

THE UNITED STATES AND THE COMING OF THE COUP OF 1947 IN SIAM⁽¹⁾

The Coup of 1947 is a watershed in the history of modern Thai politics : it “was a turning point in the political development of post-war Thailand” Politically, the Coup eliminated the liberals as an active political force and, at the same time, terminated the first attempt to establish constitutional democracy in post-war Thailand(2). In this connection, as Thak Chaloemtiarana points out, the 1947 Coup also marked the beginning of a new political era in which force had become the “common currency” in Thai politics and constitutionalism declined as a source of political legitimacy(3). Significantly, the Coup of 1947 ended the political predominance of the People’s Party (Khana Phukokan), which had overthrown the absolute monarchical rule of Siam in 1932. Consequently the Coup Group established the authoritarian rule of the military regime whose leaders, unlike those of the People’s Party, had received their military training exclusively in Thailand and thus had never been exposed to the democratic tradition of Western societies(4).

The Coup of 1947 also marked a turning point in Thai-American relations that eventually led to the intimate involvement of the United States in Thai political and economic development. Immediately after the coup in 1947, the United States strongly opposed and criticized the Coup Group, especially its leaders. In a report back to Washington, the American ambassador in Bangkok stated that the abolition of the existing constitutional was illegal : “The status of the present regime therefore is wholly illegal and is based solely on force”(5). The United States government accordingly withheld the recognition of the new regime. But this unfavorable reaction would last but only a few months. In the spring of 1948, the United States unexpectedly changed its political standpoint toward the Coup Group and its government. This sudden change was even more dramatic because it took place immediately after the Coup Group, dissatisfied with the performance of the civilian government which was established primarily to appease the United States and British governments, arbitrarily dismissed Khuang government and appointed Phibun as the new premier. Less than a month after Phibun had come to power, the United States government formally recognized his government and began to pour economic and military aid into Thailand. This paper therefore intends to explore American attitudes toward post-war Siamese politics, in particular, Pridi’s political and economic policies during the period of precarious transition from war to peace.

Relying exclusively on the declassified documents of the US National Archives, the information and viewpoints in this paper concerning prominent Thai political personalities and activities are strictly of American officials stationed in Bangkok. Most documents are confidential reports prepared either by the American legation or the Strategic Services Unit of the War Department (formerly the Office of Strategic Services-OSS) ; hence their opinions are undoubtedly candid and, at times, even sprinkled with sarcastic remarks(6). Be that as it may, the paper hopes the confidential information from American sources will shed more light upon the study of post-war Thai politics and the eventual dominance of the army over other contending cliques and political groups.

Most studies of Thai-American post-war relations have attributed the reasons for the sudden change in American foreign policy toward the Coup Group to the drastic change in world situations that prompted the United States to seek military alliances in order to contain the spread of communism(7). The American foreign policy, particularly in the spring of 1948, therefore, reflected "the realities of the situation" in which the policy of containment of the Soviet Union was well underway and China was moving fast toward communism. In addition, the Cold War thesis contends that the United States government had to choose between supporting and helping the development of democracy in Thailand or saving the country from communist aggression and the loss of freedom(8). Thus a conservative and anti-Communist regime in Thailand became increasingly attractive to Americans "regardless of its internal policies or methods of achieving Power"(9). This explanation is based on the assumption that American foreign policy had shifted from promoting "peace and freedom in the early post-war to a policy emphasizing peace and security in the new era of Communist aggression" (10)

This explanation, however, overlooks the important economic and political developments which conditioned and shaped government policies both in the United States and Thailand. underlying the rhetoric of anti-Communism were the attempts of American leaders, both political and economic, to recast the world in the image of American neocapitalism. Recent studies by revisionist historians have contended that in this period American leaders applied their corporative strategies to the management of foreign policy and the organization of the international system. American corporate capitalism asserts that public and private powers are responsible for the growth of social peace and productive efficiency in which class conflict gives way to corporate collaboration, economic self-sufficiency to economic interdependence, international rivalry to rapprochement and cooperation and

arbitrary national controls to the integrating powers of supranational authorities and natural market forces(11).

In Thailand, the post-war military and conservative leaders initially did not share the same perceived threat of communism in Asia as Americans did. In fact the communist threat became a handy political instrument when the renewed conflict among various political groups and cliques arose after the satisfactory negotiations with Great Britain and France on the post-war settlement and, especially, after Truman's speech of "Block Communism."

One of the consequential problems facing the post-war civilian governments was their inability to effect the kind of compromise or alliance which might have led to a more stable regime and a continuation of their rule. Powerful political groups and factions in the government and bureaucracy were attempting to further their own interests through the agency of the state in the quest for dominance(12). These political groups, however, still lacked a strong economic base and an effective policy that could strengthen their political dominance over the others. A brief discussion of the important development of Thai politics and its attendant political forces at work in the decade preceding the Second World War is, therefore, in order.

The Coup of 1932, led by the People's Party(Khana Phukokarn) whose leaders were young military commanders and civilian officials who had been educated in Europe, ended the rule of absolute monarchy and constituted a system of constitutional monarchy. From the outset political compromise seemed to be in order. The People's Party-led governments made attempts to draw support from, and ally with, the progressive royalists and aristocrats ; they offered the premiership to Phya Mano, a former court official and well-known lawyer(13). These efforts, however, eventually proved fruitless.

The first political conflict between the royalists and aristocrats and the People's Party erupted in the following year over the government's proposed economic plan drafted by Pridi Phanomyong, one of the promoters of the 1932 Coup and the famous leader of the civilian faction in the party. Essentially his economic plan called for the nationalization of land, labor and capital by the state in order to develop the country independently(16). The heated debate and subsequently strong opposition to the economic policy from the royalist group, particularly King Rama VII himself, resulted in a temporary exile of Pridi to Europe. Yet conflicts continued within the coalition government until the military faction of the People's Party seized the government and ousted the royalist-aristocrat group from positions in the government.

Further political struggles between these two major groups only resulted in the more violent and profound hatred and distrust between members of the two different social and political classes. The "Boworadet Rebellion"(15) in 1933 left the government troops as well as the rebel forces with many deaths and casualties. The rebels were defeated and Prince Boworadet fled the country and spent almost the rest of his life in exile in Saigon. This incident and other disagreements over government policies finally led to the king's abdication in 1934 ; he went to England where he later died(16). The government appointed the young Prince Ananda to succeed to the throne. Spending most of the time studying in Switzerland, the young monarch returned to the country after the war had ended and, almost a year later, was found dead in his bed-room. The mysterious death of the king would turn out to be the most effective weapon for the royalist and conservative politicians to vehemently attack and accuse their opponents especially the radical wing of the People's Party. Within the People's Party conflicts also arose chiefly between the civilian faction led by Pridi and the military faction grouped around Phibun. The rise of militarism and the loosening of the Western powers' grip on Thai's economy and politics contributed to the increase of Phibun's influence and power(17). In 1937 he became prime minister and army commander while Pridi took charge of the ministries of Foreign Affairs and Finance. The two factions, nevertheless, confined their conflicts within areas where they could peacefully negotiate and compromise. The divided ruling groups and their relatively weak economic bases also led to an important aspect of the Thai state. That is the interventionist role of the state in stimulating the accumulation and expansion of local capital. Emphasizing political independence and economic nationalism, the successive Thai governments, in pursuing their policy of national development, created many state enterprises and trading companies owned or managed by government officials. The policy aimed at encouraging Thai business enterprise and at gaining more control of strategic industries which were previously in the hands of foreign firms. These government and semi-government enterprises at once became the important economic base for the People's Party and they continued to provide that base down to the 1947 coup. Evidently, members of the boards of directors in these enterprises were mainly leading members of both Pridi's civilian and Phibun's military factions(18).

