

## British Policy Towards Thailand During the Second World War

NIK ANUAR NIK MAHMUD

### INTRODUCTION

Britain's interest in Thailand focussed on the strategic position of the country in relation to the rest of Southeast Asia, particularly Malaya and Burma. Thailand's long frontiers in the west were contiguous with those of Malaya and Burma, whilst in the north they adjoined the Shan States. In these circumstances, as long as Britain remained responsible for the defence of Burma and Malaya, she could not be disinterested in the fate of Thailand.

Sir Josiah Crosby, the former British Minister in Bangkok, argued that, so long as Britain was able to assert herself as the effective guardian of international peace in the region, Thailand was not of much interest from the point of view of military security.<sup>1</sup> Crosby notes that: "Once we had composed our differences with France after the events of 1893 we did not, therefore, concern ourselves very actively with Siam<sup>2</sup> beyond maintaining our traditional friendly relations with her and seeking openings for our trade."<sup>3</sup> It was other-wise, however, when the decline of British naval supremacy in Far Eastern waters set in during the late 1930s, and when Japan's assertion in East Asia became increasingly apparent. 'From that time'. Crosby states, "Siam came to acquire for us an interest closer and keener than had been the case for fifty years."<sup>4</sup>

The most alarming aspect of the situation was Japanese pressure on the status quo in China. Japan seemed bent on dominating East Asia under her 'New Order' policy.<sup>5</sup> As she advanced deep into the Asian mainland after the Sino-Japanese war broke out in late July 1937, this would not only endanger Britain's economic and political position in China, but also posed a strategic threat to her vast possessions and interests in South Asia and the Western Pacific. Britain had formal control over Hong Kong, India, Burma, Malaya, Singapore, North Borneo, Sarawak, Brunei, had large investments in Thailand and Netherland East Indies, and was largely responsible for the defence of Australia and New Zealand. If the British became involved in a war, it would be essential for them to maintain their contact with these areas, which supplied rubber, tin, oil, food and other materials that were important in war time.<sup>6</sup> So long as Japan was occupied in China, Britain's interests to the South and the West seemed secured. But London feared that, if the Japanese defeated Chiang Kai-Chek, they occupied in China, Britain's interests to the



South and the West seemed secured. But London feared that, if the Japanese defeated Chiang Kai-Chek, they would be emboldened to attack the British Empire in Asia and the Pacific.

It was the British policy to find a way to protect her interests by either halting or diverting the Japanese advance. Since Thailand was the remaining independent country in Southeast Asia, it was necessary that she remain neutral and not allow herself to be exploited by Japan and the Axis powers.

Britain, however, had to consider four main factors with regard to her policy towards Thailand and Southeast Asia as a whole. Britain did not have the strength to respond with military force to the simultaneous challenges in Europe and East Asia, and her efforts to deal with the situation in one area were hampered by her difficulties in the other.<sup>7</sup> The base at Singapore would not be ready to meet full war time requirements until late 1940. The strategists warned, moreover, that it might take seventy days for the fleet to reach Singapore, during which time Britain's interests in the East would be not the mercy of the Japanese.<sup>8</sup> The greater portion of the ships were in European waters to counterbalance the Italian fleet in the Mediterranean and guard against what then appeared to be an imminent invasion of the British Isles.

Coinciding with Japan's New Order in East Asia, Thailand was aspiring to the 'recovery' of her lost territories from France and Britain.<sup>9</sup> The Foreign Office termed Thai aspirations as Thai irredentism. In the midst of Japanese expansion, Thai irredentism remained as irritating factor in Anglo-Thai-French relations so long as it remained unresolved. Despite Thailand's pronouncement of neutrality in the international crisis, Thai irredentism created suspicion on the part Britain and France, lest Thailand should collaborate with Japan to satisfy this.

