which further added to Siam's international prestige. The Thai diplomats arrived in New York in May 1884 as the first officials from their country to set foot in the United States. Shortly thereafter they were received with great honor by President Chester Arthur. But the diplomatic relations became intermittently strained during the following thirty years as the United States and other Western nations refused the request of the Thai government to abrogate their special treaty privileges. And prior to World War I the government requested that the United States negotiate a new treaty which would give Siam complete judicial and fiscal autonomy. The Department of State postponed any move in this direction as the United States Legation in Bangkok continued

¹⁷Ibid., p. 246.

to report that local judges were inexperienced and the courts still lacked efficiency.¹⁸

An additional contact between the two countries was established in 1903 when King Chulalongkorn employed Edward H. Strobel, a former Bemis Professor of International Law at Harvard University, as a top level foreign adviser to his government.¹⁹ In this position, Strobel was assisted by Jens I. Westengard, an assistant professor on the same faculty. These appointments began a precedent of filling this post with a professor from the Harvard Law School, a precedent which lasted until 1940. In addition to their role as adviser in foreign affairs, the Americans who filled this high position were charged with responsibility of assisting the courts, since their improvement in organization and efficiency was directly tied to the move to abolish the unequal treaties with Western nations.

Strobel and Westengard took their advisory role very seriously and continued to impress upon Chulalongkorn and his officials the need for a more efficient judicial system and a deeper respect for law. They played an active role in the negotiations with the British and the French, which restored considerable judicial authority to Siam.

¹⁸Darling, pp. 16-17.

¹⁹Eldon R. James, "Yale and Harvard in Siam," The Harvard Graduates' Magazine, June 1926, pp. 525-528.

At international conferences they stressed Siam's status as a free and equal nation and they also appealed to the Western nations to relinquish their special treaty privileges.²⁰

The greatest accomplishment of King Vajiravudh or Rama VI, who came to throne during 1910-1925, was the successful revision of the treaties with other countries. On April 1, 1913, the Thai Minister at Washington, Prince Traidosprapandh, called on President Woodrow Wilson to express to him his congratulations on taking the office. The President then praised the Thai government for having helped the American missionaries; Wilson also had met King Rama VI when he passed through the United States on his way home in 1902. The friendly attitude assumed by the President raised the hopes of the Thai government for the revision of the treaty with the United States government, but the negotiations between the two governments were suspended during the First World War.

When the First World War broke out in August 1914, Rama VI's government declared itself neutral, which was only natural as far as the Thai people were concerned, since they had no direct interest in it. But Rama VI was Anglophile, having been educated at the Royal Military College at

²⁰Darling, p. 18.

Sandhurst and at Oxford University in Great Britain, and he also held the honorary rank of a general in the British army.

On April 6, 1917, the United States of America declared war on the central powers and sent a circular appeal to all neutral countries to join in the struggle to support right against might. Siam accepted the invitation and entered the First World War on the side of the Allies on July 22, 1917, in order to uphold the rights and freedom of the small powers. A small but efficient expeditionary force of 1,200 volunteers, made up of a motor transport corps and air pilots, was dispatched to Europe, under the command of Major General Phya Pijaijarnit (later Phya Devahastin).

The Motor Transport Corps operated with the French Army under heavy shell-fire before crossing the Rhine into Germany after the Armistice with other allied forces. During their stay in France the Thai soldiers became friendly with the United States troops, which has cemented to this day the Thai friendship with the American people. On their return to Bangkok, they were accorded a hero's reception. They went on a parade and were complimented by the King for their good work.²¹

In 1919, as one of the victors, Siam attended the Peace Conference of Versailles, where her delegates made no

²¹Syamanada, p. 152.

request for territory or indemnity as a compensation. The delegation from Thailand simply stressed the fact that the unequal treaties with the various countries were unfair to Siam, and President Wilson supported this appeal.

Siam followed up this step and opened negotiations for the revision of the treaty with the United States of America. The Thai Minister at Washington, Phya Prabha Korawong, was instructed to take charge of the negotiations. In his report of June 7, 1920, to the Thai Foreign Minister, he summed up their prospects:

The (American) President has shown great interest in our business and I have learnt from trustworthy persons that he has a real intention to conclude this treaty before he leaves the Presidency. If we miss this important opportunity to recover the two-fold autonomy for judicial affairs and the export tariff, during the time of President Wilson, I am afraid there will be no hope to get such autonomy when the President is a Republican.²²

As one of the Allies in the First World War, Siam signed the Treaty of Versailles, and she became a founder member of the League of Nations. The membership of Siam in the League of Nations at Geneva was again a recognition of her status as being equal to other civilized countries. However, she did not play an active role in the League of Nations until the Manchurian Incident broke out in 1931.

²²Ibid., p. 153.

The negotiations for the revision of the treaty with the United States of America were brought to a successful conclusion concerning the right of evocation of cases for a period of five years after the promulgation and enforcement of all the legal codes as well as the question of land tenure. The United States government recognized indirectly the legal system of Siam as being equal to those of a civilized country, since the Thai legal system had been thoroughly modernized in Chulalongkorn's reign. Some French and English jurists were employed by the Thai government as judges and experts in the revision and codification of the Thai laws. Thai students were awarded scholarships for further studies in law in the West, and most of them went to England.

On December 18, 1920, while Wilson was still the President, Mr. Norman H. Davis, Secretary of State of the United States of America, and Phya Prabhakorawong, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of Siam to the United States of America, signed a new treaty at Washington. It was ratified by the American Senate on April 27, 1921, by King Rama VI on April 29, 1921, and by President Harding on May 6, 1921. The treaty was to be in force for a period of ten years as of September 1, 1921, when the exchange of ratifications was effected at Bangkok. It replaced the treaty of 1856 between Siam and the United States of America.

The main points of the treaty and the protocol attached to it were specific.

1. There shall be constant peace and perpetual friendship between the United States of America and the Kingdom of Siam. The citizens or subjects of each of the High Contracting Parties, shall have the liberty to enter, travel, and reside in the territories of the other to carry trade, wholesale and retail, to engage in religious, educational and charitable work, to own or lease and occupy houses, manufactureries, warehouses and shops, to employ agents to their choice, to lease land for residential and commercial, religious and charitable purposes and for use as cemeteries, and generally, to do anything incidental to, or necessary for, trade upon the same terms as native citizens or subjects, submitting themselves to the laws and regulations there established.

2. The system of jurisdiction heretofore established in Siam for citizens of the U.S. and privileges, exemption and immunities now enjoyed by the citizens of the U.S. in Siam, as a part of our appurtenant to said system, shall absolutely cease and determine on the date of the exchange of ratifications of the above-mentioned treaty, and thereafter all citizens of the U.S. and persons, corporations, companies and associations entitled to its protection in Siam shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the Siamese courts.

3. Until the promulgation and putting into force of all the Siamese codes, namely, the Penal Code, the Civil and Commercial Codes, the Codes of Procedure and the laws for Organization of Courts and a period of five years thereafter, but no longer, the U.S., through its Diplomatic and Consular officials in Siam, whenever in its discretion it deems it proper to do so in the interest of justice, by means of a written requisition addressed to the judge or judges of the court, except the Supreme or Dika court, in which an American citizen or a person, corporation, company, or association entitled to the protection of the U.S. is defendant or accused.

Such cases shall then be transferred to the said Diplomatic or Consular Official for adjudication and the jurisdiction of the Siamese court over such case shall thereupon cease. Any case so worked shall be disposed of by the said Diplomatic or Consular

Official in accordance with the laws of the U.S. properly applicable, except that as to all matters coming within the scope of Codes or laws of the Kingdom regularly promulgated and in force, the texts of which have been communicated to the American Legation in Bangkok, the rights and Liabilities of the parties shall be determined by the Siamese law.

For the purpose of trying such cases and executing any judgement which may be rendered therein, the jurisdiction of the American Diplomatic and Consular Officials in Siam is continued.

4. Appeal by citizens of the U.S. or by persons, corporations, companies, and associations entitled to its protection from judgments of courts of First Instance, in cases to which they may be parties, shall be adjudged by the Court of Appeal at Bangkok to the Supreme or Dika Court.

A citizen of the U.S. or a person, corporation, company, or association entitled to its protection, who is defendant or accused in any case arising in the provinces may apply for a change of venue and shall the court consider such change desirable, the trial shall take place either at Bangkok or before the judges in whose court the case would be tried at Bangkok.

5. The U.S. restored to Siam the absolute power in levying taxes and recognized in principle the equal treatment to be accorded to the foreign countries having relations with her; in other words, Siam was free to fix the fee for the tariff for exports and imports, but she must not grant special rights to any nation.²³

According to this treaty, no American could own land in Siam and in the same way no Thai could own land in the United States of America. In negotiating this treaty the United States was again the first Western nation to take a new step in promoting Siam's advancement toward international

²³Ibid., p. 154.

equality. Complete equality of treatment was given to the citizens of both countries.²⁴

The United States made a great sacrifice when she agreed to revision of the treaty. She did this out of altruism and with magnanimity. As Martin asserted in A History of the Diplomatic Relations Between Siam and the United States of America 1839-1929, "This friendly deed by the United States changed the whole picture for Siam and made it much easier for Siam in her negotiations with the other countries." It is indeed a true statement. At the beginning of 1924, Siam concluded a new treaty with Japan. By this treaty Japan gave up the Consular Court system in Siam in practically the same manner as provided in the American Treaty of 1920. Owing to the most favored treatment clause, the Thai-American treaty could not be applied immediately and the treaties between Siam and the other powers had to be similarly revised. Only then would Siam be able to implement the terms of the revised treaties.

Toward the end of Rama VI's Reign, Dr. Francis B. Sayre, President Wilson's son-in-law, succeeded Dr. Eldon James as Siam's foreign adviser and submitted to the King a proposal that a delegation should be sent to Europe, where direct negotiations could be pursued with the various

²⁴Darling, p. 17.

governments so as to expedite the revision of the treaties. Those governments would understand Siam's objective in this matter clearly and thoroughly. Approving the proposal, Rama VI appointed Sayre as the leader to the delegation with full power to revise the treaties with the European powers, after the pattern of the American-Thai treaty. In the execution of this difficult task, he received close cooperation from Prince Traidosprapandh, who had succeeded his father, Prince Dewawongse, as Foreign Minister in 1923. The King rewarded Sayre with the title of Phya Kalyamaitri, and he became the second American to be thus ennobled.²⁵

From 1916 until 1929 the Rockefeller Foundation launched a public health program which brought additional medical knowledge and service to Siam. And by 1923 it began awarding medical degrees. In 1927 an American journalist, Andrew A. Freeman, was employed by Prince Svasti, the father-in-law of King Prajadhipok (Rama VII), as the editor of the English-language newspaper, the Daily Mail. This newspaper was subsequently edited by two other Americans, Don Garden and St. Clair McKelway.²⁶

Certainly the modernization of Thailand involved a large element of Westernization. The importation by returned Thai students and foreign advisers of innumerable specific

²⁵Syamanada, pp. 154-155.

²⁶Darling, p. 19.

Western practices constituted a process of Westernization. The constitutional charters, legal codes, administrative regulations, and educational institutions of the country bore familiar patterns and techniques that came from the West. However, in varying degrees, these imported Western institutions and practices operated differently from the way they did in their original home countries.²⁷

²⁷Fred Warren Riggs, The Modernization of a Bureaucratic Policy (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1966), p. 369.

CHAPTER III

THAILAND AND JAPAN: SOUTHEAST ASIA COERCION

For Japan, her trade with Thailand was significant and important, and it was growing. In 1925, Siam bought five million baht worth of goods imported from Japan. In the years 1929 to 1932, about 85 percent of all Japan's rice import came from Siam; rice made up almost the entirety of that country's exports to Japan. In 1931 Japan supplied only 8.4 percent of Siam's imports, but in 1933 the percentage rose to 19.4. Apparently it was depreciated yen in 1932 that provoked the extraordinary increase in Siamo-Japanese trade relations. Moreover, Japan's exports to Siam more than doubled between 1933 and 1935 to make up a fourth of the latter's total imports. There was no corresponding increase in Siamese exports to Japan. The Siamese now came to regard Japanese manufactures as the only ones they could afford, paying for them through rice exports which Japan surely needed.

Both Siam and Japan sincerely tried to redress the trade balance. For example, in 1935 Siam spent twenty-seven million baht in Japan. In ten years Japan's percentage of the total Siamese imports had gone from 3.41 percent to 25.56

percent. In addition, Thailand imported through Hongkong some 1,317,612 baht in goods shown as Hong Kong imports but whose origin had been Japan.

Siamese and Japanese relations were more basically economic in character rather than political or cultural. In one vital respect a truly balanced commercial approach was very difficult: the balance of trade between the two nations favored much too heavily the Japanese.

In March 1934 the sensational London Daily Express published a report that Japanese spies were thick in the Malay Peninsula. Too, it reported that the Bangkok government would welcome the substitution of a Japanese for a British Financial Adviser and that Thailand might even prefer a Japanese alliance. Rumor that war had already broken out between Great Britain and Japan caused the greatest alarm. Then relations of Japan and Thailand grew closer. In June 1934 a Siamese Trade Commission visited Japan for months; and in August, Japan businessmen came to Bangkok. In 1935 Thailand engaged a Japanese expert to promote cotton-growing in Siam with the ultimate goal of supplying the Japanese market, and Japan put two new, faster ships on the Bangkok run. In 1936 a Japanese Economic Mission of fourteen members came to survey Siam's natural resources with a view to their

development by Japanese capital. This project failed, however, because of Japan's tactlessness.¹

By design, Siam's trade to Japan was shifting before the beginning of the world war. For example, Great Britain had supplied Siam with 93 percent of her imported grey shirtings. In the year from April 1935 to May 1936 no grey shirtings were imported from the United Kingdom, but Japan shipped grey shirtings to the value of baht 1,169,524, or 95 percent of the total, which amounted to baht 1,228,252.

Goods consigned to Thailand from Singapore and included in imports statistics from there, but whose origin was Japan, amounted to baht 2,556,473. Combining these figures of the indirect trade with the exact figure of direct trade with Japan for the same period of baht 27,792,745 yields a grand total of baht 30,249,218 of trade with Japan. This figure given Japan 29 percent of the total import trade with all nations of baht 108,754,047. Almost a third of all goods imported into Siam had come from Japan.

In April 1936, through March 1937, Japan maintained the high average of accumulating 28 percent of the total Siamese import trade.² Figures for the year from April 1937,

¹Virginia Thomson, The New Siam (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941), pp. 129-137.

²Perry Landon, Siam in Transition (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1939), p. 59.

through March 1938, were slow in showing much change. A decline in imports from Japan was expected, however, because of the war in China.³ But by then, holding onto her Thailand commercial connections had become an important part of Japanese policy. Thus it is apparent that in the eyes of the Japanese government the trade with Thailand was vital, particularly when Japan could exchange her industrial exports for imported rice from Thailand.

During the 1930's the main objectives of Thai foreign policy included the protection of national independence, extension of trade relations, and promotion of Thai interests in Southeast Asia, particularly in Laos and Cambodia. Friendship with Japan seemed to be an excellent means of countering British and French influence. As Japan became more powerful, and particularly after it launched a full-scale invasion of China in 1937, some Thai leaders saw in a policy of cooperation with Japan an opportunity to regain lost territories in Indochina and to advance Thai interests in Burma and in Malaya as well.

Although Thailand's trade with Japan had grown steadily during the 1920's and early 1930's, not until 1933 did Bangkok take the first step toward accommodation with Japan. At the League of Nations, Thailand abstained from a

³Ibid., p. 59.

vote of censure against, for invading Manchuria; shortly thereafter she exchanged trade commissions with Japan. There were growing contacts between Thailand and Japan during the 1930's. Rumors began to circulate that Japan had offered to assist Thailand in constructing a canal across the Isthmus of Kra in the Malay Peninsula. Since such a canal would have bypassed Singapore as the shortest route from the Indian Ocean to the Far East, the prospect alarmed Great Britain.

In 1938, when Pibun Songgram came to power, there was a definite shift in domestic as well as in foreign affairs. The armed forces were greatly expanded, foreign business firms were increasingly harassed, and some were forced out of business; and the government instituted a program of chauvinistic nationalism that strongly resembled policies in Germany and Japan. Certain government leaders began to talk openly of closer ties with Japan and of Thailand's need to be militarily strong in order to resist Britain and France.

On December 8, 1941, Japan started the war of Greater East Asia by an attack on Pearl Harbor on the island of Oahu in Hawaii, bombing the Philippines and Singapore, and landing troops at Kota Bahru in North Malaya. In Thailand, it had been expected for some time that Japan would strike a blow against Great Britain and the United

States of America, as her army had entered Cochin China (South Vietnam) in July 1941.

On December 7, 1941, at 10:30 P.M. the Japanese Ambassador at Bangkok, Tsubokami, had demanded free passage through Thailand for the Japanese troops on their march against the British territories. The Thai soldiers at Prachuap Khirikhan, Nokorn Si Thammarat, and Songhla put up a heroic resistance against the Japanese who landed on the beaches. In spite of Winston Churchill's advice to Thailand to defend herself, Marshall Pibun's government accepted the Japanese demand for free passage and ordered, on December 8, all resistance to the Japanese to cease at once.

Direk Jayanama, who was the foreign minister, noted in his two volumes on Thailand and the Second World War that "Finally the Prime Minister asserts that it is no use trying to resist the Japanese, since we have no forces." Japan made a pledge that she would respect the sovereignty and independence of Thailand. Fifield's book on The Diplomacy of Southeast Asia, 1945-1958 states that "Thailand, of course, would have preferred neutrality. But faced with overwhelming Japanese power, she bent like a reed."

On December 21, 1941, Thailand and Japan signed an alliance with secret protocol wherein Tokyo agreed to help Bangkok get back territories lost to Britain and Thailand undertook to assist Japan in her war against the United

States of America and the United Kingdom. In January 1942, British planes began to raid Bangkok and other towns, and were soon joined by American planes. By that time, the war of Greater East Asia or the Pacific War had merged with the European War as World War II.⁴

The final step that Thailand took to align itself firmly with Japan came on January 25, 1942, when she declared war on Great Britain and the United States. The reason she gave for this action was that participation of British and American fliers in bombing attacks against civilian as well as military targets in Thailand constituted an act of aggression. Britain was also accused of economic manipulation of the national economy to the detriment of Thailand; and the United States was accused of refusing to deliver airplanes, previously paid for by Thailand, and of having failed to come to Siam's assistance in 1893 when she was threatened by France.

From January 1942 until 1944, Thailand cooperated fully with Japan, and during the war the two countries exchanged many missions of goodwill. Thailand retained nominal control of its internal administration, but Japan made ever greater demands on her economy, inflicting considerable economic hardship on the country before the war's end.

⁴Syamanada, p. 173.

Thailand did obtain from the Japanese alliance the four Malay states ceded to Britain in 1909 and two Shan states of Burma. A formal treaty covering the transfer of these territories to Thailand was signed by the Japanese and Thai governments in Bangkok on August 20, 1943.

In 1944 a serious crisis erupted in Thailand's foreign policy as it became increasingly clear that Japan would eventually be defeated by the Allied forces and that Thailand might then be treated as an enemy nation rather than an enemy-occupied country. Prime Minister Pibun had gambled heavily on a Japanese victory, and the problem now was how to extricate Thailand from this situation with the minimum of damage. Furthermore, the British felt, with considerable justification, that Thailand's cooperation with Japan had contributed measurably to the latter's success in conquering Malaya and Singapore and in pushing through Burma to the eastern gates of India. The British also resented the blatant opportunism of the Pibun government in taking over control of four Malay and two Burmese states in 1943. The British were not prepared to overlook the Thai declaration of war; and the Thai government became increasingly concerned that they might refuse to recognize the independence of Thailand at the conclusion of the war.⁵

⁵Nuechterlein, pp. 67-84.