During his first government(1937-1944) Phibun vigorously advocated policies of militarism and nationalism, making himself "phu-nam" (the leader) and the first Field Marshal. His extreme nationalist policy earned him much condemnation from the Thais who were forced to adopt a new "civilized and

modern" cultural practices and relinquish the traditional ones (19), and from the Chinese minority in Thailand whose business prominence led to government persecution and suppression. Siding with Japan, he declared war against the Allied powers in 1941. His war-time policies, however, were very unpopular among the Thais and increasingly came under heavy attacks from all sides, in particular, members of the upper echelon in the society who pinned their faith on Britain or the United States (20). Phibun's downfall came in 1944 when it was clear that Japan was losing the Pacific War.

In an important move to strengthen his position as the sole leader of the country, Phibun had worked to undermine the prestige of his "ultimate adversary, the monarchy" (21). Prohibiting the display of the picture of ex-king Rama VII, in 1939, the government filed suit against the ex-king on charges of misusing some six million baht of crown property. The government won its case and the ex-king's property and private residence were confiscated. By 1939, a noted Thai historian remarks, Phibun "had emerged as uncrown (ed) monarch in Thailand" (22). But post-war politics would change all of this. In his attempts to regain political power, though this time through parliamentary politics, Phibun set up a party, Thammathipat (Right is Might), its main pivotal policies were the preservation of the Chakri dynasty and the fight against communism (23).

During the war, Pridi was appointed regent, the post that gave him greater opportunity to organize and lead the Free Thai underground movement against the Japanese occupation. Consequently, Pridi became an undisputed chief of, and a dominating personality in, Thai politics. Pridi enjoyed popular support from the new national organization, especially a political support from the northeastern and southern provinces which, consisting largely of Laotian and Muslim minorities, traditionally have been regarded as a stronghold of opposition to the Bangkok governments since the founding of the present Chakri dynasty in the late eighteenth century.

The sudden appearance of the Free Thai forces in politics alarmed the army faction of the People's Party, the royalists as well as the conservative Democrats whose political bases were limited largely to landed and commercial classes in Bangkok and major cities around the country. In fact, what made the Free Thai group more fearful in the eyes of its opponents was its possession of the modern weapons received from the Allied forces during the war. Yet no studies have ever come out as to the precise quantities and quality of the so-called Free Thai's huge arsenal that threatened even the country's armed forces. Contemplating the

animosity aroused by the presence of the powerful Free Thai Movement, Pridi, following the termination of Japanese occupation, had to announce publicly the dissolution of the movement and its historic mission.

Consequently, leading members of the Free Thai Movement joined to form a political party, the Sahacheep (Cooperative) party. Others joined the Constitutional Front party led by Luang Thamrongnawaswat (24). The two parties became known as Pridi's or Free Thai's parties. Their policies were based mainly on the six principles of the People's Party emphasizing the national independence and welfare of the people (25). Responding to the demand from their northeastern constituencies, the Sahacheep party, however, called for more vigorous promotion of cooperatives and agricultural improvements in the rural areas.

Another important social and political group struggling for political power had a conservative or rightist base. This loosely-formed group, which consisted of various members of the royalty and, more importantly, the conservative members of the Demoractic party, was created right after the war. Khuang and the famous Pramoj brothers took the lead for this group. In general, this right-wing political clique represented no unified political and economic objectives except a common hatred for the People's Party, particularly Pridi and his popular following among the Thai intelligentsia. The most severe blow to the royalty, one that painfully urged them to make a revenge on the People's Party, was the appropriation of their vast wealth through the seizure of the Royal Crown Property and the imposition of government control over the palace budget (26).

Such were the salient characteristics of the three major political cliques : the Free Thais, who sympathized with leftist ideologies, and were led by Pridi, the military clique led by Phibun, and Khuang's conservative Democrats and royalists. These were the blocs which dominated and determined decisively the course of political and economic development of post-war Thailand. During the Japanese occupation of Thailand, these three political cliques quietly united to fight against the Japanese and obstruct their occupation of the country. By the end of the war, when it became clear that Japan had lost the war and the United States was *emerging* as the strongest power in the region, leaders of these political groups in Bangkok approached Americans and tried to win their political support.

In the post-war settlement of Thailand, the United States made known its desire to restore Thailand as a sovereign state under an independent government. This firm commitment toward a free and independent Thailand on the part of the American government played an important role in deterring the British demand "to

impose economic and military conditions within an international system which might substantially impair Thai sovereignty ” (27). Earlier, the British had proposed in December 1944 that Colonel Evelyn Van Milligen, formerly manager of the Bombay-Burmah Trading Corporation, would be likely appointed as chief of military government in Thailand. Colonel Van Milligen had also expressed the imperialist view that “the southern provinces of Thailand should be attached to British Malaya and that he could see no reason why the Thai should object” (28).

The American desire for political independence of Thailand was not the only objective in American foreign policy, however. In his address on April 9, 1944, Secretary of State, James Byrnes, said clearly that the heart of the political policy of cooperating with other free nations “lies in action which will stimulate and expand production in industry and agriculture and free international commerce from excessive and unreasonable restrictions.” Furthermore, he also expressed concern over the expansion of private capital and the government’s sanction of private property. In his own words, he said : (29)

Production cannot go forward without arrangements to provide investment capital. Trade cannot be conducted without stable currencies in which payments can be promised and made. Trade cannot develop unless excessive barriers in the form of tariffs, preferences, quotas, exchange controls, monopolies, and subsidies, and others are reduced or eliminated...

Likewise, an American political advisor to the American legation in Bangkok in 1945 also expressed a similar attitude that “in the postwar world the United States will be concerned with the political, social and economic progress of Southeast Asia, which includes Thailand, and with the maintenance of stable conditions in that area.” In addition, regarding American interest in expanding export markets after the war, an independent Thailand was of particular importance to the United States for it was “the only market in Southeast Asia not complicated by colonial relationships.” Finally, Thailand might be the only independent source in the East for strategic commodities such as rubber and tin (30).

As soon as peace was assured and independence guaranteed, a renewed political struggle among contending potential ruling groups in Thailand started.

Within a few months after the war had ended, factional conflicts and dissatisfactions over Pridi's control government began to make themselves felt. By the end of 1945 Americans in Bangkok began to receive information concerning the possibility of a revolution in Siam. According to the Americans, the first hostile reactions towards Pridi's group came from the Royalist group which had planned a "return to political prominence in Siamese affairs." The Research and Intelligence Service, U.S. State Department, Bangkok, reported the grievances of the Royalist group caused primarily by the appropriation of the Royal Crown Property, taken over by the People's Party in 1935. As an indication of the future importance of this question, the report extracted from a secret letter presented by a Thai army officer to the Office of the Strategic Services (OSS) as follows" (31)

The English Free Thai was formed to make an opportunity for the Siamese Royalist Exiles to re-enter Thailand, sweep out the party in power, place their leader as premier, revenge the wartime leaders and recover the Royalists Property, primarily that of the former Queen Rambay Barni, (Queen to King Prachathipok). She it is said is the real power behind the movement employing a British attorney as consultant named Mr. Gibbons with the wealth of Prince Chula Chakaphong to spend on this cause. To accomplish their purpose they must make a Royalist government, and to do that they must have the English behind them pulling the wires.