Britain's suspicious attitude was also due to the unpredictable nature of Thai foreign policy. Historically, it had been proved that Thailand was adaptable to a new international situation, and that she was prepared to be so in order to maintain her independence and integrity. In any international crisis, Crosby noted that "it will always be their instinctive policy to side with the stronger party. They will sit on the fence as long as they can and will not leave it until they feel sure they have spotted the winner."<sup>10</sup> Particularly, since 1933, Thailand had shown her inclinations towards strengthening relations with Japan. The Thai Government, for instance, had abstained from voting upon the motion of censure of Japan over the question of her aggressive attitude in Manchuria which was passed by the League of Nations in 1933. The following period saw the establishing of commercial undertakings as well as the strengthening of political relations between the two countries. Thailand's changing attitude had led Major Twiss, the General Officer Commanding in Burma, to conclude that Thailand should be regarded as a potential, and even as a probable, enemy in the event of a war between the British Empire and Japan.<sup>11</sup>



In such a situation, Britain was forced to seek United States co-operation as a deterrent force against Japanese expansion. Prior to 1940, Britain, however, could not count on United States support. Though the State Department indicated that it favoured 'parallel' rather than joint action with the British, Britain feared that any precipitate move on their part in the East would have destabilizing repercussions in Europe.<sup>12</sup>

Compared with Britain, the United States had minimal interests in Thailand. She remained, however, a popular power among the Thais since she was the first country to renounce her extra-territorial rights and to elevate her diplomatic mission in Thailand to legation level.<sup>13</sup>

In summary, then, military weakness, together with the European crisis, Thai irredentism, the unpredictable nature of Thailand's foreign policy and American reluctance to co-operate, virtually precluded a hard-line policy towards Thailand. These constraints were important in determining Britain's policy towards Thailand.

#### NEUTRALITY, THAI IRRENDENTISM AND THE NON-AGGRESSION PACTS

After Thailand regained her full sovereignty from the Western powers in 1939, Britain continuously reminded and advised her to maintain her neutrality and avoid joining any ideological bloc.<sup>14</sup> As far as Britain was concerned, this was important as it would determine the future security of British territories and interests in Southeast Asia.

The Thai leaders were astute enough to see that, for a small country like Thailand, the only hope of maintaining independence was by remaining neutral and preserving good relations with all countries. When the European war broke out in September 1939,<sup>16</sup> Thailand declared her neutrality stance in the crisis. Although Britain recognised Thailand's neutrality on 11 September, she warned the Thai Government that this only 'applies so long as the neutrality of Thailand is maintained effectively.'<sup>17</sup> In other words, Britain implied that she would not hesitate to take action against Thailand if ever Thailand took sides in the international conflict. Foreign Office scepticism about Thailand's neutrality, apart from the unpredictable nature of Thai foreign policy, was due to the inability of Britain to provide military support to Thailand if she were attacked by a third power. Since July 1939, Crosby had warned the Foreign Office that Thailand's neutrality 'depends on the last resort upon the degree of armed strength which we ourselves might be able to bring to bear for the purpose of defending ourselves and of putting heart into the Siamese...'<sup>18</sup> In early August 1939 Crosby reiterated a warning to the Foreign Office that "Thailand is behaving nowadays like a prostitute who is ready to sell herself to the highest bidder."<sup>19</sup> In spite of Crosby's insistence, Britain failed to send her naval fleet to East Asia because it was



urgently required in Europe. "In its absence we can only do our best, hope for the best and be prepared for the worst." the Foreign Office asserted.

Another related problem that continued to haunt Britain was Thai irredentism. Despite the protestations of the British and French Governments against the excessive irredentist claims, the Thai Government failed to check the movement.<sup>20</sup> The irredentist movement became more active, especially with the ascension of Pibun Songgram as Prime Minister of Thailand in 1938.<sup>21</sup> Although the movement was overtly directed more against French Indochina, this did not mean that the Thais did not have any aspiration to the 'recovery' of British territories in Burma and Malaya. In Crosby's own words: "...the movement remained more or less underground so long as Luang Pibul continued to desire good relations with Britain."<sup>22</sup>

As a result of Thai irredentism, Franco-Thai relations deteriorated perceptibly. France was suspicious of Thailand's opportunistic move in the wake of Japanese aggression in East Asia, fearing that Thailand would collaborate with Japan to 'recover' her territories from French Indochina.<sup>23</sup>

Presumably, it was to prevent hostility that Pibul Songgram, in late August, 1939, sounded Crosby and Monsieur Leppisier, the French Minister, about the possibility of a Non-Aggression pact between Thailand, France and Britain.<sup>24</sup> Pibul's proposal was welcomed by Crosby and Leppisier, and later was approved by their respective Governments, in so far as it would contain Thai irredentism and contribute to the establishment of a regional stability.