In July 1944, a few days after the Tojo government fell in Japan, Pibun resigned under pressure in Bangkok. Pibun's political head was the first price Thailand had to pay to get back into the good graces of the Allies. Khuang Apaiwong then became the new Prime Minister, and was to see Thailand through the difficult period until the end of the war. His task was both to keep the Japanese from taking over and administering the country directly, and at the same time to permit the build-up of the underground. It was a dangerous role for any political leader to play, and it is to Khuang's credit that he was able to satisfy the Japanese. It may seem surprising that the Japanese authorities permitted Pibun to be ousted; but the reason probably lies in the likelihood that Pibun had become unpopular with the Japanese as well as with the Thai people for his nationalistic excesses and his chauvinism. Khuang, on the other hand, was known for his candor and honesty, and the Japanese probably preferred him at a time when they themselves realized that they could not win the war.⁶

⁶The Japanese commander in Thailand apparently was an able officer whose objective during the final year of the war was to build friendship between Thailand and Japan for the postwar period. As a result, Japanese troops were well behaved and at the end of the war they handed over their weapons to the Thai underground without resistance or incidents.

CHAPTER IV

THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR, 1939-1941

In 1937 Japan had stepped up its war with the Nationalist Government of China, gaining control of north and central China and the major seaports in the south. Meanwhile, the Munich agreement made in September 1938 had had immediate effects on the policy of Japan. She decided the weakness displayed by Britain and France in the face of the territorial expansion of European dictators indicated that she, in turn, could get away with a policy of expansion in Southeast Asia. Of all foreign nations, the one with the largest financial stake in China was Great Britain and Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain had apparently demonstrated his desire for peace at any price.

Meanwhile, a new political figure had emerged in the internal politics of Thailand. Pibun Songgram, the dominant personality in Thai politics, came from rather obscure origins and rose in the army by a combination of ambition and ability. He had been Minister of Defense since 1934, and in 1938 he became Prime Minister. The first Pibun era

from 1938 to 1943 was one of extreme nationalism on the lines made popular in Italy, Germany, and Japan.¹

In 1938 the military in Thailand gained full ascendancy under Prime Minister Pibun Songgram, with a militaristic, nationalistic program. Pibun simply ignored his nation's democratic constitution, and began to pursue a policy of nationalizing the economy, building up the army, and establishing closer relations with Japan. He had two purposes in nationalizing the economy: he wished to loosen the grip upon it of the resident Chinese and he wanted to reduce the power of foreign companies in Thailand. The operations of the Standard Vacuum Oil Company suffered as a result of the new government oil monopoly.²

After 1938 Pibun developed a military youth organization fashioned along Japanese lines and devised a national code of honor called "Wiratham," adopted from Japanese "Bushido."³ Within two years he pushed aside his foreign advisers and devoted one-third of the national revenues to military preparations.

¹David A. Wilson, *Politics in Thailand* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1962), pp. 18-19.

²James V. Martin, "Thai-American Relations in World War II," *The Journal of Asian Studies* (August 1963): 451-467.

³John F. Cady, *Southeast Asia: Its Historical Development* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), p. 505.

On September 3, 1939, Britain and France declared war against Nazi Germany and all of Japan. Thailand declared her intent to remain neutral with respect to the European war and to avoid any involvement in hostilities that might develop closer home.⁴

In the spring of 1939 Japan refused the invitation to join her Anti-Comintern partners in a military pact. The big danger in the game that she was playing was from the United States, where her actions had already aroused so much apprehension that in the previous January the American fleet had been transferred from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

Japan calculated that while there was a danger of America becoming involved in a war across the Atlantic, Americans would do everything possible to avoid one in the Pacific. Japan decided to commit herself fully to the Southeast Asia gamble. In November 1939, she moved to Kwangsi province to capture the city of Nanning and cut China's strategic highway connection with French Indochina. Meanwhile, Germany and Russia signed their Non-Aggression Pact in August 21, 1939, and another great war began in Europe.⁵

⁴Martin, p. 452.

⁵Hall, p. 683.

In 1939 Siam became a partner to important currency transactions with the United States. Due to the outbreak of war in Europe, Siamese-American trade had increased dramatically; it was soon approximately eightfold over what it had been before.

Japanese military strategy envisioned the conquest of Southeast Asia and consequently placed considerable emphasis on Indochina. By acquiring a foothold in the northern part of the area in the summer of 1940 and southern part in July 1941, the Japanese were in a position to put pressure on both peninsular and insular Southeast Asia. Increasingly subjected to Nipponese (Japanese) influence, Thailand suddenly found herself in an almost hopeless position. At the outbreak of a Pacific war, Japanese forces could occupy Thailand with practically no resistance. From bases in southern Indochina and Thailand, the Japanese believed they could successfully invade Malaya and conquer the British naval bastion of Singapore. Thailand and Indochina in the New Order of the Japanese Empire thus had a special status: the former was an ally and the latter a political anomaly where the Japanese temporarily supported the facade of the

French colonial regime.⁶ Both of these conditions depended upon decisions made in Tokyo.

In Southeast Asia, commercial agriculture, and particularly the production of rice, had already achieved a position of great importance. The production of rice had shifted dramatically to Thailand, which now grew nearly 95 percent of the Southeast Asian crop. While rice production was decreased in Southeast Asia in general during World War II, Thailand was most fortunate, having in 1939-1940 an estimated 8.8 million acres of rice producing 2.86 million metric tons of clean rice; ten years later she produced 12.4 million acres with 3.7 million metric tons. It became obvious that Thailand was the rice bowl of peninsular Southeast Asia, apart from Malaya: increasingly she would be of considerable importance in international relations.

Among the other commercial crops, rubber was the most important, although tea, coffee, sugar, palm oil, coconut, and cinchona were also significant. Before the Second World War, 90 percent of the world's rubber came from Southeast Asia, and the figure has not declined. The markets for rubber were outside Southeast Asia, especially in the

⁶Russell H. Fifield, *The Diplomacy of Southeast Asia, 1945-1958* (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1958), p. 28. (See also Appendix C.)

United States, and the price of the product on the world market had important effects on the areas specializing in its production. The development of synthetic rubber, greatly accelerated during World War II, would later raise a serious question about the ultimate future of rubber in Southeast Asia.⁷

Japan's active wooing of Thailand reached a crescendo after 1940. The Japanese leaders constantly emphasized such ideas as "Asia for the Asiantic," and the "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere," and their common reverence for the Buddhist faith.

When war broke out in Europe, and the British and French became absorbed in it, the Pibun government recognized that Thailand might be able to benefit from this situation insofar as its aspirations in Southeast Asia were concerned. Initially, Thailand declared her neutrality; then she sought to negotiate nonaggression pacts with the three most powerful nations in Asia: Great Britain, France, and Japan.

She concluded them with all three early in June 1940, but within a few weeks the situation in Europe had changed profoundly with Germany defeating France and forcing her to withdraw from the war. In addition, Britain was preparing to defend herself against a German invasion

⁷Ibid., pp. 9-10. (See also Appendix F and H.)

from the Continent, the future looked grim for the democratic Allies, and no one could predict the outcome of the European war. For the Thai government, therefore, the summer of 1940 appeared an opportune time to adopt a revisionist policy in Southeast Asia in the hope of regaining its "lost territories" in Laos and Cambodia and of generally enhancing its position with respect to France and possibly to Britain.

Although the nonaggression treaty with France had already been signed, the Thai government now refused to ratify it until France agreed to negotiate concerning two enclaves of Laotian territory on the west bank of the Mekong River: one in the north near Luang Prabang and the other near the Cambodian border. Thailand claimed both of these areas. This was a modest request, in view of the large areas in Indochina that Siam had been forced to cede to France in 1904 and 1907; regaining these enclaves would have established the Mekong River as the boundary between Laos and Thailand along the entire length of their long border.⁸

Vichy France was not, however, cordial to Thailand's request, so the latter then sought support from a number of great powers, including Great Britain, the United States, Germany, Italy, and Japan.

⁸Nuechterlein, p. 70.

Meanwhile, France had refused to negotiate and Japan had indicated sympathy for Thailand's position. The Pibun government decided on a show of strength and mobilized its armed forces. In addition, it increased its demands to include all territories surrendered to France in 1904 and 1907, namely, the disputed provinces in Cambodia; and it demanded a commitment from France that, in the event the latter relinquished its sovereignty over Indochina, it would turn over control of Laos and Cambodia to Thailand. The Pibun government was clearly betting that the Japanese would eventually oust France from Indochina, and so wanted to stake out its claim to the two areas it had previously controlled. By October 1940, nationalist feeling in Bangkok was running high, and the government subtly encouraged a popular demand for armed action.⁹

In June 1940 a treaty was signed between Vichy France and Tokyo which permitted Japanese forces to occupy the northern part of Indochina as far south as Hanoi. The treaty was worded in such a way as to warn America against interference in either Europe or the Pacific. In face of this Japanese threat, American isolation died a sudden death and Washington began to prepare for the worst. Japan's next concern was to reach a neutrality agreement with Russia

⁹Ibid., p. 71. (See also Appendix C.)

and at the time hold America off by negotiations. She played upon Pibun's revisionist ambitions by permitting a mock Thai offensive on the Cambodia and Laos frontiers and then in January 1941 she would step in with an offer of "mediation."¹⁰

In late October 1940 relations between Thailand and France had become so strained that the United States decided to cancel delivery of ten bombers that Thailand had bought from an American firm. The Thai population was outraged, and an anti-American propaganda campaign was launched with government support. To make matters worse, the Japanese then agreed to send Thailand an equal number of planes, complete with Japanese mechanics to service them.¹¹

Fighting between Thai and French forces broke out along the eastern border in November 1940 and Thailand occupied the two enclaves. By the autumn of 1940 the United States and Britain were becoming apprehensive over Thailand's policy in Indochina and they warned the Thai government against using force to obtain its demands from France. On the other hand, in order to curry favor with Thailand, the Japanese encouraged Thai militarists, because they believed

¹⁰Martin, p. 455. (See also Appendix J.)

¹¹Ibid. (See also Appendix B.)

that Thailand would be of key importance in their plans to invade Malaya and Burma.¹²

After some weeks of skirmishing and a small French air attack on Bangkok, Japan arranged for a Thai-French ceasefire. Negotiations took place in Tokyo during the spring of 1941, and Japan exerted pressure on both sides. In May delegates finally signed a treaty in which France agreed to return to Thailand territories taken in 1904 and 1907, including the Cambodian provinces of Siemrat and Pratabong. Thailand did not, however, obtain a guarantee of the future disposition of Laos and Cambodia. The real beneficiary of these negotiations was Japan: in return for a promise that neither France nor Thailand would conclude an alliance with a third power against Japan, the Japanese also greatly enhanced their prestige by effecting a treaty between a European colonial power and an independent Asian nation.

The United States had consistently urged Thailand not to use force to change the status quo. Now, United States export controls were established related to the American defense effort and Lend-Lease to Britain. On the same day that the Franco-Thai treaty was initialled in Tokyo, March 11, 1941, President Roosevelt signed the Lend-Lease Act. These controls interrupted the flow to Thailand

¹²Martin, pp. 452-455.

of a number of commodities for which Thailand had recently become dependent upon the United States, and the Thais felt that the United States was trying to punish them with economic sanctions. Thailand's vital imports included oil, gasoline, and kerosene from the United States.

On March 28, 1941, the Thai Minister in Washington requested the State Department to reconsider a United States rejection of a permit to ship kerosene and five-gallon containers to Thailand, neither being on the exports control list. He stated that Thailand was like an egg in the hollow of the United States and asked for a gesture by the United States that would restore traditional friendly relations. The State Department replied that America bore no animus against the Thai people but thought they had been pursuing courses consistent neither with Thailand's own best interests nor with principles which in the judgement of the United States government furnished the only sound basis for durable and healthy relations among nations. Nevertheless, the Department indicated that it would look into the question of export of petroleum products to Thailand. And adjustments were immediately forthcoming.¹³

In April 1941 Japan's hoped for Neutrality Pact with Russia was safely concluded. That same month American,

¹³Ibid., pp. 455-456. (See also Appendix A and I.)

British, Dutch, Australian, and New Zealand officers met in Singapore for staff conversations concerning Southeast Asia.

In May 1941 the Department of State was considering the extension of a three million dollar loan to Thailand and commercial credit in the same amount for purchases in the United States of goods available for export. A condition for, or at least a consideration with respect to, the extent of assistance would be the assurance of obtaining Thai rubber and tin.¹⁴

America tried to cooperate with the British to buy up all the Siamese tin and rubber available in order to keep it out of Japanese hands. The British wanted a Thai guarantee, similar to Thailand's guarantee of May 9 to Japan, that Thailand would not enter into any agreement with a third party which would be directed at Britain economically, politically, or militarily.¹⁵

Pibun consented to continued United States purchases of tin and rubber in an effort to limit the availability of these strategic commodities to Japan, the United States refused to accept Japanese gold from Thailand, who had an

¹⁴Peck of FE, "Memorandum of Economic Assistance to Thailand, July 11, 1941," Foreign Relations V., (1941), pp. 204-205. (See also Appendix E, F, and G.)

¹⁵Martin, p. 457. (See also Appendix D and K.)

unfavorable trade balance with the United States.¹⁶ The United States was also interested in encouraging Thailand's resistance to Japan and was now willing to supply her oil needs so long as she resisted; the shipping of oil was not tied to the acquisition of Thai rubber.¹⁷

Fear of Japanese designs in Southeast Asia had long ago alarmed the British and American governments. In the summer of 1941 they were forced to take a new look at Southeast Asia, and at Thailand in particular. Japanese occupation of Cambodia at that time was also a danger signal. Whereas in 1940 the United States had viewed Thailand as an upsetter of the status quo in Asia, by the summer of 1941 American policy was based on the assumptions that Japan had military designs on Southeast Asia and that Thailand should be strengthened militarily and encouraged to resist Japanese pressure.

The Thai government also was having second thoughts about a policy of close cooperation with Japan. In August Prime Minister Pibun told the American ambassador that Thailand would oppose any military aggression against his

¹⁶The Minister in Thailand (Peck) to the Secretary of State, Bangkok Telegram No. 544, December 1, 1941, Foreign Relations V (1941), pp. 363-364.

¹⁷Government Printing Office, Department of State Bulletin 892.6176/26, quoted in James V. Martin's "Thailand-American Relations in World War II," The Journal of Asian Studies (August 1963): 458.

country. He also formally asked for American assistance. The national assembly passed a bill calling on all citizens to resist invasion, and the government loudly proclaimed Thailand's determination to protect its neutrality by all possible means. By autumn Pibun was frantically calling for planes and arms from the United States and Britain and he sought also to coordinate Thai defense plans with those of Britain in Burma and Malaya.

But military assistance was not forthcoming; British forces were very short of arms in Malaya and Singapore and the United States decided it would be wiser to concentrate defense efforts in the Philippines rather than on the Asian continent. Thus, when the Japanese ambassador presented the Thai government with an ultimatum on December 7, 1941, to permit Japanese troops to cross the country, it had little choice but to agree, which it did after a few hours of deliberation. Sir Josiah Crosby, British Minister in Bangkok at that time, believed that "in the final resort it was our military weakness in the Far East which led to the alliance between Japan and Siam. Had we been able to hold our own against our adversary, I have no doubt that Siam would have continued to maintain her neutrality."¹⁸

¹⁸The Growth of Japanese influence in Siam during this period is described in Josiah Crosby's *Siam: The Crossroads* (London, 1945), p. 127.

The Thai Assembly, on August 28, 1941, passed a bill calling for mass popular resistance to invasion. However, Pibun avoided the appearance of hostility toward Japan, and his government made numerous expressions of neutrality. Moreover, on September 20, Pibun called upon the people to engage in no hostile acts against foreigners.¹⁹ Meanwhile, the United States declined to supply the twenty-four planes that Pibun had requested of Minister Peck, and the British could spare no planes. In November Great Britain did send some field guns, ammunition, and limited quantities of aviation fuel, fearing that even this would be lost when Japan attacked. But Pibun was dissatisfied with token aid. To make the situation worse, on November 18 the Japanese press widely accused Thailand of negotiating a secret military alliance with Great Britain and the United States and warned of dire consequences.

Japan initiated the Pacific phase of World War II by striking almost simultaneously at Pearl Harbor, the Philippines, Hong Kong, and Thailand. Only Thailand received warning. At 10:30 P.M. on December 7, 1941, the Japanese ambassador in Bangkok called at the official residence of the prime minister, who was out of town, and there

¹⁹Martin, p. 458. The particular document in this instance is the Bangkok Telegram No. 455, September 21, 1941, Department of State Bulletin 792.94/148.

informed the foreign minister that Japan had declared war on the United States and Great Britain. This news came a few hours before war was formally declared by the Imperial Japanese Government. Japan did not regard Thailand as an enemy but felt she must ask for passage through Thai territory knowing that Thailand would, and did, deny passage for the troops.²⁰

There was a definite change in the attitude of the United States towards Thailand as soon as its peace treaty with France was signed. Even in the midst of the undeclared war, Secretary Cordell Hull had told Seni Pramoj of the Department's fear that Japan would swallow both Indochina and Thailand.²¹

When the United States knew that war with Japan was certain, the Washington government decided to replace Hugh Grant, who had become identified with the earlier American policy of frowning upon Thailand disturbance of the status quo. His replacement was a career diplomat, Willys R. Peck, who could ensure the closest possible support with the Bangkok government.

²⁰Martin, p. 459.

²¹Cordell Hull, "Memorandum of Conversation with Pramoj, January 13, 1941," Foreign Relations V (1941), pp. 16-17.

Prime Minister Pibun Songgram was heartened by statements of the British Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, and the American Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, on August 6 and 7, 1941, that Japanese threats to Thailand affected the interest and security of Britain and the United States.²² Pibun told Grant on August 9 that Thailand would oppose any military aggression by force, but that she would need help.²³ On August 18, Secretary Hull assured Seni that in the event of a Japanese attack upon Thailand, the United States would aid Thailand as it had aided China.²⁴

By now it had become apparent to the Thai government that the democratic Allies were in no position to help her. France had already been defeated, England was rocking under the impact of the blitzkrieg, and the United States was stoutly proclaiming her neutrality. Once Thailand became convinced that the Allies were in no position to help her, she moved very swiftly to cooperate with the Japanese.

On December 7, 1941, Japan issued an ultimatum to Thailand. She stated that she did not regard Thailand as

²²The Secretary of State to the Minister in Thailand (Grant), Bangkok Telegram No. 91, August 7, 1941, Foreign Relations V (1941), pp. 264-265.

²³Martin, p. 457.

²⁴Cordell Hull, "Memorandum of Conversation, August 18, 1941," Foreign Relations V (1941), pp. 276-277.

an enemy but wished to cooperate with it. The Japanese offered the Thai government three alternatives:

1. Thailand could allow the Japanese to use her territory for moving troops and supplies into Burma and Malaya, in return for which Japan promised not to interfere in Thailand's internal administration; or

2. Thailand and Japan would form a defensive military alliance, under which Thailand would assist the Japanese war effort, in return for a guarantee of assistance in case Thailand were attacked by a third party; or

3. Thailand would join Japan in the war against the Allies, in return for which Japan would agree to return to Thailand all territories in the Malay Peninsular ceded to Britain in 1909.²⁵

The latter offer was indeed a large incentive to Pibun's nationalistic government, and the temptation to go the whole way was too great to resist. But since it was necessary to prepare public opinion for so complete a shift of policy, Pibun accepted the Japanese offer in stages. On December 21, 1941, he signed a formal treaty of alliance between Japan and Thailand which went into effect immediately.²⁶

On December 7, Honolulu time and thus an hour and twenty minutes after the commencement of the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Japanese invaded Thailand, they attacked by sea at several points on the Gulf of Siam and by the east, particularly from Cambodia. At noon on December 8,

²⁵Crosby, p. 127.

²⁶Nuechterlein, pp. 73-74.