Furthermore, in an attached statement on the disposition of Royal Crown Property prepared by "a Royalist educated in the United States," the report continued, the Siamese Government had mismanaged this vast wealth of over 10 million Baht and put the Crown Property in debt. The anonymous Royalist further alleged that 500,000 baht of Crown Property funds were given to "the promoters of the Revolution of 1932." Later Phibun awarded 53,000 Baht to the members of the special tribunal that tried and convicted political prisoners of whom eighteen were executed. The statement also described that Crown Property funds had been spent in "big empty buildings, Rajdamnern, National Theatre, Lopburi (Phibun's pet town) and wherever the then Premier wished to see big buildings.... Shares of newspaper company, insurance companies, and many other companies doing business of all description were bought..." Finally, the statement ended saying that : (32)

The Crown Property is now a financially bankrupt institution, the men who have been running it and the country are morally

bankrupt. Both should be scrapped. If you ever go on visits to promoters' houses you will find furniture, carpets, rugs, screens, paintings and statues and all kinds of objets d' arts, those are practically all looted from the Crown Property.

The British's attempt to impose a semi-colonial domination upon Siam at the end of the war immensely enhanced the Royalist group's political determination. They believed the British, with their long reverence for monarchy, would readily support the Royalist coup to re-establish the absolute monarchy in Siam. At the same time, post-war negotiations with the British (led by the then Prime Minister M.R. Seni Pramoj) reached a crisis in December 1945 "when the British seemed determined to immediately force an unfair treaty on Thailand." (33) Thus Captain Luang Suphachalasai, who had served as a minister in the Phibun and Khuang governments during the war and had broken with Pridi over differences in political opinions, informed the Strategic Services Unit of the U.S. War Department (formerly the OSS) in Bangkok that the coup would be launched in the next four or five months depending on the British reaction. The main objective of the coup was to "get the Regent (Pridi) and the gangster government." In addition, Captain Luang Suphachalasai stated that Admiral Luang Sangworn Yutthakit, head of the Special Police whom Pridi believed was one of his supporters, also belonged to the Royalist coup group. General Wirawat Yothin, Commanding General of the Army First Division, according to the report, "is prepared to lead the revolt in the crucial Bangkok area." (34) The pending revolution, however, never got off the ground, probably due to the lack of a unified leadership and support from the army as well as the British and Americans.

The American intelligence in Bangkok also discerned another group of the "Monarchists" in the post-war politics. The eminence personality of the group was Prince Chumbhot, the son of the Prince of Nakorn Sawan, whom the US officials of the War Department described as a "progressive royalist." He was reported to have frequent conferences with the group around Pridi. According to the report this "progressive" royalist group favored a strong constitutional monarchy under the young king Ananda. Interestingly, Washington commented that Prince Chumbhot was the "most probable successor to the Throne should King Ananda Mahidol abdicate." (35)

The American diplomats in Bangkok also discerned the dissatisfactions over the royalist conspiracy as well as Pridi's 'radical' ideologies expressed by some 'middle class' in Bangkok. In a secret letter delivered to the State Department,

Major Arkadej Bijayendrayothin, who claimed to be a republican, disclosed a conspiracy by the royalist group which was attempting to regain political power and return the country to the absolute monarchy with the backing of the British behind the throne. On the other end, the self-proclaimed republican also appalled by the fact, which he had discovered, that Pridi definitely was a communist and would eventually found a communist state in the footsteps of Stalin. Distressed with the right and dismayed with the left, the Major then pledged that "Thailand will be happier to form a Republic under American pattern and guidance than to be under a puppet king with the English wielding the baton behind." The American intervention, therefore, was the only hope of the 'middle class' in Bangkok. In the end, the letter concluded by asking the Americans to "step in right now and send delegates and American soldiers" to Thailand to guarantee real liberty and peace. (36)

The news of a royalist coup emerged simultaneously with rumours that Pridi and his followers were communists. Captain Luang Suphachalasai, who claimed to be one of the leaders of the Royalist coup group, told Americans of the War Department that "Luang Ad Bhanomyong", younger brother of Pridi, covertly went to Moscow in 1939. He alleged that school textbooks now were being rewritten and given a pinkish color, under the direction of Sanguan Tularak, who was co-author of the left wing *Outline for Boys and Girls*. Moreover, Sanguan Tularak also gathered and informed government officials that the Government policy was pro-labor. While a minister of the Interior in 1944, Luang Suphachalasai had ordered the arrest of Sanguan Tularak as a backer of a leftist newspaper, *Khon Kama Cheep*. The order was delayed, however, until the formation of the cabinet of M.R. Seni Pramoj which never took action on that matter. Luang Suphachalasai further accused that Pridi himself was the owner of two leftist newspapers, *New World* and *Khon Kama Cheep*. Finally the Captain charged that the University of Moral and Political Sciences (now Thammasat University) "is a hotbed of radicalism." (37)

Yet the Americans seemed to be cautious with the rumours and confidential reports concerning the activities and movements of various groups and prominent personalities in Siamese politics. In a short note on Luang Suphachalasai's information about Pridi's radicalism, Washington corrected the alleged Moscow connections and stated that "Atthapit (sic) Banomyong, half-brother of the Regent, had been at the Siamese Legation in Berne, and then went to the Swedish Legation, as Minister, in September 1944." (38)

Americans in Bangkok, especially the OSS officers, favored and admired Pridi's political integrity and adroitness. They accepted Pridi as an "unquestioned leader of the Free Thai Movement," whose tremendous personal following allowed him nearly absolute authority over the course of post-war Thai politics. His warm and intimate relationships with the United States government, however, would last but a few years. The eclipse of his political star came sooner than anyone would have expected, when the royalist, conservative and military cliques finally managed successfully to cooperate with one another in launching a military coup against Pridi in November 1947.