Surprisingly, in early October 1939, Pibul decided to drop the idea on the pretence that Thailand had already been recognised by almost all powers as a neutral country.<sup>25</sup> Prince Varnvaidya, Adviser to the Cabinet and to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, argued that to sign such a pact would arouse Japan's jealousy. With regard to France, he pointed out that Thailand had already concluded a treaty in 1937 that stipulated the mutual respect of one another's frontiers.<sup>26</sup> It was unclear whether Thailand was really sincere in her neutrality, or was merely trying to exploit British and French weakness to satisfy her irredentism. It should be noted that, in September 1939, European war had already broken out while Japan, in East Asia, was exploiting the situation to strengthen and enlarge her position there.<sup>27</sup>

When Crosby suggested that Japan should also be invited to sign the pact, Pibul agreed to revive the proposal. It is significant that Pibul had taken advantage of Crosby's suggestion to satisfy his aspirations, i.e., the delimitation of the Mekong frontier.

According to Prince Varnvaidya, the Thais had always been dissatisfied with the second paragraph of article 3 of the Franco-Thai convention of 29 June 1927 concerning the delimitation of the frontier between Thailand and French Indochina on the Mekong river.<sup>28</sup> He argued that this provision had created problems, especially on the status of certain islands in the Mekong river, which were in reality no more than sand banks separated from



Thailand's mainland during the season of high water but joined to it when the river was low and the intervening channels had dried up. Both on sentimental and administrative grounds, those islands or sand banks should be regarded as forming part of the mainland or placed under Thai ownership, instead of under the French. Prince Varnvaidya demanded that a new frontier be established between Indochina and Thailand at a certain point in the river, and he contemplated two agreements:

1. a Non-Aggression Pact and,
2. a convention providing for the new frontier.

Prince Varnvaidya informed Monsieur Leppisier that Thailand and France should come to an agreement.<sup>29</sup> On the one hand, France should give up the islands in some part of the Mekong to Thailand, thereby establishing a new frontier between Indochina and Thailand at certain points in the Mekong. On the other hand, Thailand should agree to enter into a pact of Non-Aggression with the French on terms which would be mutually determined. While proposing this to the French Minister, the Thai Government offered the pact to Japan. Thus, as commented by Gage, the unique situation made it very difficult for the French not to agree to the delimitation of the Mekong frontier, on which the conclusion of Non-Aggression with ourselves and France is virtually dependent.<sup>30</sup>

The French Government, however, refused to accept the condition in return for the Non-Aggression pact. She believed that any concession over the Mekong islands would merely encourage Thai irredentism.<sup>31</sup>

The Foreign Office officials were a little irritated by the French Government's response to Thailand's overture. Gage, acting First Secretary, did not accept France's argument that the French concession on the Mekong frontier would encourage Thai irredentism. He believed that the Bangkok propaganda for the return of the lost territories was only intended to further the private ends of certain soldiers and politicians and to secure extra budget grants for the Ministry of Defence.<sup>32</sup> He added that the Thai Government had reiterated that she was only interested in the 'development of our country' and not in regaining the 'lost' territories. Ashley Clarke, First Secretary, blamed M. Leppisier for instigating fears on the part of the French Government.<sup>33</sup>

The Foreign Office was of the opinion that Britain and France should negotiate for the pact in view of the fact that Thailand proposed it. 'As failure to do so' Gage argued, "would be more than ever calculated to arouse suspicion." He also warned that "it would be disastrous for our relations with Thailand if Japan should conclude a Non-Aggression pact whereas ourselves and France did not. Our position in Thailand would deteriorate while Japan would corresponding improved."<sup>34</sup>



On 1 January 1940, the Foreign Office indicated to the French Government the importance of signing the Non-Aggression pact with Thailand. The Foreign Office emphasised that the pact would prevent Thailand from aligining with Japan and thus diminish Japanese influence there. The pact would not only contribute towards making Southeast Asia a region of peace and stability, but would also bind assurance from Thailand that she would not allow herself to be made a jumping off ground for a Japanese attack upon Burma and Malaya and the British naval base in Singapore.<sup>35</sup> The situation became more critical with the failure seemed to be demanding a treaty of co-operation because they hope for something better in the shape of a promise from the Thai Government to recognise the 'New Order' in China.<sup>36</sup> Crosby pressed the Foreign Office to accept the Non-Aggression pact offered by the Thai Government. He argued;