Nai Direck Jayanama (the Minister of Foreign Affairs) sadly signed an agreement allowing Japanese armed forces passage through Thailand in return for Japanese assurances to respect the "independence and honor" of Thailand.²⁷

After Pearl Harbor Japan's offensive plunged ahead with breathless speed. On the following day her troops landed in Thailand and after a token resistance Pibun's government capitulated and agreed to declare war upon the Allies; on January 25, 1942, he issued the declaration, which was recognized by Great Britain but not by the United States.²⁸

Seni Pramoj, the Thai Minister in Washington, neither approved nor accepted the politics of his government. On December 8, 1941, he told Mr. Hull that Thailand's basic orientation was toward the democratic countries "no matter what may happen, that the Thais would look to the United States for aid at opportune times in the future to emancipate Thailand from Japanese military control, and that they would look for chances to cooperate with the United States."²⁹

²⁷Martin, p. 459.

²⁸Fifield, p. 236.

²⁹Cordell Hull, "Memorandum of Conversation, December 8, 1941," Department of State Bulletin 740.0011 P.W./1004, Foreign Relations V (1941), p. 376. (See also Appendix R.)

He immediately proposed to the Department the establishment of a Free Thai Movement.³⁰ And he publicly declared on December 11 that he would work for the reestablishment of an independent Thailand.

Before the end of December 1941 the American bases of Guam and Wake Island and the British settlement of Hong Kong had fallen. Then began the invasion of the Philippines with Japanese armies overwhelming American and Filipino forces there. Having the advantage of naval supremacy in the Pacific and East Asiatic waters with a large Pacific fleet, Japan was free to go ahead with the conquest of Southeast Asia. She planned a short and decisive war, feeling it essential that she reach her objectives before America could revive her power in the Pacific.³¹

The Thai government was as surprised at the speed and vigor of the Japanese attack throughout the Pacific as were the British and Americans. On December 8, 1941, Japanese troops landed at a number of points on the Gulf of Siam without forewarning; she ordered passage of her troops on their way to Burma and Malaya. According to Tokyo, Japanese troops were stationed in Thailand not as an occupation force but as friendly allies. Pridi Phanomyong, the second most prominent man, left the cabinet to become regent

³⁰Martin, p. 460.

³¹Hall, p. 685.

immediately after the Japanese invasion. During the war he became the focus of the anti-Japanese underground in Thailand, which maintained contact with China, the United States, and Great Britain. The Free Thai underground was a national asset, free from Japanese domination. Thailand's ambassador to the United States, Seni Pramoj, had from the very beginning of the war declared his Free Thai status and built good relations with the United States government.³²

Before the war, Thailand was the only independent state left in Southeast Asia. When Japan struck in December 1941, the country was under the dictatorial control of a general, Pibun Songgram, and the young King, Ananda Mahidol, was a schoolboy in Switzerland. He remained there until after the war and the royal powers were exercised by a regency. Pibun could not resist the Japanese, so he joined them. During the war the cooperation of the Thai government with Japan was not very close, but Thailand was given back sovereignty over the four northern unfederated states of Malaya. She also recovered the Battambang and Siemaraj districts of Cambodia, the French being forced by

³²David A. Wilson, Politics in Thailand (New York: Cornell University Press, 1962), pp. 19-21.

the occupying Japanese to yield these provinces of their protected kingdom of Cambodia.

Meanwhile, Pridi Panomyong, the original leader of the antiabsolute monarchy revolution of 1932, was still in power, acting as regent for the absent King. Pridi did not agree with the pro-Japanese policy of Pibun and used his position as regent to cooperate secretly with the Allied powers. The United States, taking the view that Thailand had acted under Japanese constraint, refused to admit that a state of war existed between Thailand and America. This policy made it easier for Pridi to communicate with the Allied Supreme Commanders.³³

³³Charles Patrick Fitzgerald, A Concise History of East Asia (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), p. 28.

CHAPTER V

THE FREE THAI MOVEMENT

One of the most important factors in United States-Thailand relations proved to be the willingness of the Thai people to fight for themselves in defending their homeland. After Thailand succumbed to the Japanese ultimatum of December 7, the Thai Minister in Washington, Seni Pramoj, took it upon himself to inform the American State Department that he believed his country to be under Japanese coercion. He asked for assistance to form a "Free Thai" movement from among Thai students and officials then in the United States, in order to work for the liberation of his country.

One scholar states that "the anti-Japanese, pro-Western policy of the Thai Minister in Washington was to affect profoundly the policy of the United States toward Thailand throughout the war and during the negotiations at its end."¹ It would also produce a divergence of views between the United States and Great Britain regarding a postwar settlement with Thailand. When Seni was instructed by his government to deliver the declaration of war to Secretary of State Cordell Hull in January 1942, he told

¹Martin, p. 460.

Hull that he did not consider this to be the will of the Thai people and that he preferred not to deliver it. Whereupon the United States chose not to consider itself at war with Thailand despite the official declaration of war issued in Bangkok.

Seni Pramoj lost no time in promoting the organization of a modest Free Thai contingent which rendered yeoman services assisting the American Office of Strategic Service (OSS) in establishing liaison with the Siamese Underground (the Movement for Siamese Liberation) and with guerilla units in Thailand. He formally proposed a "Free Thai" organization scheme to the Department of State on March 25, 1942.²

At a "Free Thai" meeting in Washington representatives prepared a formal statement.

1. The Seri (Free) Thai is not a political party. It is merely a Thai organization whose main objective is to restore Thailand's independence.
2. The Japanese army is the enemy of the Thais because the Japanese armed forces invaded Thailand.
3. The Bangkok government is a puppet government because it has played ball (sic) with the enemy against the will of the people.
4. The Seri Thai regards itself as the representative agency working for the will of Thai people everywhere.
5. The Seri Thai will not interfere with the law of succession of the King.
6. A constitutional government and democracy will be restored to Thailand after the country's freedom is restored.

²Martin, p. 462.

7. The Seri Thai will release all political prisoners and will organize a people's court to investigate those who have cooperated with the enemy.³

These were sweeping and potentially helpful statements as the United States opened her military operations in the Pacific theater. In June 1942, at the Battle of Midway, the American fleet sank the four aircraft carriers accompanying a superior Japanese fleet and forced it to flee. This action proved to be the turning of the tide in the Pacific War. In 1943 the Allies were preparing for a more widespread offensive in the Pacific, with the Japanese homeland islands as the ultimate goal.⁴

The basic settlement Thailand as a sovereign state would have to make with the victorious powers of the Second World War having special interests in her is comparable in international significance to the settlements that would be made between the newly independent states in Southeast Asia and their former Western rulers. Thailand's role in the Second World War was not unlike that of Italy in a number of aspects. The British compared the respective positions of Denmark in Europe with reference to German occupation and of Thailand in Asia with reference to the Japanese. They observed that Thailand took the occasion to declare war and

³Darling, pp. 34-35. (See also Appendix L.)

⁴Hall, p. 691.

to make territorial gains. As a consequence of Thailand's declaration of war, Great Britain took the position that it would have to be legally terminated by the two powers. On the other hand, the United States ignored the declaration of war by the Pibun regime and recognized the "Free Thai" movement.⁵

Early in 1942 the Washington government accordingly offered to assist the Free Thai Organization.⁶ In April, Siamese students began to receive military and guerrilla warfare training, including radio operation and demolition technique. Of the seventy-three Thai students in the United States, thirty-nine were trained,⁷ and of these twenty-one were commissioned as officers in the Free Thai Forces.⁸ They formed an expeditionary force under a Thai military officer, Lt. Col. M. Preston Kunjara (Goodfellow to Seni) and sailed for India in March 1943.⁹ They flew over the Hump into China and from there entered Thailand by airplane, parachute, and on foot. The costs of the expedition were met by the Thai themselves. At Seni's request, the

⁵Fifield, pp. 237-238.

⁶Darling, p. 35.

⁷The New York Times, January 9, 1946, p. 8.

⁸Darling, p. 35.

⁹Martin, p. 462.

Department of State released Thai government funds in the United States and made them available for that purpose.

In Thailand Pridi Panomyong, one of the organizers of the 1932 revolution, had become Minister of Finance during Pibun's period. He had resigned his position when Pibun capitulated to the Japanese and had tried unsuccessfully to establish an independent government in the north. He was then made regent and under cover of his privileged position organized an underground movement in secret touch with the Free Thai Movement in the United States and Britain. Allied forces working through his underground prepared airfields and imported arms ready for an attack on the Japanese, although they had no opportunity to carry through with the plan due to the suddenness of the Japanese collapse in 1945. Members of the underground movement did much to help European prisoners of war working on the "death railway."¹⁰

Pridi tried to organize the Free Thai Movement from his residence at Thachang on the river front. He was assisted by such men as Thawi Bunyaket, Direck Jayanama, Police General Adul Dejcharas, Admiral Sangworn Suwannachip, and General Sinat Yothin. The assistance of the latter was important because it permitted the Allies to send men easily into the country. Friendly Thai police then "arrested" the

¹⁰Hall, p. 690.

Allied soldiers, brought them to police headquarters, protected them from the Japanese and hid them from the public. These Allied prisoners then appeared during the day as "war prisoners," and then, at night, worked secretly in their organized cells on their radio equipment contacting their opposite numbers in Kandy, giving information about Japanese military movements and news about their underground colleagues in Thailand.

It was agreed with the Japanese that prisoners arrested by the Thai would be kept by the Thai. This arrangement often resulted in unusual events. For example, the police were taking some American officers for "work duty"; when they returned they had a flat tire and quite nearby was a group of Japanese soldiers. Instead of running away they went to the Japanese asking for help, saying that they must carry off the American soldiers to prison. The Japanese believed them and helped to change the tire.

Free Thai units were organized everywhere in the country and were trained secretly in the jungle. Thus there were units at Chainat, Uthaidhani, Kanchanaburi, Chachoengsao, Nakorn Pathom, Cholburi, Sukhotai, Loeui, and Bangkok.

The objects of the Free Thai Movement were to get into contact with the Allies, cooperate with them, pass on information behind the line, organize sabotage work, help

the Allies in landing, and then fight against the Japanese when the opportunity arose.

When this "Free Thai" movement was organized, Pridi tried to send his men to contact the Allies: first he sent them to Burma but they got lost in the jungle. Then he sent Chamkad Balangkul with a message to contact the Chinese and the Americans in Chungking. But Chamkad fell sick and died. The idea that the Regent was the leader of the Free Thai Movement seemed to the Allies to be incredible.

The message sent through Balangkul reads as follows:

1. Pibun's declaration of war on Britain and America was unconstitutional and therefore null and void, so that no state of war with those countries exists.
2. Accordingly the Treaties of Friendship between Siam and those two countries should be regarded as still in force.
3. Since the present Siamese Government is not free, being under Japanese control, a "Free" Siamese Government should be set up on Indian territory, and the British and American Governments should then establish diplomatic relations with it.
4. As a nucleus for this Government, certain leading people must escape from Siam, that is the Regent (Pridi), some Cabinet Ministers and at least ten members of the National Assembly.
5. Siamese reserves held in British and American banks, all of which had been frozen, should be released to the Free Siamese Government.¹¹

But failing to form the necessary contacts, Pridi sent yet a third delegation to contact the Allies via Chungking. This time he sent Sanguon Tularksa and

¹¹Jumsai, p. 267.

Deang Guna Tilaka. This mission did contact the Americans in Chungking and were then invited to go to the United States.

In spring 1943, agents of the Thai underground appeared in Chungking to sound out the possibilities of establishing a Free Thai government in exile in that city, to be recognized by the United Nations as the one and only lawful government of Thailand. Neither the Chinese nor the British favored the idea. Seni Pramoj also opposed it. However, two of the agents, Nai Sanguan Tularaksa and Nai Daeng Guna Tilaka, came to Washington to win the support of Seni and the United States. They wished Thai assets in Great Britain and the United States to be unfrozen for their use. They also requested that a Free Thai army be established in southern China through Lend-Lease aid; that the United States' army air force cooperate with it, and that American assist in moving from Thailand by plane or submarine political personages whose presence in a Free Thai government would be necessary in making it constitutionally legal.

The Department was chary of recognizing "any particular Thai group" in connection with the government-in-exile proposal. Seni, however, moved around in favor of the plan between December 9, 1943, into February 1944, when he tried to persuade the Department of State to adopt the idea. The

Department was still careful, partly because of uncertainty concerning the British attitude. President Roosevelt and Chiang Kai-Shek had agreed at Cairo, on November 23, 1943, that Thailand should be independent after the war, but whether the British would concur had not been established.¹²

In keeping with his idea of forming a government in exile, Pridi now tried to enroll members from the three branches of government: the Regent (himself a representative of Parliament, and a Minister. He, therefore, called for Thawi Bunyaket, once Minister and Director of the Prime Minister's cabinet, and persuaded him to try to be elected as Speaker of the House. After the election, which Thawi won, Pibun refused to certify him as Speaker, saying that Thawi hated the Japanese and was not the right man. Pridi depended heavily upon M. L. Kri Dejatiwongse, Minister in the Pibun cabinet, to join him in a government in exile, along with a number of discontented members of Parliament. But he soon found that it was more useful for him to stay in the country and lead the Free Thai Movement at home than to try further to form the government in exile.

It was not difficult for Seni Pramoj in Washington to organize a Free Thai Movement in the United States, recruiting students and officials from there. The American

¹²Martin, p. 463.

government recognized him as a true representative of the Thai people and allowed him to draw on the banks as usual for the cause. They helped him to train the Free Thais and sent them to cooperate with the units in India.

Establishing the Free Thai Movement in England was more difficult, because the Thai ambassador in London did nothing similar to the activities of Seni in Washington. He merely instructed Thai students to return home. The Thai officials and students were then rounded up as aliens and held in Victoria by the British government for exchange for English nationals held in Thailand. Those who refused to go back were regarded by the British government as aliens.

In England, Thai nationals found their bank reserve frozen and they had to work for their living. The Thai students in London fled from there because of the heavy German bombardment, to join their colleagues in Cambridge. When they heard that the Thai government had declared war on Great Britain, they disagreed with their government; when they heard that Seni Pramoj had organized a Free Thai Movement, one of the students, Sanoh Tanbunyuen of Trinity College, sent a cable of support to Seni and asked for his advice as to what he himself should do. In December 24, 1941, Seni cabled Sanoh in Cambridge as follows:

Highly gratified and encouraged by your cordial message showing spirit of Thais united in true cause. Our unswerving determination to fight for liberation

of our homeland on side of Democracies must ultimately succeed. Pramoj, Thai Minister.

This exchange of cables was the beginning of a Free Thai Movement in England. The first nucleus of Free Thais consisted of students in Cambridge, with Sanoh Tanbunyuen as president, some Thai students from London, and two officials of the Thai embassy, Klin Devahastin and Prasert Patummanon. The students in Cambridge at the time were: Sanoh Tanbunyuen, Yimyon Taeruchi, Chirauy Nobhavongse, and Sanoh Nilkamhaeng. They were joined by Thai students from London: Puey Ungpakorn, Vivatana Pompert, Sawang Samkoset, Tep Semakiti, and a few others. They formed a Free Thai group and looked for a leader. At first they contacted Prince Chula Chakrabhongse, but the latter refused to accept, saying that he did not want to become involved with politics.

Fortunately they found support among the circle of Thais who had followed King Prajadhipok into exile and Prince Subha-Sawasdi Swasdiwattana became their leader. The British government would not recognize the Free Thai army; if they formed a corps of forty men they could serve only in a pioneer corps and not as active soldiers. The Thai Ambassador in Washington then helped them organize their activities and sent Mani Sanasen to contact them in London, where he stayed at the Brown Hotel. He, along with Sanoh Tanbunyuen, sent circulars to all the Thais, organizing a

meeting and fixing their program. The purpose of their program at the meeting was to help in liberating Thailand and to procure freedom and rights in living. The group declared their purpose not to involve themselves with internal Thai politics nor belong to any party, but to get contact with Free Thais at home and support them by working against the Japanese. In forming this organization they declared they did not want any name or honor or position for themselves, and they agreed to disband after the liberation of Thailand.

They quickly organized a publicity program by means of publications and a BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) program in the Thai language, through which they could inform people at home of the Japanese intentions and present a truer account of the war. They also contacted similar movements on the Continent in order to cooperate with them in their work against the Japanese and the Germans. They tried to make the English government understand that the Thai people were not in agreement with the Thai government in collaborating with the Japanese. They also helped in looking after Thai property in London. In the end they could get more than the required forty men to join their military organization.

Those in England who could pass the health examination were sent for preliminary training in Wales. From there they

were sent to India, where part of them joined Force 136 in Kandy in the Southeast Asia High Command of Lord Louis Mountbatten. Force 136 then tried to send men into Thailand by using these Free Thais. At first they tried to send them in a submarine off the coast of Takuapa in Southern Thailand, then Allied planes parachuted them into Chainat.

One of the first to fly in was Puey Ungpakorn, who was arrested by the police and finally brought to Luang Adul, head of the police. He in turn was already a Free Thai worker within Thailand. Adul imprisoned Puey during the daylight hours and set him secretly to work at night to contact the Allies by radio. After this episode there were more contacts made by sending men to parachute at Ban Cha-Am and finally nearer to Bangkok, dropping them off the plane in the Gulf of Thailand at night where a Free Thai motor boat would come and pick them up. Thus various American units were established in Bangkok under the very nose of the Japanese at Thammasart University and at the Thachang residence of Pridi.

The Free Thai Movement in England did excellent work in passing on information to the Allies which could not be obtained otherwise. They even informed the Allies precisely where the Japanese ammunition dumps were located so that with torches from the ground they could be spotted and bombed. English and American officers were secretly brought

into the country to help in organizing and training Free Thai volunteers at secret camps, and the Allies helped in dropping arms to them at secret airfields in the jungles. One group of the Japanese became suspicious and tried to enter a Free Thai dump in a forbidden ground. They were killed off and immediately buried so that no trace of them could be found.

In the end, the Pibun government fell and Pridi arranged for his own nominee, Luang Dhamrong Navasvasti, to be appointed Prime Minister. Pridi selected Thawi Bunyaket as Minister of Education; he at once rallied the students of Thammasart University for his cause and sent them for training at the camp of Luang Sangworn in Prachuap. They then began planning common action with the Allies in rounding up the Japanese at the time of landing of the Allied forces. On that day all the Free Thais would appear with white arm bands marked with a blue strip as a distinguishing mark.

Pridi then delegated two people, Pisan Sukhumvit and Sukum Naiyapradit, to go to India and America to ask for arms. The two brothers, both American trained, went to Kandy and talked with various leaders, especially General Frank Dow Merrill, commander of the American army. He promised to give the Free Thais the necessary arms but was awaiting orders from the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Louis

Mountbatten, who was hesitating, doubting the honesty of the Thais--Mountbatten never gave the order.

The two Thai representatives then went to America via Africa and arrived in Washington on June 17, 1945. The American leaders were very interested since they seldom knew what had been happening in Thailand during the war. The two Thai representatives then contacted Sol Bloom, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and his committee. They were all interested in hearing what Pisan Sukhvit had to tell them. The two also met Director Moffatt, Director of the Southeast Asia Section of the State Department. The American military also became interested and asked to see them; a meeting was attended by officers of high rank from the three armed forces. They also had been able to work through the press and radio with the help of Richard Eaton. The American public seemed to be in great sympathy with the Thai and only considered them as a country under Japanese occupation and to be liberated. Phra Pisan also tried to generate commercial interest in Thailand and in Thai raw products so that there would be more American investments in Thailand, since prior to World War II the whole trade was in British and Japanese hands. Here was a new market for the Americans. He also looked for help in order to reconstruct the country after the war, as the whole national economy was ruined and the whole system of railways

destroyed as a result of the war. They needed to be replaced urgently.

While the Free Thais were campaigning for these objectives, the war had come to an end. On August 5, 1945, an atom bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and on August 9 another one exploded over Nagasaki. The Japanese capitulated unconditionally on August 14 and peace was declared in Thailand on August 16, 1945.¹³

¹³Jumsai, pp. 265-272.