Despite the friendly gestures toward Pridi's political predominance, the Americans nevertheless were wary of his radical ideology and economic policies which previously were unfavorable to foreign firms. Following the final abolition of all the unequal treaties with foreign powers in the mid-1930s, Pridi together with Phibun initiated a series of economic policies to regulate and control foreign firms in Thailand. This led to a serious confrontation with the American and British companies in the country. In a protest against the Liquid Fuel Act which controlled the distribution and prices of the foreign oil companies, the Standard Oil Company and the Royal Dutch Shell Company terminated their activities in Thailand. After the war the government withdrew from this activity and a negotiation was made allowing the foreign oil firms to operate again. (39)

In February 1945, Pridi sent a group of delegates to seek support from Washington in establishing "a Thai Provisional government" abroad. The State Department, however, favored the establishment of "a Thai Committee" to avoid political complications that might occur as a result of the simultaneous existence of two legitimate governments. Anyway this proposal never came to fruition because of the strong opposition from the British. But another interesting point during this negotiation was the American's concern over Thailand's post-war economic policy. Thus the State Department questioned Mr. "Suni Theparaksa", Pridi's personal representative, about the future economic policy of Siam, particularly regarding "foreign capital and investment." Mr. "Suni Theparaksa" replied that he understood that, "Thailand's policy for the future would be to abolish discrimination against foreigners" (40) and to establish good economic relations with the United Nations, especially with the United States. Later, Pridi cabled the American government that Thailand "would participate in the dollar bloc countries and would reconcile local currency with the dollar." He also pointed out that direct foreign capital, which was not welcomed for it usually brought foreign political influence in the pre-war period, with post-war requirements might be more welcomed. (41)

In evaluating Pridi's political ideology, the United States Army gathered information from the French intelligence which stated that Pridi, while a student in France, was "a paid agent of the Soviets... (and) a Communist disciple in younger days." The Americans of the War Department in Bangkok, nevertheless, believed that Pridi was now "genuinely devoted to democracy." (42) The OSS in June 1945 reported that Pridi, an opponent of militarism and a genuine democrat, "is a liberal and the idol of the young Siamese intelligentsia." (43) A report from the American Legation in Bangkok in November 1945, however, commented that, "It is furthermore certain that in former days the Regent was inclined toward communism. It is doubtful whether he is more than a mild socialist now." (44)

From September 1945 to March 1946, M.R. Seni Pramoj and Khuang Aphaiwong, leaders of the Democrat party, successively became prime ministers in the post-war cabinets. M.R. Seni was the best choice to head the country because he was Minister to Washington during the war and leader of the Free Thais in America, which made him more acceptable to the Allied powers. From the point of view of Pridi's clique, the primary task of Seni was to negotiate with the Allied powers in the post-war settlement of Thailand. This he successfully accomplished. Then Seni went further into domestic entanglements. Since the first Khuang government in 1944, efforts were made for the government policy "to achieve free trade for all." (45) The Democrats and the royalists agitated and pressed for government withdrawal from engaging in private enterprises. Thus in 1946 the Seni government withdrew its shares from three companies, the Klang Changwat Co., the Thai Minerals & Rubber Co., and the Thai Cotton Co. This move by the Democrat party intended to weaken the economic bases of Pridi clique was met with stiff resistance from Parliament dominated by members of the Sahacheep and Constitutional Front parties. This and other political conflicts finally led to the downfall of the Khuang government in March 1946. And for the first time in his political career, Pridi stepped out to take the premiership.

After reviewing the new government's policies, the American Legation in Bangkok remarked that Pridi's government policy (46) "does not contain anything with socialist tinge," even though the government was promoting the organization of farmers' cooperative societies and state trading and enterprises. The Americans conceived that this policy of economic nationalism, particularly government corporations and industries, was not socialist in nature but aimed chiefly at stimulating Thai's interests in business, promoting national self-sufficiency and industrial development. Politically, the creation of state enterprises and government-owned trading corporations was to provide political rewards as well as

economic interests for government members and supporters. Kenneth P. Landon, a former missionary in Thailand, later a political advisor to the Legation thus concluded that Pridi "is very anxious to establish the best possible relations with the United States and Great Britain in order to speed the rehabilitation of Siam. Although his fundamental principles have not changed greatly, Pridi will not at this time take any radical steps which would harm him in the eyes of the two powers." (47)

To Americans, the government-owned corporations and industries seemed to operate inefficiently, thus resulting in their losses and being a burden on state revenues. For example, the government Paper factory at Kanchanaburi ceased production on July 16, 1946, putting 3500 workers out of jobs. The main reason, according to the American Legation, was the poor quality of paper which found no market in Bangkok. (48) Nevertheless the government remained in control of all major industries instead of allowing private enterprises to take over even those inefficient industries.

Also in 1946, an American firm had applied for a teak and lumber lease to which the Thai government requested 51% capital share control. The firm apparently withdrew its application. At the same time the Americans found that four new corporations were being established by cabinet members dealing with imports, transportation, mining and forestry. (49) The Americans noticed that during the period of Pridi's political predominance the government had approved the expansion of state enterprises in various industries ranging from transportation, electricity and water supply to medical supplies and canned foods to cigarettes, shoes and clothes. (50)

Politically, Americans also noticed in this period the steady rise of radicalism in Thailand. In order to gain membership in the United Nations, Pridi's government repealed the Communist Act of 1934 and resumed diplomatic relationship with the Soviet Union. As a result, the Communist Party of Thailand, secretly organized in 1942, now could operate freely. The Party then publicly published its weekly magazine, the *Masses (Mahachon)* and actively organized workers into a labor union. In August 1947, *Mahachon* weekly published articles by the Sahacheep party members with "heavy blasts against American imperialism." (51) This was not the only newspaper, however, which attacked American policy in Thailand and Southeast Asia. Actually there were, at that time, nearly ten newspapers in Bangkok, including the Chinese newspapers, which launched an attack on the United States. Edwin Stanton, the ambassador at that time, wrote that: (52)

From time to time the Communist press in Bangkok had depicted me as a vampire sucking the blood of little children, or driving a jeep with a diabolical leer as I careened along, flattening out the bodies of babies.

On the opposite side, the American Embassy found only one Thai newspaper that reacted favorably to American policy. The *Democracy (Prachathipatai)* owned by a royalist who later joined with Americans in a campaign against communism, declared in its editorial that "millions of people the world over are today emerging from darkness into light as a result of American sacrifices and efforts in the last war." The paper then expressed its appreciation that the United States "is determined to carry her leadership in war into peace." (53)

Early in 1947, the United States government began to display its concern that the political situation in Siam might lead to instability in Southeast Asia. In receiving Prince Wan, the new ambassador to Washington, President Truman referred to the "internal stability of a democratic Siam" and its need for a strong leader. This implication caused quite a stir in Bangkok, particularly among radical circles. Thai newspapers expressed their discontent and stated that the United States should not "interfere in the internal politics of Siam by supporting Phibun." Dean Acheson, the Under-secretary of State, denied making any statement referring to Phibun and the stability of the Siamese government. But the American Embassy in Bangkok indicated in its report of the Thai reactions that the American government deliberately wanted to make "clear to government leaders as well as to the public the interest of the United States government in political stability in Siam and government representation of the wishes of the people." (54)

What made the Thai press so upset about Truman's and Acheson's speeches was also the announcement of Phibun indicating strongly his intention of returning to politics. Acquitted from war criminal charges and lived quietly in his farm house near Bangkok, suddenly in the spring of 1947, Phibun gave an interview to a Chinese newspaper in Bangkok indicating his return to politics. Phibun's timing was well calculated for he deliberately made an appearance right after Truman's "block Communism" speech. Phibun announced his rightist policy hoping it would appeal to both the Army and Pridi's opposition and the United States. Ironically, Phibun's Thammathipat party (Right is Might) emphasized the preservation of the Chakri dynasty, free elections, freedom of the press, extension of democratic process and cooperation with the UN. (55) A Phibun-supporting newspaper under the ownership of Major General Prayoon Phamornmontri, a conservative member of the 1932

Coup Group, called the "Newsweek", was scheduled to be on sale beginning April 6, or Chakri Day, and it was reported that the insignia on the front page would be a picture of king Rama I. (56)

Yet economic difficulties and fierce political rivalries in post-war Siam discouraged and even inhibited Pridi's efforts to create a more stable democratic government and a prosperous and independent economy. The deterioration and loss of productive equipment, transport facilities, and the shortage of food and labor during the war, coupled with post-war treaty restrictions imposed by the British (57) resulted in the sharp decline of exports of rice, tin, rubber and teak, which were a major source of income for the government and majority of Thais. This led to the shortage of foreign exchange and subsequently the scarcity of imported manufactured goods which were essential particularly to city-dwellers. Adding to the discontent of all classes was the flourishing of smuggling trade and black markets which skyrocketed prices of food, clothing and medicines.