If we and the French both reject this offer, Thailand will be more likely to give to Japan what she wants and they will answer our reproaches by saying we have no ground of complaint, since we could have had a Non-Aggression pact if we had wanted it. Alternatively if we sign a pact and if Thailand is still willing to come to an agreement with Japan over China, we shall lose less face than if we had no pact at all, The Japanese-Thai agreement over China without a Non-Aggression pact with us would deal a disastrous blow at our prestige.<sup>37</sup>

Though the Foreign Office agreed to proceed with the negotiation of the Non-Aggression pact, it still felt it necessary to ascertain what the French attitude was, should the French not wish them to proceed with those negotiations.<sup>38</sup> M. Chavvel, the head of French Far East Department, suggested that the Foreign Office include in the pact a clause to the effect that the pact would cease to operate in the event of hostilities between France and Thailand.<sup>39</sup> On 2 February, M. Chavvel informed the Foreign Office that the French Government was willing to examine the Mekong question on a purely administrative basis.<sup>40</sup> The Foreign Office, in return, assured the French Government that, pending the outcome of the French proposal to the Thai Government of their decisions in regard to the Burma-Thailand frontiers, provided that the outcome was not unduly delayed.<sup>41</sup>

The Non-Aggression pacts, which were in fact drawn up on identical lines, were simultaneously signed between Britain and Thailand and France and Thailand in Bangkok on 12 June 1940. These agreements, which were to be valid for five years and were subject to denunciation there after by one year's notice on either side, provided for the reciprocal respect by each country of the other's territorial integrity. It was further laid down that, if one country became involved in war with a third party, the other would refrain from affording aid or assistance to such third party. The Franco-Thai delegations had also exchanged secret letters which stated that the French Government agreed to move the Thai-Laos frontier on the Mekong to the thalweq of the river and make any territory on the Thai side of the thalweq



Thai territory. These new arrangements were to be effected by a new mixed commission of representatives from both countries. The final sentence of the text indicated that any changes resulting from the mixed commission's work would be effective from the moment the pact was signed and ratified.<sup>42</sup>

Though Japan failed to secure a treaty of co-operation with Thailand, she had successfully concluded instead a 'Treaty concerning the continuance of friendly relations and mutual respect of each other's territorial integrity.'<sup>43</sup> Japan demurred at a pact of Non-Aggression on the model of those proposed with Britain and France on the ground that it might offend the Axis powers and also because there was no precedent in Japan for a treaty in that form.<sup>44</sup> In addition to stipulations analogous to those contained in the pacts with Britain and France, this instrument confirmed the existing friendly relations between Japan and Thailand, providing further for an exchange of information and for consultation upon matters of mutual interest. Although Prince Varnvaidya had assured the Foreign Office that the agreement so contemplated with Japan would be tantamount to a Non-Aggression pact, the Foreign Office's officials felt that the pact gave the impression that relations between Thailand and Japan were closer than with France and Britain.<sup>45</sup> Henniker-Major, Third Secretary, believed that the only dangerous clause was that providing for consultation.<sup>46</sup>

Thus, with the conclusion of the Non-Aggression pacts, it was hoped that a further element of stability would be introduced in Southeast Asia.<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless, some other factor must be considered which would determine the success of the pacts in this role. The Franco-Thai border problem was still waiting to be solved and the pacts remained to be ratified.

#### THE FRANCO-THAI BORDER DISPUTE AND BRITISH RESPONSE

In early June 1940, the Allies suffered a military reverse in the European war and this was followed by the capitulation of France in the hands of the Germans. This unexpected event had a tremendous impact upon the last Asian balance of power. Japan could not fail to take advantage of the European situation to remove the barrier to Japan's trade and solve the China incident. For instance, Japan demanded that France close Indochina's frontier with China and establish a military mission in Indochina. The capitulation of France and the Japanese threat had aroused different responses from French authorities in Indochina, from Thailand and Britain, over the question of French sovereignty in Indochina.