CHAPTER VI

CONQUEST OR LIBERATION: AN ANGLO-AMERICAN DILEMMA IN THAILAND

As the war wore on, the Bangkok government gradually made an adjustment to the possibility of an Allied victory. In 1944 a genuine crisis occurred in Thailand's foreign policy, since it became increasingly clear that Japan would eventually be defeated by the Allied force and that Thailand might then be treated as an enemy-occupied nation. Prime Minister Pibun had gambled heavily on a Japanese victory and the problem was how to extricate Thailand from this situation with the minimum of damage. The greatest obstacle was the ill feeling of Great Britain, which, unlike the United States, had suffered considerably from the Thai government's declaration of war and was in no mood to be charitable.

The United States was willing to see Thailand emerge as an independent nation after the war and was prepared to supply the Thai underground with equipment and training. But the Washington government was unwilling to recognize a Thai exile government, partly because of the strong opposition of the British. The British, moreover, were not willing to

give unconditional support for Thailand independence after the war. British policy held that the Thais must work themselves back to their pre-war status and that independence could be secured only at a price.¹

In 1944 Germany was losing the war. During the latter part of July, the principal Allied powers were in session at Potsdam drafting their final answer to the requests for peace that Admiral Suzuki Kantaro, the new Japanese Premier, had been proffering since the previous May. Thereafter in Southeast Asia it was only a matter of stamping out the resistance of outlying Japanese garrisons and chasing their forces through the mountains towards pro-Japanese Siam.²

In July 1944 the Japanese were clearly losing in the Southeast Asia war. Pridi and his followers were then able to force Pibun out of power and to negotiate the surrender of Thailand to the Allies without internal opposition. This capitulation was peacefully arranged at the right moment, when Japanese intervention inside Thailand was no longer a possible threat. Thailand had to give up the four northern Malay states and Battambang and Siemraj once more went back to Cambodia, but Thailand suffered no other loss of territory.

¹Nuechterlein, p. 80.

²Hall, pp. 695-697.

Siam, although Japan's ally and technically at war with the Allies, found her position little better than that of a country conquered by the Japanese. Her trade ceased, the Japanese confiscated whatever they required for their war effort, and they completely failed to supply her with either the textiles or the machinery that she so badly needed. These facts, together with Pibun's harsh treatment of officials who refused cooperation, aroused an intense opposition to his regime. In July 1944, when it became apparent that Japan was losing the war in Southeast Asia, his government collapsed.³

In May 1945 Germany surrendered in Europe. The Americans could now turn their undivided attention to the Japanese and they were preparing to invade Japan. In Manchuria a million Japanese troops were awaiting a Russian declaration of war. In July 26, 1945, the Allies at Potsdam published their terms for the Japanese surrender, though they received no answer. The first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on August 5, 1945; on August 8 Russia declared war on Japan and on August 9 the second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. A short time later Japan accepted the terms of the surrender.⁴

³Ibid., p. 724.

⁴Hall, p. 697.

At the end of the war the most urgent problem for Thailand was the readjustment of relations with the victorious Allies. Seni Pramoj, now considered the most acceptable man for bringing about reconciliation with the Allies, worked with the United States.

British commercial interests had suffered heavy losses in Siam and there was naturally a demand for compensation. But unofficial American pressure persuaded the London government to relax her demands.

While the United Kingdom had declared war on Siam, the United States had never recognized the Siamese declaration of war and was consequently in a good position to advance Thai interests at the expense of Britain. Britain's interests in Siam were much greater than America's, but British claims for war damage brought constant American intervention in order to assure most-favored-nation treatment for American trade. The postwar period, therefore, saw an immense growth of American influence in Siam.⁵ In the eyes of Thailand, Japan was defeated, Britain was demanding compensation, and the United States appeared as a fair, generous friend.

The United States was prepared to accept the Thai government's position that it had been coerced by Japan into

⁵Ibid., p. 724.

joining in an aggressive alliance. A statement by Secretary of State James Byrnes, issued on August 20, 1945, noted that "the American government has always believed that the declaration of war did not represent the will of the Thai people."

He recalled that the Thai Minister in Washington had organized the Free Thai Movement, which "contributed substantially to the Allied cause"; and that the resistance movement within Thailand had been prepared to commence overt action against the Japanese but had not done so because the British and American governments had "requested that such action be deferred" for operational reasons. This statement of policy concluded by asserting that the United States would "regard Thailand not as an enemy but as a country to be liberated from the enemy," and that it looked "to the resumption by Thailand of its former place in the community of nations as a free, sovereign, and independent country."⁶ This declaration clearly put the British and other Allied powers on notice that the United States would oppose any effort to deprive Thailand of its independence.⁷

⁶Cordell Hull, "Thai-American Relations, August 19, 1945," The Department of State Bulletin 13, No. 321, Publication 2377, pp. 261-262.

⁷Nuechterlein, p. 86.

In the meantime, Kuang Abhaiwongse had resigned from office on the ground that he had fulfilled his duties as a wartime Prime Minister. Afterward, the Thai National Assembly, on September 1, 1945, approved the statement of policy of the government headed by Tawee Bunyaket. Dealing with foreign policy, the government would cooperate and promote friendly relations to the fullest extent with the United Nations in every respect and was also prepared to join the United Nations in building up the stability of the world on the basis of the ideals which had been laid down by the United Nations at San Francisco.⁸

Although in January 1946 Thailand obtained the support of both the United States and Britain for membership in the United Nations, the approval of the other three permanent members of the Security Council--France, Nationalist China, and the Union of Soviet Republics--was also required. In each case Thailand had to pay a price for joining the wrong side in 1941. Negotiations with the Soviet Union and China did not prove so difficult as those with France, because neither of these countries had any territorial dispute with Thailand. Later that year the

⁸Syamanada, p. 174.

final obstacles were removed and Thailand was admitted to the United Nations in December 1946.⁹

⁹Nuechterlein, p. 88.

CHAPTER VII

A NEW ERA IN THAILAND-UNITED STATES

RELATIONS BEGINS

The refusal of the United States to consider herself at war with Thailand after the Japanese occupation meant that a peace treaty between the two countries was not necessary. Exerting a moderating influence on Great Britain in her peace negotiations with Thailand, the United States joined its European friend in reestablishing diplomatic relations with the Bangkok government on January 5, 1946. On January 24, the United States announced that as a result of conversations with the Thai government "it has been recognized that the treaties and other international agreements in force between the United States and Siam prior to the outbreak of war in the Far East continue in full force and effect."¹

Commercial rapprochement followed political friendships. The Department of State reported on September 9 that Thailand had promised to welcome American capital in the development of her minerals. During 1947, 1948, and 1949

¹Statement by Acting Secretary Acheson, "International Agreements with Siam Continue in Force," the Department of State Bulletin 14 (February 3, 1946), p. 178. (See also Appendix O.)

relations between the two countries were largely commercial. The United States was purchasing rice for South Korea, China, and American troops in Japan, and rubber and tin for stockpiling. Trade was more extensive than at any past time. The United States gave certain technical help and in August 1949 instructed the Supreme Commander in occupied Japan to release certain earmarked gold in the country to Thailand and France. The sum of \$37,300,000 had been earmarked for the Bank of Indochina and \$43,700,000 for the Bank of Thailand.²

The Thai military assistance agreement with the United States was made in October 1950, before the first successes of Chinese intervention in Korea. Thai values stress the virtues of reserve and emotional noninvolvement and, therefore, adjustment to any given circumstances. Thus the style of Thai foreign policy is clearly distinct from the activism of the Filipinos or the Malaysians. Throughout the cataclysmic events of the last three decades, Thailand has always managed to be an ally of the dominant power in the area, which suggests either masterful flexibility or opportunism.³

²Fifield, p. 269.

³William Henderson, Southeast Asia Problems of United States Policy (London: Cambridge University Press, 1963), p. 82.

It was also suggested that United States aid programs, both economic and military, should be tailored to fit individual nations. Too, policymakers noted that success of a particular thing in Indonesia did not necessarily mean that it would be equally good in Thailand or Burma or elsewhere.⁴

The United States was slow to become intimately involved in the concerns of Southeast Asia after the end of World War II. Not until 1950, when the Communist Chinese completed their conquest of the mainland and entrenched Communist power along the whole periphery of Southeast Asia, did United States involvement in the region take on serious dimensions. The principal American effort was, therefore, directed to safeguarding the military security of the Southeast Asian countries against the Communists, both by strengthening, in so far as seemed feasible, their own military establishments and by extending the mantle of American military power over the region. But United States policymakers were also aware of the close relationship between the Communist threat to Southeast Asia and the profound political, economic, and social problems besetting the region.⁵

⁴Ibid., p. 172.

⁵Ibid., pp. 249-250.

The great weakness of United States policy in Southeast Asia since the 1950's, which indeed may ultimately prove a fatal defect, is that Americans have never been quite sure how serious the United States policy should be. In consequence, American policy toward the region has usually lacked dynamism and a sense of urgency and crisis commensurate with the dimensions of the Communist threat to the region. Nor has there ever been much popular interest in, or active support for, the steadily increasing involvement of the United States in Southeast Asian affairs.⁶ Too, the Vietnam War proved disenchanting for many.

Not only did 1950 mark a change in Thailand's policy but also in that of the United States in Southeast Asia. The rise of power of Communist China and her alliance with the Soviet Union followed by the outbreak of the Korean War created a situation in the Far East not conducive to American interests. Southeast Asia in many respects was a power vacuum with both the Communist and Western powers eager to win support in the region and deny it to their rivals. Obviously Thailand was a key country in the security policy of the United States in the area. American-Philippine ties had come into being as a result of many years of close association on the political as well as the economic and

⁶Ibid., p. 252.

cultural levels, but American-Thai relations did not have such a heritage upon which to build.

In February 1950 a conference of senior American diplomats in the Far East was held in Bangkok with Phillip Jessup, Ambassador-at-Large, in attendance. In April an economic survey mission visited Thailand on its trip through Southeast Asia, and in August an American military survey mission came to Bangkok, also on a trip, though less extensive, through Southeast Asia. On September 19 an Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement was signed between Thailand and the United States and a month later, on October 17, a military assistance agreement was completed. In a statement on the occasion of the signing of the latter, the American Ambassador in Bangkok characterized the pact as neither a military alliance nor defense pact. It contained no provisions for military, naval, or air bases.⁷

In the agreement, both the United States and Thailand candidly reappraised their positions with regard to the possibility of military bases. The Government of Thailand has not offered such bases, nor has the Government of the United States ever requested such bases or any special concession. This agreement follows the request by the Government of Thailand for arms and equipment to strengthen Thailand's forces with a view to enabling them better to defend Thailand and Thailand's people from any aggression which may threaten the peace and tranquility of this country. It is in this spirit that the Government of the United States has responded to the appeal from the Government of Thailand and has

⁷Fifield, p. 269.

decided to give army and military equipment which will replace old equipment now being used by the armed forces of Thailand and to supply a number of American officers and technicians for training purposes.⁸

The outbreak of the Korean War was a turning point for both the United States and Thailand, insofar as the military defense of Southeast Asia was concerned. The Korean War also had a decisive effect on Thailand's foreign policy and tended to vindicate Pibun's earlier efforts to associate Thailand with a defensive arrangement among the Western powers in Southeast Asia.

The Thai government was one of the first to respond to the United Nations call for assistance in the Korean War and Pibun dramatically offered 20,000 tons of rice and several thousand troops to assist the United Nations war effort. By offering to send Thai soldiers to fight beside British and American as well as other United Nations forces, Pibun felt he had a right to expect support from these countries in defense of Thailand.

Until June 1950 there had been considerable opposition in Thailand to accepting military aid from the West on the grounds that it might bring about retaliation by Communist nations; after the attack on Korea, however, these

⁸Statement by American Ambassador Edwin F. Stanton, "Military Assistance Agreement Concluded with Thailand," the Department of State Bulletin 23 (October 30, 1950), p. 702.

fears were largely dispelled and there was little opposition to the equipping and training of the Thai armed forces by American advisers. By the end of 1950, military and economic aid began to flow into the country and it brought increasing prosperity for the Thais. As a result, in September 1950 the above noted Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement was concluded between the United States and Thailand and the following month the previously described Military Assistance Agreement was signed. In July 1951, the two governments agreed on an Educational Exchange Program. A short time later Thai students began coming to the United States on scholarships and American professors went to teach in Thailand.⁹

During the following months relations between the two nations grew even more friendly. On November 9 the Washington government opened an American Consulate in Chiangmai, a strategically located city in northern Thailand. On December 27 and 29, 1951, an exchange of notes between the United States and Thailand provided for the Thai assurances necessary for the kingdom to receive military aid under the Mutual Security Act of 1951.

By March 31, 1955, United States allotments for aid to the Thais amounted to \$63,769,000. The first shipments of

⁹Nuechterlein, p. 108. (See also Appendix M and N.)

military supplies had been turned over to Thailand in January 1951. The situation in Indochina, however, so preoccupied the American thinking that deliveries to Thailand were slow. The Thai armed forces were being built up with the help of the Joint United States Military Advisory Group. American economic and technical aid was being extended to the kingdom through a mission associated with the United States Embassy.

On July 13, 1954, it was announced that "a new program of increased military aid and technical assistance" to Thailand had been formulated. Funds would be available for the construction of a strategic military highway of 297 miles from Saraburi in central Thailand through Korat to Ban Phai. A growing cultural relationship between the two countries brought them closer. In the Northeast the United States Information Service had been especially active. Americans had participated in Thai international fairs and a Fulbright program had been successfully functioning between the two countries. Thailand was becoming so Americanized that on June 21, 1955, she agreed to buy \$1,900,000 worth of American tobacco.¹⁰

The government of Premier Pibun continued for some time to press for an American guarantee of the nation. When

¹⁰Fifield, p. 270.

in April 1954, during the climax of the French battle at Dien Bien Phu in Vietnam, the United States called "for united action to halt the further march of Communist aggression, Thailand was the only country that responded immediately and without reservation."¹¹

In 1955 Pibun took an extensive trip abroad including the United States on his itinerary. Making an official visit in Washington from May 2 through 6, he received the Legion of Merit award from President Dwight D. Eisenhower and played a good game of golf with him. In his speeches in the United States Pibun stressed Thailand's loyalty and commitment to the Western block, SEATO, and the United States in particular; he strongly supported American policy toward Nationalist and Communist China; and he discussed the threats to his country from Communist activities among its neighbors as well as at home.

Thailand followed with considerable interest the international developments associated with the Geneva meeting at the "summit" of the American, British, French, and Russian heads of government in the summer of 1955 and she also watched the American-Chinese Communists direct talks in Geneva. She did not want to find herself alone or almost

¹¹Edwin F. Stanton, "Spotlight on Thailand," Foreign Affairs 33 (October, 1954): 83.

alone in Southeast Asia if the "summit" atmosphere proved permanent. At stake was the future of Thailand-Chinese Communist relations. One thing could be certain about the future of Thai foreign policy--it would have its roots in Thailand's years of experience as a sovereign state in an important part of the world and would reflect to a substantial degree the shifts in global power and the changes in world politics.¹²

The United States was vitally interested both in maintaining access to the resources of the free world and in keeping them out of Communist control. The system of military alliances and bases was intended to protect the American economy. In this sense it was a fulfillment of that other tradition in American Far Eastern policy, which dated from Commodore Perry, of covering the Pacific with naval bases for the protection of American commerce.

American policy since the war was strongly affected by the development of powerful new weapons. It was in the Pacific that the first atomic bombs were used and the Pacific was the proving ground for the hydrogen bomb tests. The question arose as to whether or not the new weapons made obsolete many of the assumptions on which political, as well as military, strategy was based. The high point in the

¹²Fifield, p. 272.

development of this view was that decisive wars would no longer be waged on the traditional battlefield but would be determined by the immediate destruction of the major industrial centers of the world. It was thought that local wars could be prevented by the threat of massive retaliation. But the realization that the H-bomb threatened the mutual destruction of the world's greatest powers posed the question whether or not it would be used at all.¹³

Pibun began patiently and warily to build his nation's military strength. The army supported him and regarded him as a strong man who could give political stability. He issued a new constitution, promised a general election in the near future, and installed Khuang Apaiwong as interim Prime Minister. In January 1948 he was elected again. He showed respect for world opinion by hiding his military dictatorship with the utmost care behind a ministry of talented leaders, and he held power successfully. Shortly after winning the general election he took over the premiership himself, revived his previous policy of modernism, and launched a comprehensive scheme for the improvement of secondary education. His chief efforts went towards

¹³George E. Taylor, *America in the New Pacific* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1942), p. 688. Other thinkers, of course, note that the traditional battlefield and the traditional army may not be obsolete after all. The problems of armies and battlefields and traditional values could easily be seen later vis-a-vis the Vietnam War.

strengthening Siam's military forces and building a new military city just outside the old town of Lopburi.¹⁴

Pibun had greatly strengthened his position in Thai politics and had gained the support of the United States and Britain, both of whom had had strong reservations about his return to power in 1948. Whether or not one agreed with his ideas on government, it could not be denied that Pibun seemed to be a master politician who knew how to work with the major powers.

In September 1954, Thailand was among the eight nations represented at the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization founding conference at Manila. Much had happened in Southeast Asia between August 1944 when Pibun stepped down from the premiership and September 1954. The fact that a government led by Pibun was a participant at Manila was one of these changes. Thailand was, subsequently, the first nation to ratify the Southeast Asian Collective Defense Treaty.¹⁵

The friendship of the United States had brought many major benefits to the Thai people, aside from the considerations of international politics. Deadly malaria, for instance, was eliminated as a consequence of American aid.

¹⁴Hall, pp. 725-726.

¹⁵Amry Vandebosch and Richard Butwell, The Changing Face of Southeast Asia (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1966), p. 179.

The United States brought to Thailand a new rice seed which would increase rice yields threefold. The new roads and railroads have been built and many acres of arid land have been irrigated.

Thai-American cooperation was quickly evidenced in many ways. Militarily, for example, Thai troops participated in "Operation Firm Link," the first joint maneuvers of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization power. In February 1956 the military exercise comprised a mock landing in the vicinity of the Thai capital of Bangkok and provided clear evidence of Thai willingness to cooperate with the United States in maintaining a sturdy defense posture against aggression in Asia. On another level of joint endeavor, the government of Pibun Songgram cooperated with the United States in carrying out an ambitious anti-Communist indoctrination program among the Thai peasantry.¹⁶

The emergence of a new pattern in the international relations of the area has been one of the most significant developments in Asia since the end of the Second World War. Action and reaction are normal processes in any foreign office, although the time sequence varies with the government and the situation. International developments on the world scene have had a direct impact on the foreign policies of all

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 179-180.

the states of the areas, particularly in instances where governments are forced to adjust their policies to world events. The rise of the Chinese Communists to power was only one of several developments which have helped to draw Thai and American foreign policies closer together in the postwar years.

Past experience and present aspirations have combined to create a system of values influencing behavior in Southeast Asia. It has been aptly stated that these values include:

1. The equality of all men before the law.
2. The inalienable rights of men which governments must neither deny nor abridge.
3. The greatest good of the greatest number.
4. A government of laws responsive to the consent and needs of the people.¹⁷

Obviously these values are locally expressed in different forms, representing the diversity of the Asian context. And it is possible that alterations will occur.

In efforts to improve the welfare of the people through the use of technology and industrialization, the governments of Southeast Asia face an uphill battle. It is difficult to change an agricultural economy into an industrial economy in the short time desired by many Asian leaders.

¹⁷Kenneth T. Young, "The Challenge of Asia to United States Policy," the Department of State Bulletin 35 (August 27, 1956): 342.

In the effort to make progress, the leaders of the region, mainly trained by the West and relatively small in number, have great responsibility. As they have generally led the independence movements, their thinking tends to be conditioned by memories of the recent past. A key person or handful of leaders with a dominant revolutionary group still holds the reins in a number of states in Southeast Asia. The future of Southeast Asia will be closely related to political stability in the countries of the area.¹⁸

¹⁸Fifield, p. 500.