Moreover, government attempts to remedy the domestic situation were ineffective party due to the lack of competent and scrupulous enforcement of government policies and regulations. But mainly it was the political instability of the government which ultimately inhibited the effective government.

When the rainy season came, political clouds had already spread all over Bangkok. By August 1947, rumours of "revolution" spread all over the city. The two political parties under Pridi's leadership, the Sahachep and Constitution Front which controlled Parliament, were contemplating a military coup as conflict between the army and the Free Thai party mounted. On the other hand, an American report also indicated that the royalists and conservative Democrats believed that Pridi's parties might launch a coup in order to seize total state power and form a "Communist police state." (58)

The American diplomats in Bangkok believed that the rise to political dominance of the Free Thai group, putting its civilian leaders in key positions of the government, Parliament and various important state enterprises, intensified the ever-widening cleavage between Pridi's and Phibun's elements within the People's Party (Khana Phukokarn). The current rumours had that strong measures were scheduled to be taken soon by Pridi's Free Thai group against either Phibun's uncompromising military faction of the People's Party or against "Royalist plotters" The Americans, however, saw the possibility of the former alternative. (59)

According to the American's analysis, Pridi tried unsuccessfully to make certain basic compromises relating to the two factions of the People's Party. This was

due largely to his own and the ideologies of his leftist Sahacheep party which did not allow full implementation. Against Pridi's power machine, based on control of the police, military police and OSS-trained Free Thai guerrillas was the Phibun military faction backed by a majority of the Army and supported to a certain extent by Opposition conservatives. Pridi had consolidated his power by the appointment of Free Thai strong man Admiral Luang Sangworn Yutthakit as Commander of the Military Police in 1945, the appointment of Police General Luang Adun Detcharat as Commander of the Army in July 1946, and finally the appointment in August 1947 of Luang Sangworn as Director General of Police in conjunction with his other position. (60)

Although Pridi had in the past declared that the Free Thai Party was formed for one purpose only, that is the liberation of Siam from Japanese domination, and once the war had ended the Party was dissolved, the Americans believed as well as his opposition that "Pridi would maintain the Free Thai identity and his control over it as a political weapon." The proof of this, according to the American Embassy in Bangkok, was a speech delivered by Pridi at his house on the occasion of Peace Proclamation Day, August 16, 1947, in which "he repeated five times that the Free Thai Party included not only those persons directly involved in the wartime underground but all sincere Siamese patriots as well." (61) The implication of this speech, the Americans maintained, was Pridi's intention to open the door "for expansion and offering the opportunity to other members of the coup d'etat (Khana Phukokarn) who had not been Free Thais during the war to join his party." (62)

Intending to weaken the Pridi government and to check the growth of the Free Thai group, the Opposition in the House of Representatives raised the motion to investigate Free Thai expenses. In a reply Pridi assured the Assembly that the Free Thai Movement "is clean in its financial affairs" and that he was ready for investigation to be carried out any time. He would ask, however, that "no move be made on the arms and ammunition used by the Free Thais, because these arms and ammunition had been lent by the United Nations for the national restoration work here." (63)

Though some attempts had been made to distribute "the large supply of modern weapons" provided during the war by the OSS for the training of the Free Thai guerrillas, according to the American Embassy's report, Pridi still held a firm grip on "what amounts to a private arsenal for his private army." (64) A series of confrontation between the Free Thai and its opponents therefore erupted. For example, on March 22, 1947 a robbery was reported in which 32 machine guns stolen

from special Free Thai Arsenal at the University of Moral and Political Sciences. The leader then was captured and an official in the Ministry of Defence implicated. On August 3, 1947, Phra Phichan Pholakit, Director General of Police, accompanied by several police colonels, was denied permission to make a search of the Free Thai arsenal located within the headquarters of the Military Police: This incident led to the resignation of Phra Phichan Pholakit whose position was taken over by Luang Sangworn Yutthakit, head of the Military Police. (65)

The political situation was intense, complicated and sensational, when the Democrats spread rumours about Pridi's complicity in the mysterious death of the young king Ananda in June 1946 and about Pridi's ambition to establish a republican state. The accusations against Pridi's government were substantiated by the increasing control measures designed to put off rumours and slanted statements against the government. Adding to this political turmoil in the mid-1947 came the news of the expected arrival of the Soviet minister to Bangkok "accompanied by the staff of 200 Russians." Pridi's opposition quickly took this opportunity to flame the rumour that this was a move to establish a Communist state in Siam. (66)

For Americans in Bangkok, the conflict and rivalry between Pridi and Phibun were not unfamiliar or unexpected at all. This had happened many times in the past and it always ended in a compromise and some form of collaboration between the two leaders. The American Embassy thus wryly remarked in a confidential report that "the almost amusing possibility exists that both Pridi and Phibun are engaged in a race to see who can engineer the first coup d'etat to establish the first republic and become the first president." (67)

With the increase of opposition to his government, Pridi tried to seek support for his government from the Western powers, especially the United States. In the spring of 1947, Pridi took a trip to visit the West European countries and then the United States. The American Embassy in Bangkok thought this trip abroad indicating Pridi's messages to the world that "no concern need be felt regarding the internal political situation (in Siam)." (68)

Other reasons, however, according to the Americans, for Pridi's trip to the United States were his desire to "promote trading activities for his personal party company recently established, "The United Works Co., Ltd.," whose American agent was Mr. Richard Greenlee, a close friend of Pridi during OSS activities in Siam. (69) Moreover, Pridi also wanted to ask for assistance from the US for his 'pet project' - the Chainat Dam irrigation scheme and to prepare for the newly established "Ruth Foundation" (70) which would provide lodging places in various

capitals for Thai and other students on temporary visits. (71)

Contrary to the general belief that Phibun was the first government leader who had asked for military and economic aid from the United States, (72) according to the American documents, it was Pridi who, in a few months before the 1947 coup, had initiated military and economic assistance from the United States government. In the political context of the 1940s in which America was playing a leading role in supporting the independence of the colonial countries, it was not unlikely that Pridi should ally his government closely with the United States hoping that the latter would assist Siam in economic and political development. Whatever reason, it was evident that in his last few months in power, Pridi increasingly gave an American orientation to his government. Americans, however, remarked that "Pridi is far too astute to commit himself irrevocably to either Russian or American orientation. While he is promoting the combination of more leftist power in the administration, government officials continually emphasize to us their American orientation." Pridi had ordered the translation of American constitution from which the idea of senate and two Houses of Parliament had been borrowed and put into the new Siamese constitution of 1946. The Ministry of Defence was then busy translating American military manuals in the hope to reorganize the Thai Army along American lines. (73)