The French Indochina authorities, under their new Vichy Governor-General, Admiral Jean Decoux, clung to the hope that France sovereignty in Indochina would continue to be retained.<sup>48</sup> Decoux's plan was to reduce the Japanese activities to a minimum, without risking actual invasion, in the hope that a change in the international scene might permit France to retain



sovereignty. In line with this, he attempted to limit the activities of the Japanese mission in Indochina to its stipulated objectives. He tried to gain time and reduce the effect of military pressures by virtually referring to the Vichy Government every demand made by the Japanese. At the same time, he begged the United States to recognise France's sovereignty in Indochina.<sup>49</sup> Decoux's policy had radically transformed the encouraging attitude of the previous Reynaud Government to the solution of the border problem. Decoux, as noted by Flood, was "...so bitter about the commitments Leppisier had already made that he viewed him as almost a traitor for having suggested territorial concession to the Thai."<sup>50</sup>

On the part of Thailand, the unexpected capitulation of France had tremendously aroused Thai irredentism. The Thais were not only demanding the delimitation of the frontier between Thailand and French Indochina on the Mekong river, but also the return of Thailand's 'lost territories'.<sup>51</sup> The Thai Government felt uneasy about Japan's offensive moves in Indochina. Thai authorities continued through late June and July to check with Leppisier on when the negotiating party would arrive. But the French Minister was obliged to evade the issue with the apology that France was in great confusion due to the surrender to Germany.<sup>52</sup> Leppisier's inability to give the Thai's any real news about when the party from Indochina might be expected, combined with the increasing Japanese threat to the colony, impelled Pibul to take a firmer position with the French before the border in question became a Japanese border with Thailand. Pibul Songgram declared to his cabinet in early July that the situation in Indochina was becoming serious and that, if the Thai permitted that colony to fall into the hands of the Japanese without any effort to regain their lost territories, his Government would not be able to justify this to the Thai people.<sup>53</sup>

The Foreign Office did realise the negative consequences of the French defeat and the Japanese threat to Indochina as well as to Thailand and the whole of Southeast Asia. The Foreign Office was kept informed by its Minister in Bangkok, Sir Josiah Crosby, on the political trends in Thailand and Indochina-Thailand relations in the context of British security interests in Southeast Asia.

On the basis of Britain's own military weakness, it was important for her to maintain cordial relations with Thailand. Crosby was of the opinion that, "if they lose faith in our ability to protect ourselves, let alone them, they will walk over into the Japanese camp. There will be nothing else for them to do."<sup>54</sup> Facing such a possibility, Crosby suggested that it was necessary to cultivate Thai goodwill and not exasperate them, as the French so often did, by an attitude of suspicion towards them or by unfounded suggestion that they were working in concert with the Japanese. He warned that within the Thai cabinet there was an anti-British element which had hitherto been kept in check by the majority of the members, who were friendly to Britain. He



stressed that "we must retain the sympathy of the latter at all reasonable costs."<sup>55</sup>

With regard to Thai iredentism, Crosby wrote:

If will be to our interest to raise no objection to the occupation of the portion of Indochina under discussion by the Thais as the natural heirs of the French. We have no choice in the matter. To oppose them, it would also force them to do a deal with the Japanese, which is the last thing that would suit us. Moreover, I take it that on the merits we should prefer to see these regions occupied by the Thais than by the Japanese. Not that Thailand would be free to have her way in Indochina altogether with our consulting Japan, for, aside from other consequences, she would presumably be bound to do so under the terms of the latest Japan-Thailand treaty. But formal consultation need necessarily be the same things as an understanding which might be tantamount to an alliance or to a pooling of Japan and Thailand interests in the process of carving up Indochina.<sup>56</sup>

At a meeting with Nai Direck Jayanama, the Deputy Foreign Minister Crosby suggested that:

If it came to the worst with France and if Thailand were in consequence to set about recovering any of her lost territories to the east, it would never do for her to receive them as gift at the hands of the Japanese, who would assuredly impose as a condition for making it that Thailand should recognise the so-called 'New Order' in East Asia. It would be better for the Thais to come by their territorial acquisitions as the natural heirs of the French, and not as a beneficiary of Japan<sup>57</sup>

Direck Jayanama agreed to receive these territories as an act of restitution on the part of France. Apart from that, he added, the Thai Government would also like to establish the *thaleweq* of the Mekong river as the boundary between Thailand and Indochina, except for those trans-Mekong districts where the population was mostly of the Thai race.<sup>58</sup>