CHAPTER VIII

RECENT THAI-AMERICAN POLICIES

Although Thailand had never been a colony, the Americans were suspicious of any attempt by the Europeans, especially the British, to tamper with Thai national sovereignty or to regain their former dominant influence in the country. Dr. Kenneth Landon, the leading American adviser on Thailand affairs, declared:

Any appraisal of Thailand looking forward to post-war settlement must take into consideration the fact that the Thai are an old nation with a distinct culture. . . . Above everything else, the Thai want their freedom, their continued national existence. They would resist any forced coalition of the countries of Southeast Asia. An attempt to put them under the domination of an outside power would merely result in the creation of an Asiatic Ireland.¹

The Americans hoped that the absence of a colonial background in Thailand would enable her to serve as a model to the former European colonies as they achieved their national independence. A New York Times correspondent foresaw a completely independent Thailand as "the forerunner of the new political order for Asia, free of colonialism."² Some

¹Kenneth P. Landon, "Thailand," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (March 1943), p. 118.

²*Ibid.*

Americans predicted that the long tradition of national freedom would somehow help the newly-independent nations in Asia toward the goal of constitutional democracy. When receiving Prince Wan Waithayakon as the first Thai Ambassador in the United States, President Harry S. Truman declared that "a democratic and stable Siam can make a great contribution to the peace of mankind, especially in Southeast Asia."³ The general assumption was that a strong tradition of national independence automatically promoted a strong sense of individual freedom and the corresponding democratic institutions.

This sympathetic American attitude was due largely to the opinion that the policies and acts of the Pibun government during the war did not represent the real sentiment of the Thai people. The United States, unlike Great Britain, had suffered very little from Thailand's alliance with Japan. The close wartime collaboration between the United States and the Free Thai underground movement also convinced most Americans that the country had never been a loyal ally of Japan. In accepting the repudiation of Pibun's declaration of war, Secretary of State Byrnes declared that the United States regarded Thailand "not as an enemy but as a country to be liberated from the enemy."⁴

³Ibid., p. 119.

⁴Ibid..

The United States and the British have had different experiences in dealing with the Thai government and people. The British had been involved with Thailand for almost a century, largely in the fields of trade and diplomacy. Until World War II the Americans had been interested in the country mainly as a field of missionary activity. The experience of the British consequently tended toward the pragmatic and concrete; the experience of the Americans tended toward the humanitarian and altruistic.

World War II brought a degree of complexity and intensity to Thai-American relations that contrasted sharply with their quiet uneventfulness in the era preceding it. The factors chiefly responsible for altering this relationship were the emergence of Thai nationalism in association with Japanese imperialism and the eclipse of Western power in eastern Asia during World War II.⁵

In the years since 1945, Asia has been swept by political and social revolutions. The colonial and traditional regimes that existed before the war have been replaced by a wide variety of new governments subject to new forces such as nationalism, the drive for self-determination, and Communism demands for social change.⁶

⁵Martin, p. 451.

⁶John A. Garraty and Peter Gay, The Columbia History of the World (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1917), p. 1118.

In Thailand between World War I and World II, the beginnings of a Western school system, the Foreign Language Academy, the Western training of the army, and the encouragement of Thais to study abroad created a small group of Western-trained intellectuals, professional men, and military officers. These younger men pressed for a larger share of authority than the absolute monarchy permitted. The old type of Buddhist official was replaced by a Western-trained official who demanded his share of policy-making.⁷

Relations between Thailand and the United States before the Second World War had been cordial. American influence in Bangkok, however, had not been strong partly because of the Anglo-French impact and partly because the United States did not seek to extend directly her power to peninsular Southeast Asia. American advisers, like those from other countries, had served at the court in Bangkok.⁸

By the end of the Second World War foreign influence in Thailand had become much more extensive. The war proved that the shifting forces in the realm of international politics would inevitably have some effect on the Thai political system. The future of Thai politics by 1945 was

⁷Franz H. Michale and George E. Taylor, The Far East in the Modern World (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1956), p. 602.

⁸Fifield, p. 268.

inextricably interlinked to the vagaries and uncertainties of the international political arena.

The Thais are among the best diplomats in the world, it is often said, because they managed to maintain their country's independence during a period when all other countries in Southeast Asia were forced to accept European colonialism. Thailand's foreign policy during World War II is cited as proof of the cunning and resourcefulness of its leaders; very few countries emerged from the war as Allies of the Germans or Japanese and were restored within eighteen months to their prewar status.⁹

With the recovery of Thailand from the worst effects of World War II, the revitalization of local government again became a policy of the government and a new organic act on municipal government was passed in 1953. It was not until the period roughly delimited within the years 1955 to 1957, however, that a major program was designed to effect sweeping changes in all levels of provincial government. A "democratization" program was instituted as part of the government's appeal for mass support in an incipient political struggle between elements of the ruling oligarchy. The initiative for the program was provided by the then Prime Minister, Pibun Songgram, who, upon his return from a world

⁹Nuechterlein, p. 96.

tour in 1955, committed the government to a number of political, social, and economic reforms. These included establishing a "Hyde Park" for unrestrained expression of public opinion, press conferences on the Western model, liberalized election laws, and a decentralized government.¹⁰

The future of Southeast Asia after the war was a question which quickly began receiving consideration. It was suggested that the dependencies should be placed under the control of a League of Nations, and that the civil service should be international instead of being composed exclusively of subjects of ruling powers.¹¹

The western influence on twentieth century Southeast Asia was not limited to economic and governmental development. It included an expanding acquaintance with science and its technological applications to such practical needs as communication and transportation, electric power, water supplies, soil conservation, and medicines, etc. Christian missionaries continued to demonstrate certain nonprofit institutions and ways of Western civilization, such as hospitals, schools, leprosariums, language transcription, and aid for the poor. But the process of great change is

¹⁰Darrell Berrigan, "Thailand: Pibun Tries Prachathipati," Reporter 14 (June 14, 1956): 37.

¹¹Lennox A. Mills, Government and Nationalism in Southeast Asia (New York: Publications Offices, 1942), p. 48.

always confusing and sometimes painful. Western values that have appeared inconsistent with Thai values have been particularly unacceptable.

Thailand quickly found herself on the border between Chinese Communist and American spheres of influence. Throughout, the guiding principle of Thai foreign policy was a willing adjustment "to the world as defined by the Great Powers."¹²

Since the American government had followed since V-J Day a policy of diplomatic support for Thailand as the only country in Southeast Asia that had escaped colonization, relations between Bangkok and Washington soon assumed the character of an entente cordiale (cordial alliance).

The three nations closest to the United States in Southeast Asia, the Philippines, Thailand, and South Vietnam, have generally regarded with favor American foreign policy in the region. In general, this favorable attitude has been brought about by a number of factors:

1. Substantial consonance of foreign policy goals;
2. satisfaction with the purposes and administration of various American aid programs;
3. the transfer of their deep-seated fear of foreign intrusion away from Japan, which is now viewed more sympathetically than formerly, to Communist China and thus a continued acceptance of

¹²David A. Wilson, "Thailand," ed. George Mc T. Kahin, *Governments and Politics of Southeast Asia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1959), p. 9.

the United States' presence in Southeast Asia as a matter of national safety; and a good many more.¹³

Two major events in recent years have led the Thais to examine closely their dependence upon the United States, especially for defense support.

1. The sudden withdrawal of the United States from support of the pro-Western government in Laos, which it had helped bring to power, caused Thai leaders to question the reliability of their own alliance with the United States.

2. The United States was increasing its American military aid to Cambodia in mid 1962, at a time when Cambodia's clamor about Thailand's provocative activities along their common border was at its peak.¹⁴

In addition, the American announcement in 1961 that aid to Thailand would be increasingly in the form of loans rather than outright grants did not sit well with Thai leaders. Too, the military or security emphasis of United States policy in Southeast Asia has been widely criticized, and it is difficult to understand exactly why.

Thailand had been receptive to Western influences for well over a century. As the only people in Southeast Asia who had never been subordinated to European rule, the Thais are singularly free of the anti-Western, nationalistic sensitivities which prevail in the region. Foreign technicians have long been advising the government and engaging

¹³Henderson, p. 127.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 254.

in various forms of commerce, and by 1959 over two thousand young Thais were studying at public expense in forty-two different countries, approximately half of them in the United States. The easy relations between American and Thai technicians and the absence of suspicion made possible searching inquiries into both the means and the prospects for introducing administrative reform and social improvements.¹⁵

An understanding of the structure and operation of government in Thailand before the coming of the Westerner in the nineteenth century is essential to an understanding of government in Thailand today. In the first place, there has been a great continuity of tradition in the government of Thailand. Unlike most other East Asian countries, Thailand suffered no complete break with the past. And it never became subject to any colonial power. Although Western influence and pressure brought about changes in government, these changes were introduced by Thai leaders, not by Western rulers. In addition, Thailand, during its longest period of governmental change, continued to be governed by traditional leaders; not until 1932 did the country have a change in leadership comparable even to that of Japan's Meiji era.

¹⁵John D. Montgomery, The Politics of Foreign Aid (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publisher, 1962), pp. 27-29.

Secondly, any judgment concerning the modernity and the degree of Westernization of Thai government should be based not only on a comparison of the government of Thailand with the government of Western democracies or other Asian states but also on a comparison of the present day Thai government with that of a hundred years ago. A comparison of the Thai government with the government in the United States may lead to one conclusion regarding the strength of democracy in Thailand; a comparison of the present Thai government with the government in Thailand before 1850 may lead to another. In dealing with political ideologies, it is perhaps more important to analyze trends within a country than to make quantitative conclusions on the basis of comparisons with other countries.

Thailand was in a better position to cope with Western pressures than were most of its neighbors. In the first place, the strongest Western pressures were not placed on Thailand. Thailand's markets were small compared to those of China, where the primary Western interest lay. Thailand was also, in this respect, favored geographically: the country was not situated on the main sea routes as were Malaya and Japan, and its boundaries were not contiguous with those of any Asian empire as were Burma's. Equally important as factors in its ability to survive Western

pressures, however, were Thailand's concessionistic foreign policy and modest international outlook.¹⁶

Japan attacked the United States to rid the East of Western influence and Western dominance. Japan was trying to compel Asia to eliminate the West, not only as a political but also as an ideological factor. Japan attacked America because she wanted to shut out the West, to close the minds of Asiatic peoples forever to the currents of world thought. Japan was fighting, in effect, to destroy American leadership in Asia. The very fact that she attacked the United States is in itself sufficient evidence of the irreconcilability of American and Japanese designs in that part of the world.

With such ambitions it was impossible to compromise, there could be no appeasement of men who had no wish to arrive at a compromise. America in the Pacific has relied, more than any other country, upon the revolutionary power of ideas. She had known how to use nationalist movements against imperialism, how to offer free trade in place of monopoly exploitation, how to use American prestige in preference to force, how to use dollars as well as gunboats. A clear recognition of the new and revolutionary situation

¹⁶Vella, pp. 317 and 342.

in the Pacific can give to Americans an unrivaled opportunity for leadership.¹⁷

The United States misunderstood Japan just as Japan has probably misunderstood America. While the one calculated power in terms of potential economic strength and resources the other conceived of power in terms of immediate political and military strength.¹⁸

The changes which took place on the international scene during the spring and summer of 1955 had a significant effect on the relations between the United States and Thailand. The Soviet Union appeared to be somewhat less intransigent since the death of Joseph Stalin.

A policy of "peaceful coexistence" became the dominant party doctrine with the rise of Nikita Khrushchev as the new Communist leader in Russia. This apparent change in Soviet foreign policy was due primarily to the atomic stalemate with the Western bloc. It was also caused by the rising influence of the uncommitted nations who were demanding greater efforts by the major powers for a permanent peace. Soviet Russia also wanted peaceful relations with the non-Communist world; she changed from a stress on military treats to nonmilitary means.

¹⁷George E. Taylor, America in the New Pacific (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1942), pp. 3-7.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 38.

To give concrete expression to this new policy, the Soviet rulers agreed to meet with the leaders of the Western alliance at the "summit" conference in Geneva in July 1955 where both parties vowed their unbending devotion to world peace. The Soviet Union paid a tacit compliment to the United States as it endeavored to expand its influence in the underdeveloped countries by imitating the American policy of providing the uncommitted nations with sizeable grants of economic and military aid. They were primarily a change in tactics in an attempt to expand Soviet influence and power through nonviolent means. They revealed that they wanted a slight relaxation in world tension.¹⁹ When convinced that some relaxation of tension might result from a meeting with the Soviet leaders, President Eisenhower agreed to attend the Geneva conference and he returned stating that there was "evidence of a new friendliness in the world."²⁰

Like the Soviet Union, the United States wanted to maintain adequate influence in the uncommitted nations. In April 1955, President Dwight Eisenhower requested Congress to grant \$3,500,000,000 for foreign aid, the bulk of it designed for military assistance to the "Arc of Free Asia."²¹

¹⁹Darling, p. 131

²⁰Darling, p. 132.

²¹Ibid.

American policy in Thailand reflected this conservative attitude, and the previous policy of trying to prevent the spread of Communism primarily through the use of military and police power remained essentially the same. In 1956 the United States provided the modest sum of \$4,800,000 for technical aid and in 1957 this amount was further reduced to \$4,500,000. By the end of 1957 the United States had spent a total of \$138,000,000 for foreign aid in Thailand with most of this money devoted to the armed forces. According to the new United States Ambassador, Max Bishop, the amount spent on direct military aid was "in the hundreds of millions of dollars."²²

As the new era of "peaceful coexistence" caused Thailand to soften her attitude towards the Communist bloc and veer closer toward neutralism, the United States used the SEATO organization to instill an even stronger fear of Communism in the minds of Thai leaders and people. A SEATO subcommittee meeting at Manila in September 1955 reported that "subversion is on the upswing" in Southeast Asia and the internal threat to the member nations was much more serious than during the previous year.²³

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid., p. 133.

SEATO Headquarters in Bangkok, although principally occupied with military matters, eventually became an important center of economic planning for Southeast Asia. Under SEATO sponsorship the United States financed a contract with the University of Hawaii to institute a program for training skilled workers throughout the region, and another with Colorado State University for advice in establishing a graduate school of engineering to be open to students throughout Southeast Asia. American support also went to international cooperative programs in technical assistance sponsored by the Colombo Plan, the International Labor Office, and the United Nations. Regional aid programs are always difficult to establish and complex to administer, but at least half a dozen were operating successfully by 1959 and other possible fields of activity were under consideration with strong support from the Thai government.

It cannot be agreed, however, that American aid has converted enemies into neutrals or neutrals into allies: indeed, American aid probably has not changed any foreign or domestic policies in Southeast Asia that affect vital national interests of those nations. At best, foreign aid has shown a usefulness and versatility that have earned it a distinctive and permanent place in the arsenal of peace.²⁴

²⁴Montgomery, pp. 55-60.

Throughout the period from 1955 to 1957 most Americans living in Thailand continued to stress the Communist threat and bolster the military regime. And during this period many prominent Americans, including Vice President Richard Nixon, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, Under Secretary of State Christian Herter, Director of ICA John B. Hollister, many Senators and Congressmen, and numerous generals and admirals visited Thailand, continued to be showered with military decorations from the grateful Thai government.²⁵

A special group representing President Eisenhower known as the "Citizens Committee on Mutual Security" headed by Benjamin Fairless, President of the American Iron and Steel Institute, visited Pibun and brought the greetings and support of the Chief Executive. The major impact of this personal contact was to counter any serious attempt by the Thai government to veer toward neutralism or weaken its allegiance to Western bloc. Most Americans sought to maintain close relations between the two countries and pledged even greater efforts to prevent the spread of Communism.²⁶

Important Thai officials also visited the United States. But, perhaps the most memorable tour ever made to

²⁵Ibid., p. 61.

²⁶Darling, p. 137.

the United States by guests from Thailand was the visit of King Phumiphon and Queen Sirikit from June through July 1960. The sincerity and modesty of the young monarch combined with the beauty and charm of the Queen made a deep impression on Americans and the royal couple did much to promote a greater understanding of the problems of their country. During his visit the King reminded Americans that he had been born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, while his father was studying medicine at the Harvard Medical School. On his arrival in Washington he stated: "I was born here in this country, so I can say the United States is half my motherland."²⁷

President Eisenhower welcomed the royal visitors by referring to the "perfect" friendship between the United States and Thailand. The King presented the President with his nation's highest award, the Most Illustrious Order of the Royal House of Chakkri, which was the first time this honor had ever been conferred on a nonroyal chief of state. At the White House President Eisenhower conferred the Legion of Merit on the King.

While visiting in Washington, King Phumiphon addressed a joint session of Congress, where he appealed for even closer relations between the two countries. Referring to their common devotion to "freedom," he stressed the desire

²⁷Darling, p. 177.

of his people to assume the major burden for their own progress and development.

Although the American and the Thai live on opposite sides of the globe, yet there is one thing common to them. It is the love of freedom. Indeed, the word Thai actually means free. . . American assistance is to enable the Thai to achieve their objectives through their own efforts. I need hardly say that this concept has our complete endorsement. Indeed, there is a precept of the Lord Buddha which says: 'Thou are thine own refuge.' We are grateful for American aid; but we intend one day to do without it.²⁸

President Eisenhower and the King issued a joint communique reemphasizing the American commitment to defend Thailand and promote its economic and social development. The successful visit of the King and Queen revealed to a considerable degree the distorted impression of Thailand with which most Americans welcomed Thai visitors in the United States.

American technical assistance has been an important impetus to the impressive economic development of Thailand. American educational programs have promoted higher intellectual and professional standards. At the same time the heavy emphasis on military aid has contributed to the present imbalance in the Thai political system by helping the military leaders enhance their status as the dominant

²⁸Darling, p. 177.

political group. American policy in Thailand should be part of an overall strategy designed to promote the security and progress of the country and the surrounding nations.²⁹

The military aid provided by the United States to Thailand should be tailored strictly to the needs of internal security. This aid should consist primarily of military equipment and training designed to counter guerrilla warfare. The United States should do what it can to develop a professional military tradition among the rising leadership within the armed forces.³⁰

The basic values of Western ideology have been familiar to many people in Thailand for several decades. These ideas include freedom, equality, progress, popular sovereignty, and respect for law. The economic and social progress of Thailand depends heavily on American public and private assistance.³¹

²⁹Ibid., p. 214.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 220-221.

³¹Ibid., p. 228.

APPENDIX A

892.24/67

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division
of Far Eastern Affairs (Hamilton)

(Extract)

(Washington) March 28, 1941

The Thai Minister called at his request. He referred to his previous call on March 18¹ in regard to various applications which had been rejected for license to export petroleum products to Thailand.

The Minister then said that he wished to speak to me quite frankly in regard to the general question of relations between our countries, the United States and Thailand. The Minister said that he had very much at heart the maintenance of good relations between our two countries; that the Thai people and the Thai Government prized the long heritage of friendly relations with this country; that from an economic point of view Thailand was today dependent upon the United States; that, to use an old Thai saying, Thailand was like an egg in the hollow of the hand of the United States and, if the United States closed the hand, the egg would be crushed; that he had not felt it opportune to bring up the question of endeavoring to improve relations between the United States and Thailand while fighting was going on, but now that fighting had ceased he felt impelled to bring to

our attention his view that it was very important that Thai Government not feel that the American Government was following a policy directed against Thailand; but that there be some manifestation of an attitude on the part of this Government which could be used in Thailand as a basis toward reestablishing the traditional friendly relations between our two countries.

M(axwell) M. H(amilton)

¹Mr. Hamilton's memorandum of conversation for that date not printed. Foreign Relations V (1941), p. 119.

APPENDIX B

792.94/95

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State (Hull)

(Washington) April 8, 1941

The British Ambassador called at his request. He handed me two aide-memoires relative to the Thai-Japanese situation, copies of which are hereto attached. I thanked the Ambassador. He then said that he hoped we would give this matter consideration as he thought it was one of importance.