The most interesting move in this period was Pridi's attempt to ally militarily with America. This idea, probably came out of his wishes to reorient the role of Thai military in constitutional politics, or simply to undermine Phibun's military faction's influence within the army and to rebuild it as Pridi's power base. Pridi therefore asked for an American military advisor to examine, reorganize and reequip the Siamese Army with American arms. In order to assure the United States of Siam's military role in future conflicts, Pridi buttressed his requests with the promise that "Siam wished to collaborate with the United States in military way as well as in political matters." (74) Apparently the State Department turned down Pridi's requests replying that this kind of aid would only be possible if it were approved by the Congress, of which there was none at present. (75)

Among other things, Pridi's orientation and sympathy toward left ideologies and movements both in the country and in the region could well have cautioned the U.S. government in responding to Pridi's requests, especially in military matters. Pridi himself might have been aware of his precarious political position. In many instances he tried to tone down the radical implications of his government's activities. For example, when the first conference of Asiatic Nations was held in Delhi in April

1947, the government chose Phya Anuman Rajathon, Director General of the Fine Arts, as the Siamese delegate to the conference, and stated that "Siam would engage only in those parts of the conference dealing with literature and culture." (76) This caused Thai newspapers to express their regret that Siam could not play a more active leadership role among Southeast Asian nations due to the government policy. But this apparent neutral role of Pridi was later contradicted by confidential information gathered by an American Military Attache in Bangkok. According to Colonel Law, Assistant Military Attache, a representative of the Vietnam government, Dr. Ngugen Duc Quon, informed him that there was considerable discussion concerning "the desirability of some thing in the nature of a federation of the countries of Southeast Asia and that he, Dr. Quon, felt Siam and particularly Nai Pridi would be the natural leader (of the league). (77)

Moreover, the desire of Siam to play a leading role in the region was soon substantiated by another request from Pridi's younger brother, Mr. Arthakit Phanomyong, minister of Foreign Affairs, to secure American support for Siam's place on the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations Organization. According to Arthakit, the reason for his request was because "Siam (was) surrounded by colonial peoples, in whose welfare she (was) interested." (78) But the US government declined to support the Thai request because it was already committed to support the Philippines for this place in the UN's Council.

One week before the coup took place, Washington summed up its political attitudes towards Siam and, of course, Pridi's led-government. This report would become a basis for the formation of American foreign policy in Southeast Asia, particularly toward subsequent Thai military governments. In essence, the United State placed Thailand, for the first time, in the context of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. The situation was alarming in view of a continually weakening China and the present Soviet influence on the political, economic, and military situation in Asia. The United States concluded in its research on "The Current Situation in Siam" that : (79)

A : At the present, Siam is oriented toward the West, with the prestige of the United States particularly high. It is doubtful whether increased Soviet influence in China and among Chinese resident in Siam will materially affect this orientation in the foreseeable future.

B : Siam is important to the Western powers from the standpoint of her economic potential particularly in food production. Her rice

exports are needed in neighboring countries, particularly Malaya, which can contribute heavily to Western war economy, specifically by furnishing tin and rubber.

From this report it seems that the United States was looking toward a close relationship with Pridi's government. It was pleased that Siam was "looking toward the United States for military assistance in the form of a mission (which would be the first foreign mission since 1945), and for assistance in social and cultural affairs." (80)

But another crucial factor that led to American's favorable attitude toward Pridi's government was his "relaxation of government controls over economic activities" and the promotion of private enterprise. The United States then commented on Pridi's economic policy that "there did not seem to be any trend toward nationalization. On the contrary, the aim of the government seemed to be to make concessions to attract foreign capital (American and British) for survey and exploitation of the natural resources of the country." (81)

In the first week of November 1947 the political clouds over the sky of Bangkok seemed to be clearing away somewhat. The American diplomats in Bangkok were pretty much convinced that Pridi now could muscle through political squabble that had been raging for two years. They were looking forward to a military and economic cooperation with Pridi in order to secure peace and security in Southeast Asia.

Furthermore, post-war economic distress in Siam, which was a major target for criticisms, was now being solved through a series of government economic policies aiming at increasing production activity. The British and American governments also helped repair transportation networks and assisted in the recovery of rice and tin production and other manufacturing. This rehabilitation program led to an increase of rice exports which in 1947 amounted to more than 700 million baht. On November 1, Duen Bunnak, Deputy Premier and Minister of Commerce, stated that the rice situation had greatly improved as "a result of the anti-smuggling program, the black market price of rice had come down greatly and hoarded stocks were being released on the markets." (82)

Nevertheless, rains in Thailand always begin abruptly and occur in conjunction with thunder and lightning, which are more consequential than causal. On the evening of November 7th, the Premier and Opposition leader together with other prominent politicians and government officials gathered for a charity party at the Suan Amphorn ballroom. The highlight of the evening was "rabble-rousing"

ex-political prisoner, Dr. Chote Khumphan, driving a tricycle rickshaw (samlaw) around the dance floor with two passengers--Premier Thamrong, whose government had just convicted Chote of slander and inciting unrest and sentenced him to two months imprisonment, and Opposition leader Khuang, who for two years had been leading a political attack against Thamrong-Pridi government. The crowd was cheering and laughing and the Americans commented that "while the spectacle was ridiculous, it perhaps meant that political antagonisms in Siam are not very deep seated..." (83) On the night of November 8th, however, the coup d'etat finally occurred. The three politicians who had just performed their charity play together the other night went their own ways. Ex-premier Thamrong was in hiding, Khuang became Premier and Dr. Chote was appointed a Minister of State

Planned and executed by a small group of junior army officers who had in the last minute successfully solicited political support from Phibun, the coup also drew strong support and cooperation from the royalists and Democrat conservative politicians. The American diplomats in Bangkok believed that the Coup Group had been formed many months before and the key links between army groups and opposition political groups were Phibun and Khuang. The reputed "red-jar constitution" with a distinctive royalist tone was reportedly drafted jointly by military leaders, the most famous of whom was Major Kach who hid it in a "red-jar," and Khuang's Democrats. Contributing significantly to the drafting were, according to the American Embassy, Democrat MP. Luen Phongsophon and Phya Atthakari Nipon and it was probable that Seni and his brother Kukrit were also concerned. (84)

The United States Ambassador in Bangkok, Mr. Edwin Stanton, strongly criticized the coup saying that "neither Thompson (the British Ambassador) nor I liked this overthrow of the Thamrong government by force; the flouting of the constitutional processes simply set back the hands of the clock.... We deplored the rule of force, the possibility of civil war as well as numerous diplomatic complications which might arise." (85) Outspoken criticisms from both the United States and Great Britain caused the coup leaders to remain in the background and allowed the royalist-conservative politicians to take a temporary leading role in the formation of the government. Consequently, the U.S. recognized the civilian government of Khuang Aphaiwong.

A few months later, when it became apparent that the royalist-conservative forces were controlling more and more power within their hands and trying to exert their policies against the wishes of the Coup Group, the military leaders brashly

seized the government power by ordering Khuang and his cabinet to resign within twenty-four hours "because the progress made by his government had been unsatisfactory." (86) The following morning the Coup Group announced Phibun as the new Premier. Less than a month after Phibun had come to power, the United States government formally recognized his government.