As mentioned earlier, Decoux's delaying tactics, combined with the increasing Japanese threat, had impelled Pibul to take a firmer position with the French. In late July 1940 Pibul decided to send military missions to Japan and the Axis countries as part of his diplomatic offensive to compel France to fulfil her promises.<sup>59</sup> On 6 August 1940 Pibul sounded Crosby and Leppisier regarding his diplomatic plan.<sup>60</sup> Pibul's decision had caused much concern to the Foreign Office. J.S.C. Bennett, the head of the Far East Department, believed that the Thai mission to Japan would be welcomed by Japan as it would enable the Japanese to show that their recently announced 'Monroe Doctrine' for East Asia was in accord with the American doctrine.<sup>61</sup> Gage considered it as an indication of Thailand's impression of Japanese power.<sup>62</sup> Crosby attributed Pibul's decision to being "inspired by fear and by temperamental lack of sympathy" and because he saw "it the best way of getting what he wants territorially".<sup>63</sup> In drafting a message to the Thai Government, J.S.C. Bennett stressed that 'it is not the claims themselves but the moment and manner of putting them forward that we object to'.<sup>64</sup> He



added that "the point to be stressed is the imopportunity of precipitating a crisis now. We don't want to lay ourselves open to the usual criticism of clinging blindly to the status quo. It may well be that certain Thai claimants, both in the French and ourselves, have a good dale of foundation."<sup>65</sup> On 14 August, the message was sent to Thailand, in which it was argued that the British Government did not oppose the validity of Thai claims. However, it stressed that any change or proposed change in the status quo was most untimely as it would give Japan an excuse to demand more far reaching concessions for herself. It expressed concern over the intention of the Thai Government to send a military to Japan for the purpose of obtaining the agreement of the Japanese Government to the cession to Thailand of territories in Indochina. Such a step could ultimately only be prejudicial to Thailand's interests, since the obligation under which Thailand would be placed would eventually be used as a lever to reduce that country to a state of complete subservience to Japan.<sup>66</sup>

Crosby, on his part, did try to dissuade Pibul from pursuing his plan, but to no avail. Despite this, Pibul promised to send a similar mission to Britain and the Commonwealth countries, the mission would be renamed 'a good will mission' and it would be composed of civilian members, apart from the military officials. An official communique would be issued prior to the despatch of the mission to Japan.<sup>67</sup> Though the Foreign Office endorsed Crosby's efforts, it still deplored Pibul's proposal that Thai claims be raised at the moment. The Foreign Office was informed that the French Government, probably backed by the German Government, appeared to be resisting Japanese demands.<sup>68</sup> Despite Foreign Office disapproval, the first mission left for Tokyo on 30 August 1940.<sup>69</sup> Pibul justified his actions by explaining that Japan was on the point of seizing Indochina; she was already consulting with Berlin and Rome to that end; she was already consulting with Berlin and Rome to that end and Thailand must stake out her claims immediately or it would be too late.<sup>70</sup> However, probably to placate Britain's opposition, the Thai Government ratified the Non-Aggression Pact between the two countries on 30 August 1940.<sup>71</sup>

The Prayoon Mission did not only arouse Crosby's suspicion but also that of the French Government. Crosby believed that the Japanese had proposed a territorial bargain to Pibul,<sup>72</sup> while the French Government feared that Thailand would co-operate with Japan to upset Indochina's status quo. France's fear was justified by the fact that Thailand refused to ratify the Non-Aggression Pact with her. At that time the French Government was being pressed by the Japanese to allow them to move their troops through Indochina territory and to recognise the predominance of the political and economic interests of Japan in the Far East.<sup>73</sup>

It was not surprising that, in early September 1940, the French Government submitted to the Thai Government a list of Indochinese officials who would



compose the French negotiating party.<sup>74</sup> At the same time Baudoin, the Vichy Foreign Minister, demanded ratification of the Non-Aggression Pact with Thailand without waiting for the usual exchange of ratification documents.<sup>75</sup> The Thai reply on 12 September indicated that they would comply if agreements were reached on the matters which still await negotiation: the *thalweg* issue and the adoption of the Mekong as the Thai-Laos frontier, meaning the retrocession to Thailand of the two enclaves opposite Luang Prabang and Pakse. The Thai note also requested that France furnish Thailand with a letter of assurance of the return of Laos and Cambodia in the event of a change of sovereignty there.<sup>76</sup> The French Government, however, refused to yield to the Thai demands. The urgency of the matter became more evident with the submission of Indochina's authorities to the Japanese demands in early September 1940.<sup>77</sup> In Bangkok, demonstrations demanded that strong measures be taken against French Indochina. The *Thai Rasdr Daily News*, for instance, demanded a declaration of war on Indochina.<sup>78</sup> Crosby, on 21 September, urged the Foreign Office to review its policy towards Thai aspirations, he believed that,

we cannot afford to take an unsympathetic attitude towards Thai territorial claims. We may not see our way to give active encouragement to these claims, but I submit, that it would be unwise for us to disapprove of them.<sup>79</sup>