In the course of the conversation, the Ambassador said that the British Minister in Thailand thought that United States-Thai relations could be returned to a more friendly basis if this Government would make due compensation promptly for the airplanes which had been purchased and paid for in this by Thailand and were intercepted by this Government in Manila and kept for its own use. I replied that, of course, this Government would return the money to Thailand. I then added that I myself am not at all convinced that the present Thai Government is a real friend of this Government or any other government except the Japanese, with whom it went into collusion for the purpose of securing Japanese aid which enabled it to obtain the annexation of a large amount of the territory of Indochina;

that in my opinion, there exists Japanese-Thai alliances of a more or less military, political, and economic nature. The Ambassador referred to the views of the British Minister in Thailand, which fell short of the views I expressed.

I concluded by saying that we would give every attention to the two aide-memoires.

C(ordell) H(ull)

Foreign Relations V (1941), p. 120

APPENDIX C

792.94/95

The British Embassy to the Department of State

Aide-Memoire "A"

Japan's mediation in the dispute between Thailand and Indochina makes it necessary to take stock once more of the situation in Southeast Asia.

2. The settlement is more unfavorable to Indochina than would have been the case if it had been negotiated direct at an earlier stage. The Thais, on the other hand, while not achieving their fullest ambitions have with Japan's gained much, and it is clear that the Thai Government is highly satisfied with the results. Ostensibly Japan has not yet exacted any definite price for her mediation, and she is inclined to claim credit in this respect. Actually she has succeeded in bringing Thailand much more under her influence and has accordingly obtained a most favorable position for exacting her price as and when opportunity offers. The situation is therefore full of dangerous possibilities.

3. Japan's general position as mediator and guarantor gives her ample opportunities for keeping naval forces in Indochina and Thai waters and even military forces in South Indochina (Japanese naval forces appear to be

using Camranh Bay and Sattahib as bases without any specific agreement to that effect.) In return for her guarantee Japan receives an undertaking from both sides that they will not "enter any agreement or undertaking envisaging direct or indirect political, economic or military cooperation against Japan," while the communiqué issued when the settlement was announced referred to agreements to be subsequently made with respect to the maintenance of peace in greater East Asia and the promotion of specially close relations between Japan and Thailand and France. All this marks an important stage in the extension of Japanese influence and opens the way for gradual absorption both of Indochina and of Thailand.

4. Strong pressure will doubtless be exerted now on the French to conclude the commercial negotiations which have been proceeding for three months and are designed to give Japan very extensive economic advantages in Indochina, from which Germany will indirectly profit.

5. In Thailand the immediate danger is that Japan will first exact her economic price in tin and rubber, of which a proportion will go to Germany. There are political dangers also. Japan may instigate Thailand to make territorial claims against Great Britain. The French are dissatisfied with the Tokyo award and disorders might break out again. Either of these eventualities would provide a

pretext for further Japanese intervention, offers of assistance and requests for military facilities in Thailand.

6. In Indochina there is little chance of effective action at present. It is in Thailand that the main question of policy arises. Although brought to the brink, it seems that the Thais do not yet appreciate the full extent of the potential danger and certainly do not regard themselves as having gone over to Japan. There is thus some scope for action, and action is necessary both for economic and strategic reasons;

(a) Economic: To prevent loss to ourselves and gain to the Axis of an important source of supply of rubber and tin; and

(b) Strategic: To prevent the Japanese from working around our flank in Malaya. The presence of Japanese forces in the Gulf of Siam and in particular in the Kra Isthmus would substantially increase our difficulties in defending Singapore.

Suggestions as to the form the action might take are contained in Aide-Memoire "B."

Washington, April 8, 1941.

Foreign Relations v (1941), pp. 121-122.

APPENDIX D

792.94/95
The British Embassy to the Department of State

Aide-Memoire "B"

The background of the situation in Thailand has been given in Aide-Memoire "A." This Aide-Memoire contains suggestions for possible action.

2. The most effective way of keeping Thailand from falling completely under Japanese influence would be to take naval and military action which would impress her. Failing the practicability of such action, possible courses are:

(1) To exercise such economic and financial pressure on the Thai Government as we can; (2) To offer some economic and financial assistance on suitable conditions.

3. His Majesty's Government have for their part already considered course (1). They hold some assets, e.g., the importance to Thailand of markets in the adjoining British territories, control over gunny bags and the Thai financial deposits. His Majesty's Government are instituting control of ore bags, and any severe restriction of gunny bags would seriously affect the market of Thai rice. But economic pressure would be double-edged. It would adversely affect the supply position of Malaya and might only drive

Thailand more surely into the arms of Japan, thus accelerating Japanese expansion and facilitating the supply by Japan to Germany of such essential commodities as rubber and tin. His Majesty's Government feel that while the possibility of pressure should be kept present in the background, i.e., that Thailand should be aware that we can place them in difficulties if we wish, course (2) should be tried first.

4. The Thais have been accustomed to look to London in economic and financial matters, and the Thai Prime Minister recently made a concrete request for a loan and for assistance in the purchase of oil and armaments.

5. As regards armaments, it seems unlikely that any assistance is practicable. His Majesty's Government are not able to supply them, and it is assumed that the United States, in view of their own rearmament program and the assistance which they are giving to the Democracies, will hardly be in a position to spare arms for Thailand.

6. As regards a loan, the Thais have asked for £3,000,000 against which they would issue local currency for development expenditure, as follows: (Amounts in millions of Ticals)

Railway Construction.....	4.5
Irrigation.....	3.2
Postage.....	1.8
Highways.....	11.0
Cotton and Silk.....	3.4
Port of Bangkok.....	3.6
Abattoirs.....	1.4

7. Towards the financing of this program (or the purchase of oil), the Thais could find £1.25 million by reducing the cover now held against their note issue from 111% to 105%.

8. His Majesty's Government feel that if the United States Government are prepared to cooperate in the offer of a loan on suitable conditions this would probably be the most effective step that could be taken to keep the Thais from complete absorption in the Japanese new order. The concrete proposal of His Majesty's Government is that they should find any sterling required for expenditure in the sterling area, plus half the amount required as backing for the new currency to be issued, if the United States would similarly provide the dollar expenditure required for purchases in the United States (it is clear that while the major objects mentioned above could be met by payments in local currency some must involve expenditure abroad on materials, most of which His Majesty's Government could not in present circumstances supply), and the remaining half of the cover required.

9. As regards oil, a full statement of the position at that time was set out in the memorandum which was handed by Lord Halifax to Mr. Hull on March 3rd.¹ In that memorandum His Majesty's Government urged that supplies of oil to Thailand should be restricted to regular and well-defined limits and

and invited the United States Government to give the matter their urgent attention. The changes since that date in the military and political situation in the Far East make it possible to use our capacity to regulate the supply of oil reaching Thailand as a means of control which can be made to appear as economic assistance; the British and United States Governments could in conjunction with the oil companies devise practical means of assuring to Thailand balanced supplies of oils of the different types which they are likely to require, having regard to their normal consumption and the position of their stocks at the date of the agreement. Provided that the Thai Government were willing to enter into discussions with appropriate experts of the British and American Governments upon both their stocks and current requirements, His Majesty's Government would be willing to give them now an assure that their supply position would be safeguarded so long as there was no evidence that they were reexporting oil products to dangerous destinations or were building up special oils of a kind that might constitute a strategical reserve for any military operations in or near Thai territories. The Thai Prime Minister has recently made an urgent appeal to His Majesty's Government for the immediate supply of oil, and as an earnest of their good intentions, provided effective Thai cooperation is forthcoming, His Majesty's Government are prepared, within the limits

imposed by discretion, to supply forthwith to the Thai Government small quantities of petroleum products provided United States Government see no objection. The Thai Government will no doubt recognize that before such a step can be taken His Majesty's Government and the United States Government will have to be genuinely satisfied about both the character and urgency of Thailand requirements. All these concessions in respect to oil would be contingent upon the acceptance by the Thai Government of the whole of the guarantee suggested by this memorandum.

10. Before making the appeal mentioned in the preceding paragraph, the Thai Prime Minister had returned an unsatisfactory reply to a request from His Majesty's Minister for an assurance similar to that given to the Japanese Government about the conclusion of agreements aimed directly or indirectly against Japan. The Thai Prime Minister took refuge in the argument that this assurance was part of a specific bargain with Japan. His Majesty's Government would propose to make it clear that a similar assurance would have to be part of a specific bargain with them over financial and oil supplies. Furthermore, they feel that any help to the Thai Government should be dependent on:

(a) An appropriate guarantee against the diversion of rubber and tin and rice out of the usual trade channels for the benefit of Japan and on the furnishing of information

as to Thai's commitments to Japan in respect of these commodities; and

(b) An undertaking that the development projects to be financed by the loan shall not be undertaken in such a manner as to increase the Japanese hold on Thailand.

Washington, April 8, 1941.

Foreign Relations V (1941), pp. 122-124.

APPENDIX E

711.92/26

Memorandum by Mr. Willys R. Peck of the Division of Far
Eastern Affairs

(Washington) July 11, 1941

Economic Assistance to Thailand

This morning I invited the attention of EA (Mr. Feis) to an AP² telegram from Singapore, dated July 10, 1941, published in the Evening Star, July 10, to the general effect that Japan was buying rubber in the open market in Thailand and apparently had contracted for two years' output, paying cash in advance. I also invited the attention of Mr. Feis to enclosures nos. 14 and 15 with Bangkok's dispatch no. 222, of June 17, 1941,³ two translations of Bangkok news items, to the effect that purchases of rubber and tin in Thailand had resulted in the termination of export of these products to Singapore. I remarked that information regarding the purchase of rubber in the open market in Thailand seemed contradictory to the tenor of statements oral and written made to the Department by the British Embassy, which clearly implied that the Thai Government was in position to allocate rubber output as it might wish. I observed that our proposed method of acquiring rubber from

Thailand was based upon the supposition that the Thai Government would be able to control the destination of rubber exports.

Mr. Feis said the situation in Thailand in regard to rubber was the same situation that confronted the efforts of the American Government to acquire certain raw materials in many South American countries, that is, Japanese agents entered the open market and forced the price of such materials to sometimes fantastic heights. The American Government has not been attempting to meet such competition in the open market, which would only force prices higher still, but has been pointing out to the governments concerned that if they wished to acquire such American products as the United States might be in position to release for export, they could obtain the American products by making their own exports available to the American Government at reasonable prices. It was Mr. Feis' opinion that it was within the power of the Thai Government, as of the South American governments in question, to effect arrangements of mutual assistance in these matters, if it desired to do so.

Mr. Feis remarked that the method that had been adopted toward obtaining Thai rubber and tin was exactly similar to the method that had been followed in the case of certain South American products, in that the Department is offering the Thai Government assistance in purchasing

American products, within the limits set by our national defense needs, on the condition that the Thai Government shall assist the American Government to obtain by purchase as large a portion as possible of Thai rubber and tin.

Incidentally, Mr. Feis thought that the Rubber Reserve Company was probably aware of the open market buying of rubber in Thailand and that it was unnecessary, therefore, to bring to the attention of the Rubber Reserve Company the information that had reached the Department through the press here and in Thailand.

Foreign Relation V (1941), pp. 204-5.

¹Approved by the Adviser on International Economic Affairs (Feis)

²Associated Press.

³None printed.

APPENDIX F

811.20 (D) Regulations/3172: telegram
The Acting Secretary of State to the Minister in Thailand
(Grant)

(Washington) July 12, 1941, 9 P.M.

76. Your 330, July 3, 2 P.M.

1. The Department is hopeful that the plan to extend economic assistance (including oil supplies) to Thailand may prove to be an effective means of counteractions whatever attempts may be made to divert Thai trade relations to new channels and to undermine Thai independence. In accepting the British plan in principle the Department had two aims, (1) to support British efforts to oppose the attempts described above as well as to improve the attitude of Thailand toward Great Britain during the present emergency and (2) to obtain for the United States as large a part as possible of the Thai output of rubber and tin.

2. The Department desires that you approach the appropriate Thai authority and inform him orally that the American Government was gratified to receive through the Thai Minister in Washington the information that the Thai rubber and tin be made available for purchase by the United States and that American products be released for export to Thailand. The American Government desires that detailed

arrangements for the purchase and shipment of the respective commodities shall be concluded at the earliest convenience supply you with an indication of the largest amounts of rubber and tin it can allocate for purchase by the United States and similarly furnish a list of American products it desires to import. You may explain that the appropriate authorities of this Government will carefully scrutinize the list with a view to releasing for export as many items as the defense needs of the United States in the present emergency will permit.

3. For your confidential guidance: (1) The Department would prefer that negotiation should take place in Washington because there will be frequent necessity to consult other branches of the Government but the removal of the Thai Legation to summer quarters makes this plan impracticable; (2) such rubber and tin as may come within British control will be held subject to our efforts should therefore be directed toward acquiring that portion of the output free for allocation to other than British purchasers; (3) as an added inducement to prompt action by Thailand you may indicate our willingness to assist in carrying out the internal development program in proportion as the Thai Government is disposed to assist us in regard to rubber and tin but you should not at this stage introduce the subject of a loan or of commercial credits; if requests for financial

assistance are made you should offer to report them to the Department; (4) it would be advisable to inform your British colleague in advance concerning your intended approach to the Thai authorities; (5) this Government attaches great importance to the acquisition of tin and rubber.

Welles

Foreign Relations V (1941), pp. 205-206.

APPENDIX G

792.94/130

The Assistant Secretary of State (Acheson) to the British
Minister (Hall)

(Washington) July 14, 1941

My Dear Mr. Hall: I have read with interest your letter of July 7, 1941, stating in brief, that the British Minister in Bangkok is utilizing oil supplies as inducement to Thailand in connection with rubber and tin, and that he is reserving financial credits for use in connection with obtaining political assurances. You suggest that the American Government may like to keep this further objective in mind.

The Department in the oral communication to the Thai Minister on June 24 indicated its readiness to assist in carrying out the Thai program of internal development, if satisfied in regard to rubber and tin, but no mention has yet been made to the Thai Government of financial assistance.

We shall expect to consult the Embassy at such time as it may appear desirable to broach to the Thai Government the possibility of a loan and commercial credits.

It is now two weeks since the Thai Government accepted in principle the Department's proposal for reciprocal

assistance in the matter of Thai and American products, and no specific information has been received that would make it possible to proceed to a definite arrangement. The Department has, therefore, instructed the American Minister in Bangkok¹ to urge the Thai authorities to supply information necessary before the arrangement can be made. It was suggested that he inform his British colleague of his intended interview.

Sincerely yours,

Dean Acheson

Foreign Relations V (1941), pp. 206-207

¹Telegram No. 76, July 12, 9 P.M., supra.

APPENDIX H

892.24/64.1/2

The British Minister (Hall) to the Assistant Secretary of
State (Acheson)

(Washington) July 14, 1941

Dear Mr. Acheson: Since writing to you on July 7th on the question of Thailand, I have received a further communication from London. Sir John Crosby has been given by the Thai Government a forecast of their counter-proposals in respect to rubber and tin. The Foreign Office, subject to the approval of the United States Government, is prepared to instruct him to clinch the agreement on the following terms. They feel that further delay in settling may be dangerous.

With regard to rubber, the agreement will merely state the amount which Thailand is to assign to us, namely a minimum of 1,500 tons a month, plus any excess over a total export of 4,000 tons a month which Sir John Crosby can secure. It appears that Japan has already been promised 2,500 tons a month. I shall refer to this again later in this letter.

With regard to tin, the Thai Government are apparently prepared to maintain in the open market as at present. Sir John Crosby hopes to obtain an assurance that the produce of

the British mines in Thailand, equivalent to 2/3 of the total, will continue to go to Malaya. Some at least of the remainder should be available for allocation to United States' purchases as suggested in Mr. Thorold's letter of June 24th to Mr. Peck. The Thai Government has still to find a balance of 2,000 tons of tin which they owe the Japanese in payment of aeroplanes purchased from them. The alternatives are either that we provide this quantity ourselves or allow the Thai Government to purchase it in local markets, which Sir John Crosby says they are willing to do. My Government prefers the latter alternative and, subject to the approval of your Government, are prepared to instruct Sir John (Josiah) Crosby accordingly.

It is also hoped that it may be possible to obtain from the Thai Government an assurance that there will be no unfair treatment of or discrimination against British or Australian mining companies in Thailand.

In general we are inclined to think that there are certain advantages in your Government conducting their negotiations separately in the brief that so far at least as rubber is concerned such a course is more likely to prove effective in reducing Japan's allocations. Naturally all rubber allotted to us, as well as tin passing to Singapore, will only be disposed of by agreement between my Government and yours.

It is hoped that in the course of such separate negotiations the United States Government will insist not only on receiving a part of the Japanese rubber allocation mentioned above, but will also insist that the price is reduced to the Singapore level. This is important not only in itself, but also to check the incentive to smuggling from Malaya which is difficult to stop entirely by administrative measures. In order not to prejudice your chances of obtaining some concession on these lines, the agreement which it is suggested Sir John Crosby should be instructed to negotiate will make no reference either to the price or to the amount to be allocated to Japan both of which we hope may be reduced as a result of your Government's separate negotiations.

If, despite the assistance of your Government on this point, we find it impossible to obtain our allocation without paying a premium, my Government hopes that the United States Government will be prepared to bear a part if not the entire additional cost.

The Foreign Office have drawn my attention to the possibility that the Thai Government may attempt to obtain from the United States, in exchange for allocations of rubber, some form of undertaking whereby American aircraft are to be made available to them. My Government hopes that if this question is raised no arrangement will be made with the Thai

Government whereby our supplies of American aeroplanes might be interfered with.

In order that Sir John Crosby's negotiations may be resumed without delay, I should be most grateful if you would inform me as soon as you conveniently can whether this outline of the instructions which it is proposed to send him meet with the approval of your Government.

Yours sincerely,

Noel F. Hall

Foreign Relations V (1941), pp. 207-208.

APPENDIX I

811.20 (D) Regulations/3312: Telegram
The Minister in Thailand (Grant) to the Secretary of State

Bangkok, July 14, 1941 - 6 P.M.
(Received July 15 - 6:25 A.M.)

344. My telegram 343, July 13, 10 P.M. The British Minister handed to me today a memorandum labelled "Thailand Purchases Oil" in which the details of the proposed agreement between Great Britain and Thailand regarding oil supplies are outlined. There are 6 articles the first of which states that

"The British Government undertakes that throughout the period of the agreement the Thai Government shall be furnished with monthly supplies of oil as follows: kerosene, 3,000 tons; motor spirit, 3,000; diesel, 5,000; gas oil, 1,000; aviation spirit for civil air services, normal supplies; aviation spirit, military purposes, such amount as the Thai Ministry of Defense may find it necessary to apply for from time to time; crude oil, 5,000 tons as basic amount for which as a rule oil products will be substituted but such amount of crude oil shall be furnished as the Thai Ministry of Defense may find it necessary to apply for from time to time in order to keep the oil refinery in operation; aviation lubricating oil and motor and industrial lubricating

oil, such amount as the Thai Ministry of Defense may find it necessary to apply for from time to time.(")

Article 6 states that "Regular supplies of oil to Thailand are conditional upon regular supplies of rubber to Malaya."

I was given to understand that these proposals had been telegraphed to London by the British Minister.

Grant

Foreign Relations V (1941), pp. 208-209

APPENDIX J

740.0011 P.W./: Telegram
The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State

Tokyo, July 16, 1941 - noon
(Received July 16, - 4:10 A.M.)

1006. The following is a paraphrase of a secret telegram received today from London by my British colleague.

1. It is learnt that the Japanese Ambassador at Vichy has been instructed to present to the French Government a demand for bases in French Indochina. The demand is to be made with a time limit.¹ In case the French Government accepts the demand the Japanese occupation will be carried out peacefully and territorial integrity guarantees will be given. Material, goods and arms will be promised. In case of French refusal the occupation will be carried out by force and Japanese Ambassador has been directed to hint that important changes for Indochina may be involved.

2. The Japanese attach great importance to the United States and Great Britain having no prior information for fear complications might be created. The French Ambassador therefore is not being informed lest he inform his American and British colleagues.²

Grew

¹This was later identified as July 20.