That Phibun was attractive to some Americans could be seen from an incident that occurred immediately after the coup. Phibun approached an American businessman in Bangkok requesting a purchase of a huge amount of American arms including 10 ton light tanks, anti-aircraft, anti-tank guns, small arms and artillery. The United States military attache in Bangkok quickly cabled the War Department asking for permission to complete a deal with Phibun before the British and German firms. It is interesting to note that this requirement from the U.S. military attache was made despite strong criticisms of Phibun and the military coup from the American Embassy in Bangkok. (87)

Finally, Pridi got out of the country with the help of the American and British Embassies and went into exile first in China and eventually in France. After the recognition of Phibun's regime, the United States denied Pridi a visa to travel to the United States as it might irritate Phibun and adversely affect their growing relationships. Pridi tried to return to power, utilizing the same means as Phibun and the Coup Group did, by staging a coup in February 1949 relying on the navy and Free Thai forces, which resulted in a bloody fighting for two days. Pridi and the navy were defeated. (88) And he never returned to his country again before his death in France in 1984. The Free Thai forces were smashed and prominent civilian leaders, most of them from the northeast and the south, were massacred. Thereafter the country moved quickly to become American's closest ally in fighting against communism in Southeast Asia and in promoting the expansion of American capital and private enterprise in Siam.

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Endnotes :

1. "Siam" and "Thailand" are used interchangeably in this article. The official foreign designation for the country had been "Siam" until 1939 when Phibun changed to "Thailand". After the Second World War, it was changed to "Siam" which was more favorable to liberal and Muslim and Lao minorities leaders as well as the British. Upon his return to power following the 1947 coup, Phibun had the name changed to "Thailand" again. Curiously enough, the Constituent Assembly reasoned that this had been done "after astrological consultations." See the American Embassy, "Fortnightly Summary of Political Events in Thailand for the Period June 15-June 30, 1949", National Archives' Declassified Documents (hereafter cited as NADD), Washington, D.C.
2. Frank C. Darling, *Thailand and the United States*, (Washington, D.C., Public Affairs Press, 1965), p. 59.
3. Thak Chaloentiarana, *Thailand: The Politics of Despotic Paternalism* (Bangkok : Social Science Association of Thailand and Thai Khadi Institute, 1979), p. 57.
4. Darling, *Thailand and the United States*, p. 58; Suchin Tantikul, *Rattahapraharn 2490* (the 1947 coup d'etat), (Bangkok : The Social Science Association Press, 1977).
5. Darling, *Thailand and the United States*, pp. 66-68
6. Benjamin A. Batson indicates that OSS intelligence on Thailand during the war was, with some minor errors, "accurate and complete." See his fine article, "The Fall of the Phibun Government, 1944," *Journal of Siam Society*, Vol.62, part 2. (July 1974), p. 113.
7. see Darling, *Thailand and the US*; Donald E. Neuchterlein, *Thailand and The Struggle for Southeast Asia*, (Ithaca : Cornell University (Press, 1965).
8. See Darling, *Thailand and the US*; Russell H. Fifield, *Americans in Southeast Asia : The Roots of Commitment* (New York : Crowell Company, 1973), p. 89.
9. Frank C. Darling, "American Policy in Thailand," *Western Political Quarterly*, (March 1962), pp. 93-110.
10. Darling, *Thailand and the US*, p. 65.
11. Michael J. Hogan, "American Marshall Planners and the Search for a European Neocapitalism," *American Historical Review*, Vol.90 No.1 (February 1985), pp. 44-72. See also Barton J. Bernstein ed., *Politics and Policies of the Truman Administration* (Chicago : Quadrangle Books, 1970)
12. Kevin Hewison, "The Development of Capitalism, Public Policy and the Role of the State in Thailand," (Ph. D Dissertation, Murdoch University, 1983), p. 126.
13. It is interesting to note that Phya Mano, while serving as official under the absolute monarchy of Rama VII, had earned a wide respect on his legal integrity

which modelled after Western legal tradition. I am grateful to Nakharin Mektrairat of Chiangmai University for this information.

14. See "National Economic Policy of Luang Pradit Manutham (Pridi)" in Thak Chaloemtiarana ed., *Thai Politics: Extracts and Documents 1932-1957*, (Bangkok : The Social Science Association of Thailand, 1978), pp. 110-161.

15. See Nakharin Mektrairat, "Khabot Boworadet : Kanmuang Khong Prawatisat Lae Prawatisat Khong Kanmuang," (The Boworadet Rebellion : Politics and History). *Thammasat University Journal*, Vol.12 No.1 (March 1984), pp. 92-119.

16. For more details and critical analysis of the period see Charnvit Kasetsiri, "The First Phibun Government and Its Involvement in World War II," *Journal of Siam Society*, Vol.62, part 2 (July 1974), pp. 25-34.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 34-51.

18. Sangsit Piriyanangsan, "Thai Bureaucratic Capitalism 1932-1960" (MA. Thesis, Thammasat University, 1980); Fred W. Riggs, *Thailand: The Modernization of a Bureaucratic Polity*, (Honolulu : East-West Center Press, 1966); *Ibid.*, "Cabinet Ministers and Coup Groups : The Case of Thailand," *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 2 No. 2 (1981), pp. 159-188.

19. See "Government Decrees on Statism" in Thak Chaloemtiarana ed., *Thai Politics: Extracts and Documents*, pp. 420-450; Kenneth Landon, *The Chinese in Thailand*, (New York : Russell & Russell, 1941), pp. 156-292; Thamsook Numnonda, *Thailand and the Japanese Presence 1941-1945*, (Singapore : Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1977), p. 15.

20. Thamsook Numnonda, *Thailand and the Japanese Presence, 1941-45*, pp. 18-19; also see "Queen Ramphai's Memoir," in Thak Chaloemtiarana ed., *Thai Politics: Extracts and Documents*, p. 19-22. cf. J.K. Ray's pointed remarks that Phibun's pre war economic policy also has its merit and the attack comes primarily from the disgruntled aristocrats; see his *Portraits of Thai Politics*, (New Delhi : Orient Longman Ltd., 1972), pp. 10-15.

21. Thamsook Numnonda, *Thailand and the Japanese...*, p. 19.

22. *Ibid.*

23. The American Embassy, Bangkok, "Fortnightly Summary of Political Events in Siam for the Period March 16-March 31, 1947," NADD, Washington, D.C.

24. Luang Sangworn Yutthakit later wrote in his memoir that, in this period, Pridi developed an intimate relationship with Luang Thamrong and thus acted as if he were the party leader. See A Creation Volume of Admiral Luang Sangworn Yutthakit, (Bangkok : Chuanpim Press, 1973), p. 144.

25. The Six Principles of the People's Party are :

1 : To protect and maintain the country's independence in all areas.

2 : To maintain internal security.