In another despatch, he noted his views on the problem. He suggested that,

if the status quo in Indochina is going to be upset in spite of everything that we and the United States may do to maintain it, and if the French are going to evacuate that country including the regions bordering on the frontier of Thailand, then it will undoubtedly be to our advantage to see the latter in the occupation of the Thais rather than of the Japanese. In saying this I am thinking the Thai claim on the larger scale, i.e., to the province of Laos and to a part at least of Cambodia. If, on the other hand, it should fortunately happen that the status quo is preserved, the larger scale aspirations of the Thai must be presumed to lapse, or to fall into abeyance...<sup>80</sup>

With regard to the smaller claims, he suggested that the British policy should be a non-obstructive one. 'In particular', he recommended, "we should recognise these small scale demands as being disassociated with the larger and more important issue of the maintenance of the status quo."<sup>81</sup> He concluded that,

the question of Thai irredentism thus presents a most difficult and delicate problem, and I can only suggest that our policy in regard to it should be one of expediency and of sympathy towards the Thai aspirations in principle and in so far as that does not conflict with other international issues of such importance and to justify our risking an interruption of our present cordial relations with Thailand.<sup>82</sup>

Crosby's suggestion was examined by the Foreign Office, and it was fully accepted. The Foreign Office despatched its message to the Thai



Government assuring it that Britain would not object to any rectification of the frontier freely negotiated between France and Thailand. It also reiterated that 'in view of the firm relationship between Thailand and Great Britain, he Majesty's Government could always be glad to be kept informed in advance of any action contemplated.'<sup>83</sup>

Britain's hopes for regional stability, however, collapsed when, in late November 1940, war broke out between Thailand and Indochina. The chaotic situation, as predicted by the Foreign Office, was capitalized by Japan which was supplying Thailand with weapons and mechanics. The presence of the Japanese in Indochina and Thailand had aroused fears in Britain lest Thailand would succumb to Japan's New Order. The Foreign Office urged the United States to intervene in the dispute and act as mediator.<sup>84</sup> The United States Government, however, refused to intervene as mediator on the ground that 'the permanence of any guarantee that might be forth coming would be questionable.'<sup>85</sup>

Without United States co-operation, Britain was powerless. She was reluctant to become a mediator herself, although she was invited to do by Thailand and France, lest it would provoke the Japanese. The opportunity, therefore, was seized by Japan, who offered her mediation on 10 January 1940 and, by 28 January 1941, hostilities between Thailand and Indochina ceased.<sup>86</sup>

#### ANGLO-THAI RESPONSE TO JAPANESE THREAT

The Japanese mediation in the Franco-Thai border dispute had caused considerable inconvenience to the British Government. The most obvious implication of the Japanese involvement in the dispute was the greater likelihood that Japan would obtain military or, at least, economic concession in either Thailand or Indochina, or both. The establishment of a Japanese military foothold in either Thailand or Indochina<sup>87</sup> would increasingly threaten the security of Singapore and sea communication in the Strait of Malacca, which was then considered to be the key to the defence of Southeast Asia.<sup>88</sup> In the face of the Allies' economic embargo upon Japan and the Axis countries,<sup>89</sup> Thailand and Indochina were the remaining countries in Southeast Asia where Japan could obtain the necessary raw materials required by her, such as rice, tin and rubber, that were important in war time.<sup>90</sup> The Foreign Office realised that some of these materials were not wholly consumed by Japan but that some was sent to Germany.<sup>91</sup> Thus, from the British point of view, action was necessary both for economic and strategic reasons: (i) to prevent the Japanese from establishing themselves in Indochina and, in particular, in Thailand, and, (ii) to prevent loss to the Allies and gain to the Axis of an important source of supply of rubber and tin.<sup>92</sup>