²The Adviser on Political Relations (Hornbeck) wrote in a memorandum dated July 16: "This has an important bearing on the question whether to act immediately by way of prevention or to defer action and then take it in what would be in a retaliatory or punitive sense." In a footnote notation Dr. Hornbeck added that he and the Chief of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs (Hamilton) "do not recommend" immediate preventative action. For Ambassador Grew's review of the situation, see telegram No. 1015, July 17, 11 a.m., vol. IV, p. 1006.

Foreign Relations V (1941), p. 210.

APPENDIX K

892.24/66 1/2

Memorandum by the Adviser on International Economic Affairs
(Feis)¹

(Washington) July 16, 1941

I do not anticipate that Thailand will in any way put up effective resistance to Japan. For that reason I see no reason in the field of political policy to incline us to the support of Thailand, except in so far as something can be secured which we ourselves need; viz, rubber and tin. From the beginning I have not understood why we have not just sailed ahead in negotiating for this rubber and tin with Thailand.

Of course I would rather see Great Britain secure the tin and rubber than Japan. However, if the tin and rubber is to be secured by Great Britain, will we be prepared to sanction the export to Thailand of any supplies needed for her own defense? It is to us, not to Great Britain, that Thailand would look for such supplies, with the possible exception of part of their oil. On this understanding I would not object to the consummation of the British deal. The role which the British will have assigned to us after they have concluded their own negotiation will prove in my judgment a wholly unsatisfactory one. They apparently look

to us to bargain to secure the remaining one-third of the output of the Thailand tin mines. We are reliably informed that the Japanese are buying tin in the open market in Thailand at a price which may be as much as double that which Jones and Clayton² are prepared to pay; they could not possibly pay this price, thereby imperiling their contract for vastly greater amounts of tin from other sources at fifty cents a pound. The British know that, for they themselves are parties to the agreement between the International Tin Committee and the Metals Reserve Company, which already gives the Metals Reserve Company a prior right to all the tin Britain itself does not need.

My surmise is that the same situation will be confronted in the case of procurement of rubber (in this instance, the spread between the 1,500 tons which the British are to secure and the total of 4,000 tons), in which the British will again enter the picture. Again it will be observed that the British asked us to share in the cost of any premiums they might have to pay on the tin and rubber they procured, but they take no note of the fact that any tin and rubber we procured would also be at a premium and do not offer to share that expense.

To summarize:

(1) I would rather we secured the tin and rubber directly from Thailand.

(2) However, since the British have proceeded so far into this negotiation, and since certainly I would rather see the British get these products than the Japanese, I would not try to prevent this agreement.

(3) I would make clear, however,

(a) that the role assigned to the American Government in the field of procurement of tin and rubber would in all probability turn out to be an unsatisfactory and probably an impossible one, and

(b) suggest that the tin and rubber which the British secure might be resold to us under the regular terms of our agreements with the International Rubber Regulation Committee.

(4) I should also make clear that we are accepting no obligation as regards the furnishing of supplies to Thailand.

Herbert Feis

Foreign Relations V (1941), pp. 211-212.

¹Noted by the Assistant Secretary of State (Acheson).

²Jesse H. Hones, Administrator, and W. L. Clayton, Deputy Administrator, Federal Loan Agency.

APPENDIX L

THE THAI MINISTER PROTESTS

To the Editors:

Allow me to thank you for your courtesy in sending me the report on Pacific Relations and asking for my comment upon it. I should like first of all to clear that I wholeheartedly agree with your author's denouncement of the present attitude of the Thai Government, in its subserviency to the Japanese invader's and its announced alliance with the enemy. On that score I have no single objection to make.

When, however, your author projects his unfavorable opinion of "the present Thai Government" back beyond December 7, without modification, and especially when he seems to indict the Thai people as a whole because of the nefarious actions of the Thai Government since that date, I believe that he is in error.

I particularly like to think it is wholly untrue that Thailand has long been "a full-fledged Axis partner, in fact." The shortest refutation to that libelous accusation that I know of lies in the fact that, ever since the end of World War I, Thailand has had a distinguished line of American advisers to its Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

It seems hardly credible that such men as Eldon R. James, Francis B. Sayre, Raymond B. Stevens, and Frederic R. Dolbeare, who served for the last six years up to the time of the invasion last December, would have been blind to such full-fledged Axis partnership as your author implies. Certainly they would never have consciously condoned it, or remained long in the service of any government which showed such a marked tendency. There have also been many advisers from England, such as W. A. Doll, Financial Adviser to the Thai Government, who was in Bangkok at the time of the Japanese occupation, and was interned by the enemy invaders. W. K. Le Count, an American, manager of the Thai Commercial Bank, which is considered the central bank of Thailand, was also interned by the Japanese and returned to this country on the Gripsholm. From the list in the Thailand directory for 1939-40, the latest edition available, it appears that among some sixty foreigners employed in Thai Government services, there was only one Japanese, S. Niki, who was in the Manual Arts Section of the Department of Fine Arts. A few German and Italian technicians were also engaged.

I cite these noteworthy instances to show the relative importance which the Thai Government was granting to American and British influences in the development of our country, in contrast with Axis influence.

It may seem, however, that the very fact of our having had all these foreign advisers in our government indicated exactly what your author meant when he stated that "Thai independence has always been more formal than real." Any state, he might argue, which leaned so heavily on outside advice as Thailand apparently has leaned in the last century, can hardly be looked upon as a truly sovereign nation. As a matter of fact, your author has propounded a statement much like this, declaring that Thailand has been "not really a national state but a strategic area."

Your author ignores the fact that we can legitimately extend our record of political organization as the nation back to the fourteenth century, so that on the purely chronological basis of length of survival, his dismissal of Thailand's independence seems ill-founded. Nor does it seem to me that your writer's analysis of Thailand's history "during the twenties" is altogether valid. The difficult period of our national survival extended, in truth, far back beyond even the beginning of this century. Only by a miracle, one would think, was Thailand able to keep its independence, alone of all the political units of southern and southeast Asia, in the face of the mighty surge of colonial expansion, which was then sweeping our corner of the earth. Restrictions of trade and of the jurisdiction of our law courts were imposed upon us by foreign powers, it

is true, just as they were laid, for instance, upon China. But surely that historical fact furnishes no grounds for today denying to Thailand her right to independence after the war. Most of these limitations on Thailand's full sovereignty were removed in 1925-26, and in 1937 they were totally lifted under new treaties.

The presence of foreign advisers in Thailand, from the middle of the nineteenth century, does not then argue for our subserviency to outside influences, such as your author implies were present. We move forward in a few score of years, from an almost feudal condition of medieval backwardness to a thoroughly modern type of civilization, with, for instance, the finest railroad in the Far East, and an educational system which sent our students abroad fully prepared to continue their specialized education at Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard, Yale, and other such leading institutions. To achieve this rapid development of our land, we need outside help, and we found invaluable assistance at the hands of our friendly counselors from Europe and America. At the same time, Thailand has remained Thai, even while adopting modern technology for the bettering of our people in their standards of living and their cultural welfare.

As regards the present Thai Government, which the FORTUNE report designates as "a small pro-Fascist clique of palace despots," I believe that this verdict, which is

certainly indisputable today, should not be applied without qualification to the government before the time of Japanese conquest of Thailand. Especially it should not be allowed to stand as a declaration against the Thai people as a whole. Indeed, your author himself acknowledges as much in his further statement that the present government "has neither claimed nor aspired to represent a majority of the people."

In as much as we have had a representative form of government in Thailand since the promulgation of our new Constitution in 1932, some may reasonably ask how it was possible for a Cabinet to come into power and to maintain its dominance, if it was not wholly representative of the thought and the will of the people.

In reply, I can only recall to mind the fact that our bloodless revolution of 1932, which brought to an end the absolute monarchy and insugurated the varied and complicated processes which would transform us into a constitutional monarchy, was the beginning of a difficult and highly involved period of our history. Fundamental changes in the form of any national government always bring a time of delicate adjustment, with swings of the pendulum now one way now another, before stability can be achieved. The early years of even your own American independence were not, as we know, times of unruffled steady progress in the direction where your great Republic moves today. Our own first ten

years in Thailand have known the same sorts of vicissitude. There have been, it must be acknowledged, divergent groups in our National Assembly and in our State Council. But to characterize the whole of our government, and, by implication, our emerging democracy itself in so briefly unsavory a fashion as the report has done seems to me eminently incorrect and unjust. Right up to the time of the Japanese attack upon us, voices were raised in the National Assembly against the growing danger of Japanese encroachments. Our most infamous Thai Quisling today, Nai Vanich Panananda, was actually impeached by that same National Assembly shortly before the Japanese invasion, for his notorious pro-Japanese leanings and activities.

I stake my own honor upon the knowledge which I possess of the Thai people, that they have never been, and are not now, and never will be willing allies with the Japanese or any other member of the Axis powers.¹

M. R. Seni Pramoj
Free Thai Minister

¹Fortune 26 (October 1942), p. 8.

APPENDIX M

UNITED STATES EDUCATIONAL
FOUNDATION IN THAILAND

Agreement between the United States of America and Thailand amending agreement of July 1, 1950. Effect by Exchange of notes dated at Bangkok January 20 and April 7, 1953; entered into force April 7, 1953

The American Embassy to the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs No. 1038.

The Embassy of the United States of America presents its compliments to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and has the honor to refer to Article 8 and Article 12 of the agreement between the government of the United States of America and the government of Thailand for Financing Certain Educational Exchange Programs.¹ Article 8 pertains, in part, to the total amount of currency the government of Thailand shall make available during any single calendar year. Article 12 states that the agreement may be amended by the exchange of diplomatic notes between the two governments.

As the program of the United States Educational (Fulbright) Foundation in Thailand is now well established and appears to have proven successful in fulfilling the purposes of the agreement, the government of the United States of America proposes that Article 8 of the agreement be amended so that the government of Thailand make available

each year an additional sum the equivalent of \$30,000 so that the activities of the Foundation may be extended, within the present framework, in furtherance of the purposes of the agreement. The proposed additional sum for each year would not alter the total amount to be paid under the terms of the agreement.

The government of the United States of America trusts that the government of Thailand will in the near future be able to advise the Embassy of the United States of America of a decision with regard to this proposal.

AMERICAN EMBASSY,
BANGKOK, JANUARY 20, 1950

The Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the American Embassy
No. 6834/2496.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs presents its compliments to the Embassy of the United States of America and has the honour to refer to the latter's Note No. 1038 dated the 20th of January, 1953, stating that the government of the United States of America proposes that Article 8 of the Agreement between the government of the United States of America and the government of Thailand for Financing Certain Educational Exchange Programs be amended so that the government of Thailand make available each year an additional sum the equivalent of \$30,000 so that the activities of the Foundation may be extended, within the present framework, in furtherance of the purposes of the agreement, and that the proposed additional sum for each year would not alter the total amount to be paid under the terms of the agreement.

In reply the Ministry of Foreign Affairs begs to inform the Embassy of the United States of America that His Majesty's Government is agreeable to the above proposal, and Article 8 of the agreement will thus read as follows:

"The government of Thailand shall, as and when requested by the government of the United States of America for purposes of this agreement, make available for deposit in Thailand in an account in the name of the Treasurer of the United States of America, amounts of currency of the

government of Thailand up to an aggregate amount equivalent to \$1,000,000 (United States currency) provided, however, that in no event shall a total amount of the currency of the government of Thailand in excess of the equivalent of \$230,000 (United States currency) be made available during any single calendar year.

"The rate of exchange between currency of the government of Thailand and United States currency to be used in determining the amount of currency of the government of Thailand to be so deposited, shall be the rate established pursuant to the provisions of Article 6, c. of Supplement No. 2 of the Sales Contract.²

"The Secretary of State of the United States of America will make available for expenditure as authorized by the Foundation currency of the government of Thailand in such amounts as may be required for the purposes of this agreement but in no event in excess of the budgetary limitation established pursuant to Article 3 of the present agreement."

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Saranrom Palace
7th April 1953

(SEAL)

²Not printed.

APPENDIX N

THAILAND

ECONOMIC COOPERATION

Agreement amending the agreement of September 19, 1950.
Effected exchange of notes dated At Bangkok July 12 and 25,
1951; entered into force July 25, 1951.

The American Embassy to the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs
No. 41.

The Embassy of the United States of America presents its compliments to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and has the honor to refer to the Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Thailand, and more particularly to the understanding in regard thereto confirmed in memoranda exchanged by the Embassy and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs dated 19 September 1950 covering the interpretation of Section I, paragraph 2 (B) of the Annex of the above-mentioned agreement. The Embassy further has the honor to request a revision of such understanding as expressed below.

1. The Government of the United States of America shall from time to time notify the Government of Thailand of its dollar disbursements during periods of not more than one month covering the indicated dollar costs of the commodities

and services made available under this agreement, and the Government of Thailand will thereupon deposit in the special account a commensurate amount of Baht.

2. The rate of exchange to be used for the purpose of computing the commensurate amount of Baht shall be the simple average open market selling rate of exchange of Baht for U.S. dollars for commercial transactions as reported by the Bank of Thailand for the first legal banking day of the month covered by the notification above provided for. The rate defined above shall be reported to the Chief of the Special Technical and Economic Mission to Thailand on or before the tenth day of each such month.

R.B.S.

AMERICAN EMBASSY,
BANGKOK, JULY 12, 1951

U.S. Treaties and Other International Agreements 2,
Part 2 (1951), p. 1613.

The Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the American Embassy
No. 14284/2494.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs presents its compliments to the Embassy of the United States of America, and has the honour to acknowledge the receipt of the latter's Note No. 41 dated July 12, 1951, referring to the Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement between the Government of Thailand and the Government of the United States of America, and more particularly to the understanding in regard thereto confirmed in memoranda exchanged by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Embassy dated September 19, 1950, covering the interpretation of Section I, paragraph 2 (B) of the Annex of the above-mentioned agreement and requesting a revision of such understanding as expressed below:-

1. The Government of the United States of America shall from time to time notify the Government of Thailand of its dollar disbursements during periods of not more than one month covering the indicated dollar costs of the commodities and services made available under this agreement, and the government of Thailand will thereupon deposit in the special account a commensurate amount of Baht.

2. The rate of exchange to be used for the purpose of computing the commensurate amount of Baht shall be the simple average open market selling rate of exchange of Baht

for U.S. dollars for commercial transactions as reported by the Bank of Thailand for the first legal banking day of the month covered by the notification above provided for. The rate defined above shall be reported to the Chief of the Special Technical and Economic Mission to Thailand on or before the tenth day of each such month.

In reply the Ministry has the honour to inform the Embassy that His Majesty's Government agrees to the proposed revision.

The Embassy's note and the present note in reply thereto shall be regarded as placing on record the revision agreed upon in respect to the matter.

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
25th July, 1951

(Seal)

U.S. Treaties and Other International Agreements 2,
Part 2 (1951), pp. 1614.

APPENDIX O

Statement by Acting Secretary Acheson
(Released to the press January 24, 1946)

INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS WITH SIAM CONTINUE IN FORCE

In conversations with the Government of Siam, following the formal resumption of diplomatic relations between the United States and Siam, it has been recognized that the treaties and other international agreements in force between the United States and Siam prior to the outbreak of war in the Far East continue in full force and effect. Bilateral treaties and agreements covered by such conversations include the Treaty of Friendship, Commerce, and Navigation of November 13, 1937, together with the final protocol and accompanying exchanges of notes; the Extradition Treaty of December 30, 1922; and the agreement for the waiver of passport-visa fees of September 19, 1925.

The Department of State Bulletin 14 (February 3, 1946), p. 178.

APPENDIX P

Statement by the Secretary of State
(Released to the press August 20, 1945)

The Minister of Thailand, M. R. Seni Pramoj, has communicated to the Department of State the text of proclamation issued by the Regent of Thailand in the name of His Majesty the King on August 16. As regards Thai relations with this country, the proclamation declared null and void, as unconstitutional and contrary to the will of the Thai people, the declaration of war by Thailand on January 25, 1942 against the United States; announced Thai determination to restore the friendly relations which existed with the United Nations before the Japanese occupation; promised that repeal of laws prejudicial to our interests would be considered; assured just compensation for damages resulting from such laws; and pledged full Thai cooperation with the United Nations in establishing world stability.

The action of the Thai government is a welcome step in American-Thai relations. The Japanese occupation of Thailand took place at the same time as the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. The Thai declaration of war was made seven weeks later. The Thai government was then completely controlled by the Japanese. The American government has

always believed that the declaration did not represent the will of the Thai people. Accordingly we disregarded that declaration and have continued to recognize the Thai Minister in Washington as the Minister of Thailand, although, of course, we did not recognize the Thailand government in Bangkok as it was under Japanese control.

Immediately following the Japanese occupation of Thailand, the Minister of Thailand in Washington organized a Free Thai Movement among those Thai who were outside their country when the Japanese blow fell. The Free Thai have since contributed substantially to the Allied cause.

Soon after the Japanese occupation a resistance movement developed within Thailand. Our government and the British government have both given to and received from the resistance movement important aid and for some time past have been in constant communication with its leaders. For a number of months the resistance movement has been prepared to commence overt action against the Japanese. For operational reasons this government and British government requested that such action be deferred. It was only because of this express request that the resistance movement did not begin open fighting for the liberation of their country before Japanese surrender made such action unnecessary.

Before the war Thailand and the United States had a long history of friendship. We hope that friendship will be even closer in the future. During the past four years we have regarded Thailand not as an enemy but as a country to be liberated from the enemy. With that liberation now accomplished we look to the resumption by Thailand of its former place in the community of nations as a free, sovereign, and independent country.

Letter from the Minister of Thailand to the Secretary of
State
(Released to the press August 20)

August 17, 1945

Sir:

I have the honour to communicate to Your Excellency, for the information of the United States Government, the text of the following Proclamation issued by the Regent of Thailand on August 16th, 1945, and unanimously approved on the same day by the National Assembly of Thailand.

"Whereas Thailand had pursued a fixed policy of maintaining strict neutrality and of combating foreign aggression by all means as is clearly evident from the enactment in B.E. 2484 (1941) of the Law "Defining the Duties of the Thais in Time of War," this fixed determination was made clear, when Japan moved her forces into Thai territory on the 8th December B.E. 2484 (1941), by acts combating aggression everywhere, and numerous soldiers, police and civilians lost their lives thereby.

"This circumstance, which stands as evidence in itself, shows clearly that the declaration of war on Great Britain and the United States of America on the 25th January B.E. 2485 (1942), as well as all acts adverse to the United Nations, are acts contrary to the will of the Thai people and constitute an infringement of the provisions

of the situation and the laws of the land. The Thai people inside as well as outside the country, who were in a position to help and support the United Nations who are lovers of peace in this world, have taken action by every means to assist the United Nations are already aware. This shows once again that the will of the Thai people does not approve of the declaration of war and acts adverse to the United Nations as already mentioned.

"Now that Japan has agreed to comply with the declaration of the United States of America, Great Britain, China and the Soviet Union which was made at Potsdam, peace is restored to Thailand as is the wish of the Thai people.

"The Regent, in the name of His Majesty the King, hereby openly proclaims on behalf of the Thai people that the declaration of war on the United States of America and Great Britain is null and void and not binding on the Thai people as far as the United Nations are concerned.

Thailand has resolved that the good friendly relations existing with the United Nations prior to the 8th December B.E. 2484 (1941) shall be restored and Thailand is ready to cooperate fully in every way with the United Nations in the establishment of stability in the world.

"As for the territories the occupancy of which Japan entrusted to Thailand, namely, the States of Kelantan, Trengganu, Kedah, Perlis, Kengtung, and Muang Phan, Thailand

has no desire for the territories and is ready to arrange for their delivery as soon as Great Britain is ready to take delivery thereof.

"As for any other provisions of law having effects adverse to the United States of America, Great Britain, and the British Empire their repeal will be considered hereafter. All damages of any kind resulting from those laws will be legitimately made good.