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- 3 : To provide happiness and economic well-being for the people.
- 4 : To give equal rights to the people.
- 5 : To give the people freedom which does not contradict the four principles listed above.
- 6 : To provide complete education for the people.
- from Pridi Phanomyong, "Some Stories Concerning the Formation of the People's Party and Democracy," in Thak Chaloemtiarana ed., *Thai Politics...*, p. 52.
26. American Political Advisor, The American Legation, Bangkok, Enclosure to Despatch No.1, 21 November 1945, NADD Washington, D.C.
27. Division of Southwest Pacific Affairs, Department of State, "Thailand-Summary of Development," 2 March 1945, NADD Washington, D.C.
28. Ibid.
29. Division of Southwest Pacific Affairs, Department of State, "Thailand-Postwar Security Arrangements," 21 March 1945, NADD, Washington, D.C.
30. Division of Southwest Pacific Affairs, Department of State, "Thailand-Summary of Developments," 2 March 1945, NADD,
31. Research and Intelligence Service, US State Department, Bangkok; "Royal Crown Property in Siamese Politics," 24 November 1945, NADD.
32. Ibid.
33. Jayanta K. Ray, *Portraits of Thai Politics*, p. 17
34. Strategic Services Unit, War Department, "Interview with Captain Luang Saphachalasai on Possibility of a Revolution," 9 December 1945, NADD, Washington, D.C.
35. Ibid.. "Political Information," 30 November 1945, NADD.
36. The American Legation, Bangkok, "The Political Situation in Siam," Enclosure : Letter dated 16 September 1945 from Major Arkadej Bijayendrayothin. NADD, Washington, D.C.
37. Strategic Services Unit, War Department, "Interview with Captain Luang Saphachalasai on Possibility of a Revolution," 9 December 1945. NADD, Washington, D.C.
38. Ibid.
39. E. Ayal et al., *Underdevelopment and Economic Nationalism in Southeast Asia*, (Ithaca : Cornell University Press, 1969), p. 301; K.P. Landon, *The Chinese in Thailand*, pp. 156-180.
40. Division of Southwest Pacific Affairs, Department of State, "Thailand-Postwar Economic Arrangements," 22 February 1945, NADD. Mr. "Suni Theparaksa" was a code name of Mr. Konthi Suphamongkon who, at that time, was an official in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. See Konthi Suphamongkon, *Kanwithesobai Khong Thai* (Thai Foreign Policy), (Bangkok : Thammasat University Press, 1984), p. 149.

41. Division of Southwest Pacific Affairs, Department of State, "Thailand-Postwar Economic Arrangements," 22 February 1945, NADD.
42. Special Service Unit, United States Army, Bangkok, "Political and Propaganda Situation in Siam," 11 October 1945, NADD.
43. Office of Strategic Services, "Siamese Personalities," June 1945, Record Group 226, NADD, Washington D.C.
44. K.P. Landon, American Political Advisor, The American Legation, Bangkok, "The Political Situation in Siam," 21 November 1945, Record Group 59, NADD, Washington, D.C.
45. Strategic Services Unit, War Department, "Government Corporations in Siam and Clique Participation," 20 February 1946, NADD, Washington, D.C.
46. "Pridi's government" hereafter refers to the three successive governments in which Pridi was the main moving force from 24 March 1946 to 8 November 1947. The first led by Pridi himself; the next two cabinets led by Admiral Luang Thamrong Nawasawat.
47. Strategic Services Unit, War Department, "Various Opinions on Luang Pradit's Policies," 4 April 1946, NADD, Washington, D.C.
48. The American Legation, Bangkok, "Fortnightly Summary of Political Events in Siam." 30 July 1946, NADD, Washington, D.C.
49. Ibid., "Fortnightly Summary Of Political Events in Siam for the Period August 1-August 15, 1947," 7 April 1947, NADD, Washington, D.C.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid.
52. E.F. Stanton, *Brief Authority*, (New York : 1956), p. 217.
53. The American Embassy, Bangkok, "Fortnightly Summary of Political Events in Siam for the Period March 16-March 31," 7 April 1947, NADD, Washington, D.C.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid.
57. The Anglo-Siamese Treaty, of 1 January 1946, provided that Siam was "to prohibit, except in accordance with the recommendations of the Combined Boards in Washington, or any successor body, and in the case of rice, under the direction of a special organization to be set up for the purpose, any exports of rice, tin, rubber, and teak and to regulate trade in, and stimulate the production of, tin, rubber and teak." The same treaty also compelled Siam to make available free of charge its rice surplus which amounted to one and one half million tons. This clause, nevertheless, was revised, following a disapproval from the Thais, to include agreements to pay for a progressive reduced surplus. In addition, Siam also agreed to pay 1,250,000 Pound Sterling in compensation to Commonwealth mine-owners for wartime

production of tin seized by the government. Treaty restrictions were lifted in July 1947. See Virginia Thompson, "Government Instability in Siam," *Far Eastern Survey*, August 25, 1948, p. 186.

58. The American Embassy, Bangkok, "Fortnightly Summary of Political Events in Siam for the Period August 1-August 15, 1947," 27 August 1947, NADD, Washington, D.C.

59. Ibid.

60. Ibid.

61. Ibid.

62. Ibid.

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid.

65. Ibid.

66. Ibid.

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid., "Fortnightly Summary of Political Events in Siam," 7 April 1947, NADD, Washington, D.C.

69. Ibid.

70. "Ruth" was Pridi's code name while a leader of the underground Free Thai Movement.

71. The American Embassy, Bangkok, "Fortnightly Summary of Political Events in Siam," 7 April 1947, NADD, Washington, D.C.

72. See Toru Yano, "Sarit and Thailand's Pro-American Policy," *The Developing Economies*, Vol.6 (September 1968), pp. 284-299.

73. The American Embassy, Bangkok, "Fortnightly Summary of Political Events in Siam," 27 August 1947, NADD, Washington, D.C.; See also Darling, *Thailand and the United States*, p. 49.

74. Memorandum of Conversation, Department of State, Washington, D.C., "Possible Standardization of Siam's Military Practices and Equipment on those of the United States," 1 October 1947, NADD, Washington, D.C.

75. Ibid.

76. The American Embassy, Bangkok, "Fortnightly Summary of Political Events in Siam for the Period August 1-August 15, 1947," 27 August 1947, NADD, Washington, D.C.

77. The American Embassy, Bangkok, "Fortnightly Summary of Political Events in Siam for the Period March 16-March 31, 1947," 7 April 1947, NADD, Washington, D.C.

78. Memorandum of Conversation, Department of State, Washington, D.C., "Siamese-American Relations," 2 October 1947, NADD, Washington, D.C.

79. Intelligence Research Project, Intelligence Division, "The Current Situation in Siam," 1 November 1947, NADD, Washington, D.C.
80. Ibid.
81. Ibid.
82. The American Embassy, Bangkok, "Fortnightly Summary of Political Events in Siam for the Period November 1-November 15, 1947," NADD, Washington, D.C., See also Somsak Nilnopkoon, "The Thai Economic Problems After the Second World War and the Government Strategies in Dealing With Them, 1945-1955," (MA. Thesis. Silpakorn University, 1984), pp. 95-187.
83. The American Embassy, Bangkok, "Fortnightly Summary of Political Events in Siam for the Period November 1-15, 1947," NADD, Washington, D.C.
84. Ibid.
85. Darling, *Thailand and the United States*, p. 61.
86. Ibid., p. 64.
87. US Military Attache, The American Embassy, Bangkok, Telegram to War Department, 11 December 1947, NADD, Washington, D.C.
88. Professor Ben Anderson of Cornell University asserts that the navy in any country, alone or as a principal force, has never succeeded in any coup attempts.