"In conclusion, all the Thai people as well as aliens who are in the Thai kingdom are requested to remain in tranquility and not to commit any act which will constitute a disturbance of public order. They should hold steadfastly to the ideals which have been laid down in the resolutions of the United Nations at San Francisco.

"I have the honour to be, with the highest consideration, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

M. R. Seni Pramoj "

APPENDIX Q

740.0011 European War 1939/14402
Memorandum of Conversation, By the Secretary of State (Hull)

(Washington) August 18, 1941

The Minister of Thailand called by mutual agreement. He had previously had conference with Mr. Hamilton of the Far Eastern Division, in which he discussed the purpose of his call to see me. (Reference is made to the record of Mr. Hamilton's conversation of August 12, 1941.)

The Minister said that pressure had been brought to bear on his government in connection with rubber and perhaps one or two other commodities; that the troops of Japan have been moved up to a point on the new border between Thailand and Indochina just opposite and overlooking Bangkok. He was of the opinion that their first objective is to go south and attack Singapore. He said that the largest military forces are opposite Bangkok and that the Navy and all of their military craft with few exceptions are stationed at Saigon. He believes that the Japanese will probably move south and later against Rangoon in order to destroy the Burma Road terminal.

The Minister indicated that pressure on his government was more and more threatening and that no one could tell

what day or what hour Japanese troops and other forces might move into his country. He said that his government had announced that it was neutral and friendly towards every country, but that if it should be attacked it would defend itself as best as it possibly could. He then stated that his real interest in calling on me was to ascertain what the attitude of this government would be towards his country in case it should be attacked and endeavor in good faith to defend itself. I repeated to him what Mr. Hamilton had said concerning the long friendship existing between our two countries and about the probability of Japanese intervention by force at any time despite agreements and understanding to the contrary. I stated that we have ascertained this by experience with them in the Chinese invasion and in other instances; and that they are unquestionably out on a rampage of invasion by force, the seizure of any and all weaker countries, and the placing of them under a military despotism, which would dominate their political, economic, commercial and other affairs and interests and which would channel straight to Tokyo the cream of all benefits, advantages, and gains.

I reminded the Minister that we have been aiding China against the aggression of Japan--aiding her in many ways--and that we would place Thailand in the same category; that I have already more than one expressed the serious

concern of this country with reference to threatened Japanese intervention. I then added that in aiding all countries subjected to aggression and intervention by force, especially by countries like Germany and Japan, we do the very best possible to distribute such aid where it will be most effective. I said that we are increasing our production fairly rapidly and that the State Department will be glad to contact the officials in charge of the defense program and inform them of the needs and desires of Thailand. I finally said that I would be glad to have the Minister call at any time for the purpose of exchanging information about the situation. He remarked that Thailand had the money to pay for the material that they would like to purchase in the United States.

C(ordell) H(ull)

Foreign Relations V (1941), pp. 276-277.

APPENDIX R

740.0011 Pacific War/1004
Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State (Hull)

(Washington) December 8, 1941

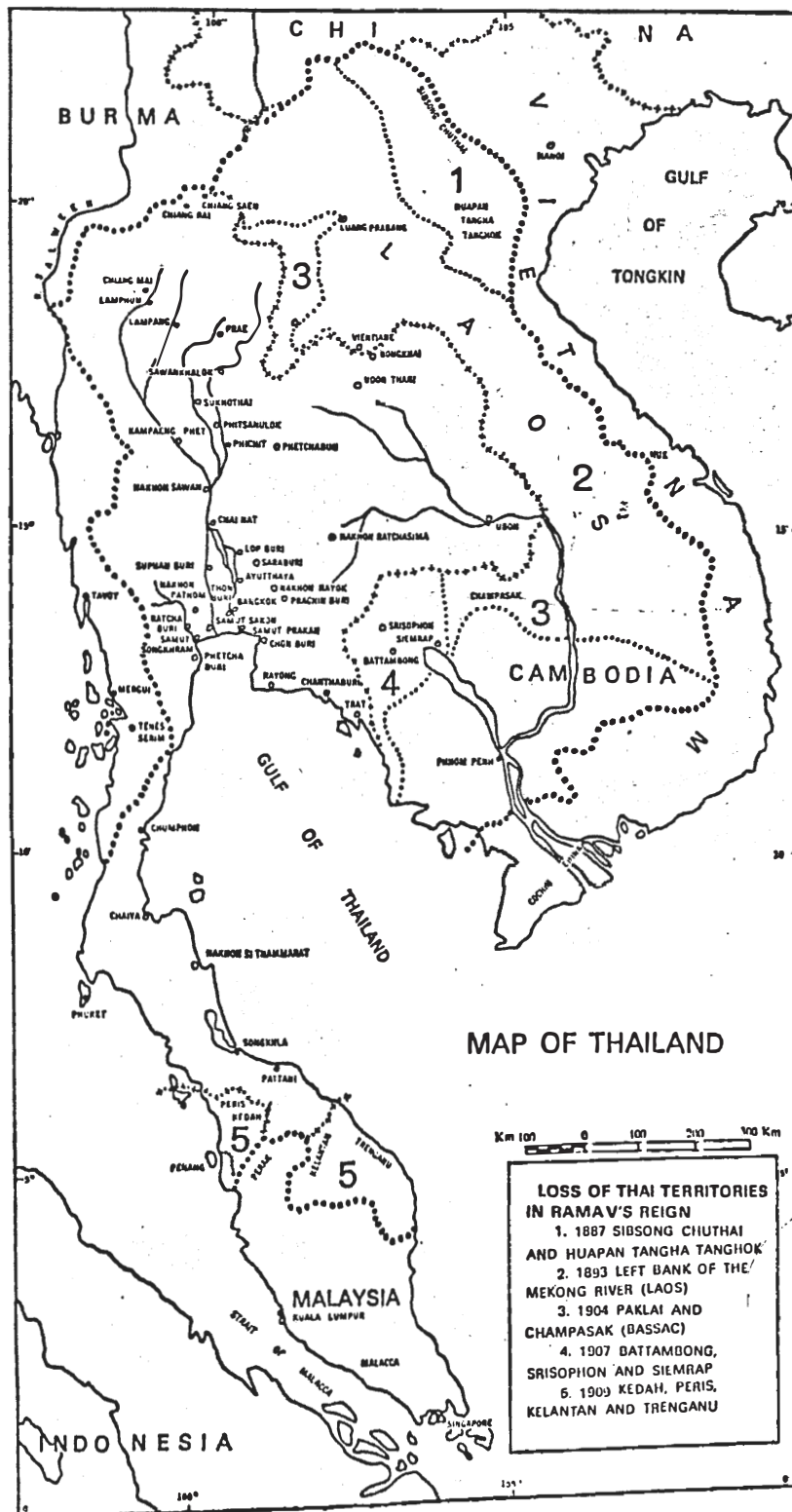
The Minister of Thailand called at his request.

He said that he had not been able to hear from his government during recent days and desired to get any information I had from our Minister in Thailand. I gave him the substance of two cables that had come in yesterday and today which showed that his government's forces had resisted Japanese attacks at various places on the land and sea frontiers on December 8. I added that the Thai government had ordered a cessation of firing five hours and thirty minutes after the attack and that negotiations were taking place, including terms of capitulations between Thai and Japanese representatives; and that the American Minister expects Japanese control of the Thai government.

The Minister then proceeded to say that not many months ago his government became satisfied of the dangerous character of the Japanese and that it has sought in every way to keep aloof from them; that the people of Thailand are inherently unfriendly toward the people of Japan and distrust them in most ways. The Minister said that what they have

said and done in way of contacts with Japan has been under duress and that, while there are some pro-Japanese in Thailand, and even in the government of Thailand, the people are fundamentally sound in their opposition and in their conviction that they must always look to democratic governments like the United States for any freedom that they may be able to enjoy. The Minister said that we could count on this state of mind in his country no matter what may happen and that it would look to this country for aid at opportune times in the future to emancipate itself from Japanese military control. At the same time he said his people and himself would watch every chance to be cooperative with us. I thanked him and reminded him that during recent months on account of our friendship for the people of Thailand and also our desire to safeguard that area against the establishment of a menace against the South Sea area by Japan, we have constantly warned Japan against occupying Thailand.

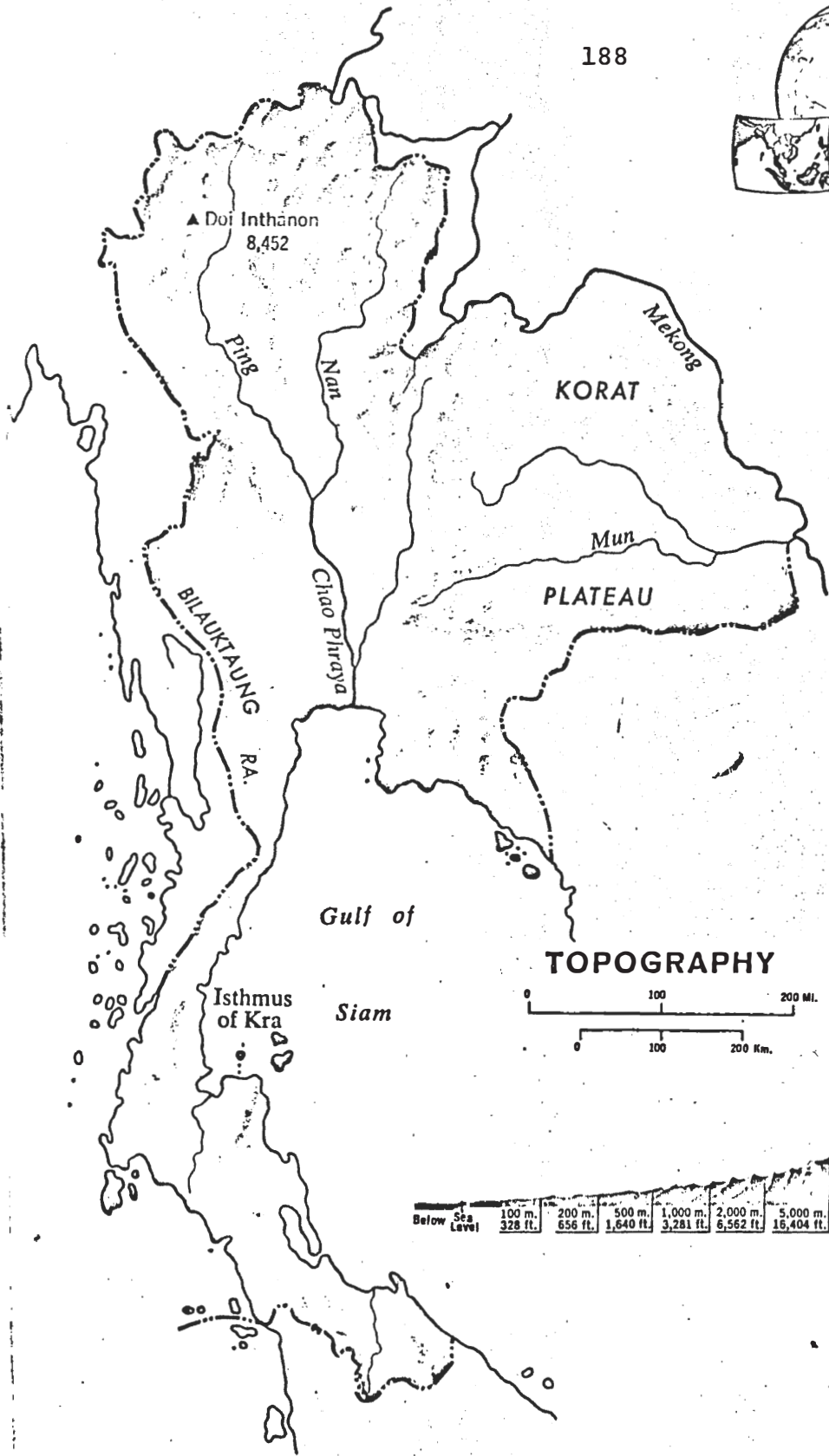
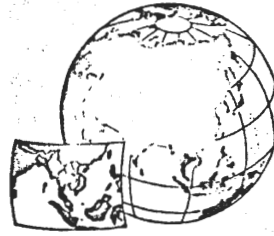
Foreign Relations V (1941), p. 376.



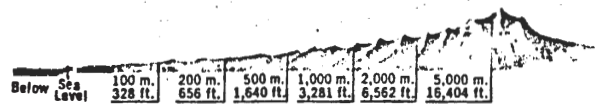
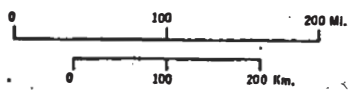
Map 1

THAILAND

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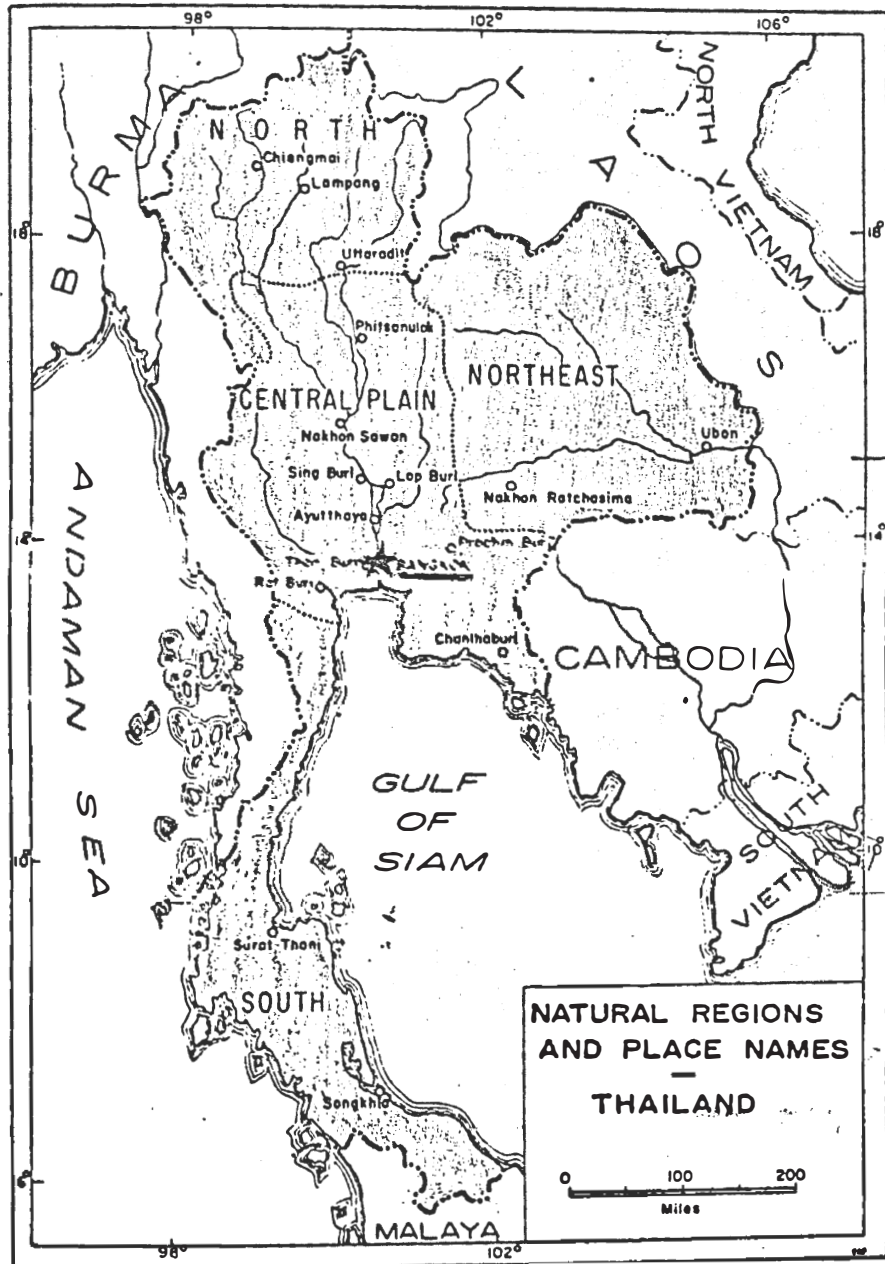


TOPOGRAPHY

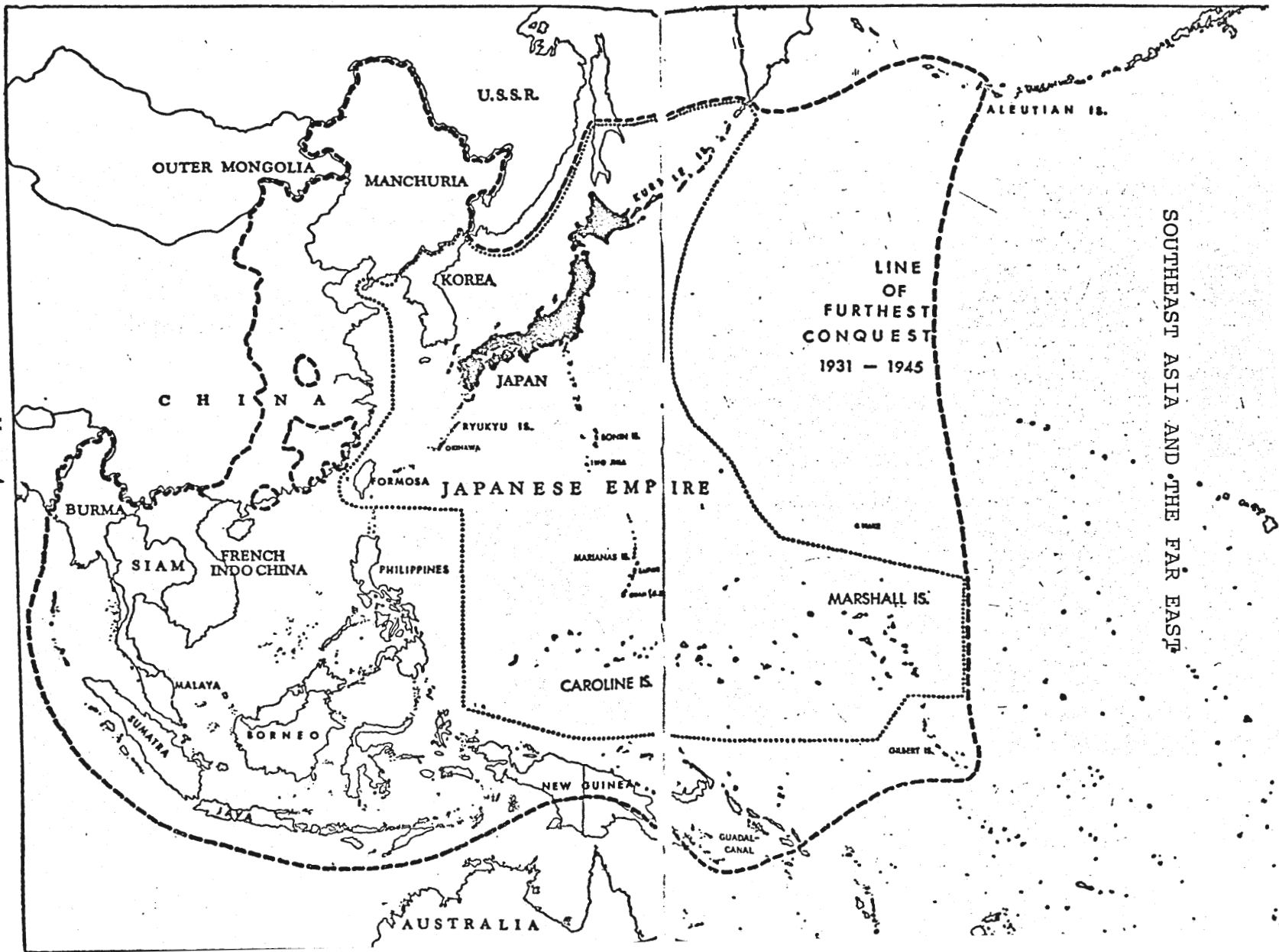


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Map 2



Map 3



SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE FAR EAST

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