The fundamental factor was that Thailand must be prevented from falling completely under the Japanese influence. In other words, Thailand had to remain neutral and independent while, at the same time, she must resist the Japanese encroachment on her sovereignty. As mentioned earlier,<sup>93</sup> there were three distinct aspects inherent in Thailand's system that worried Britain most: first, the unpredictable nature of Thai Foreign policy; second, Thai irredentism and, lastly, Pibul's character. Though the Thai Government reiterated that she would remain neutral and respect the Non-Aggression Pact, the Foreign Office was still sceptical. It had been the traditional policy of Thailand, in her international relations, that she remained neutral as long as there was a balance of power in Southeast Asia. In this aspect, it meant a balance of power between Britain and Japan. Given the fact that Britain was involved in the European war and the American reticence<sup>94</sup> it was doubtful that Thailand would remain neutral. As argued by Gage:

Pibul was a treacherous villain who does not hesitate to give the most solemn assurance with every attention of breaking them up if it suits him ... the point is that he is determined to be the winning side and for this reason has practically committed himself to Japan if we can convince we are going to win there is a chance that he will hold hard. The difficulty is that we have not in the Far East those symbols of armed strength which to the child-like Thais are only convincing proof of power.<sup>95</sup>

The Foreign Office suspicion was further reinforced by Pibul's own confession that, although the declared policy of Thailand was to resist by force any attempt to violate her neutrality, he could not guarantee that he would oppose Japan by force of arms if she were to attack Malaya or Burma via Thailand. It would depend on the circumstances of the moment and it might be suicidal for Thailand to resist Japan unaided.<sup>96</sup> Furthermore, as Pibul himself said, Thailand's attitude very much depended on America's attitude towards the Japanese. So long as the United States remained quiet or indecisive, Thailand's neutrality was very doubtful.<sup>97</sup> It should also be noted that the pro-Japanese cliques in the Thai Government were quite pronounced in agitating for a close relationship between Thailand and Japan. And this was, in fact, reflected in *Thai Rasdr*, the largest circulation newspaper in Bangkok, which had openly advocated a close association between the two countries for the establishment of a 'New Order in East Asia'.<sup>98</sup> However, the most important event was the conclusion of a peace settlement between Indochina and Thailand in early April 1941. As expected by the Foreign Office, Japan made use of her position as a mediator to force Thailand and Indochina to undertake that neither country would collaborate with an external power to impose political, economic and military co-operation against Japan.<sup>99</sup>

Thai's excessive irredentism was another problem. Crosby, on 9 February 1941, warned the Foreign Office of the alleged Thai-Japanese conspiracy



against Burma.<sup>100</sup> A proposal had been submitted by the Japanese that Thailand should help Japan in setting up an independent Burma under a scheme of 'coprosperity' and in establishing joint Thai-Japanese condominium over Malaya. As reward for her co-operation, Thailand would recover sovereignty over the states of Kedah and Penang from Malaya, and Tavoy and Mergui from Burma. In return for these advantages, Thailand would provide Japan with active assistance in attacking Malaya and Burma or, alternatively, would acquiesce in use being made of Thai territory by Japanese forces. Although the authenticity of the information was doubtful. It was difficult for the Foreign Office to dismiss it. Crosby asserted: "we cannot ignore it as Japanese are only too likely to use it against us when the opportunity offers."<sup>101</sup> Craigie agreed. He said, "Success against the French is likely in any case to stimulate the national vanity of the Thai's and draw their attitude to other 'lost territories'."<sup>102</sup> He believed that Japan had an obvious interest in arousing an agitation for cession of the obvious interest in arousing an agitation for cession of the British territories in question because: (a) that would align Thailand definitely on her side against Britain and, (b) the Japanese might expect Southern Burma and Northern Malaya to be an issue in which the American stake was negligible and therefore one which, like Tientsin, they could usefully bring to a head.<sup>103</sup>

Pibul's character was another factor which caused the Foreign Office much concern. Crosby described him as 'unstable as water and is inspired by incredible national vanity of extreme Nationalists'.<sup>104</sup> Crosby strongly believed that "once he is satisfied that Japan is going to expel us from Malaya and Burma ... Thailand is likely to benefit by our possessions."<sup>105</sup>

The British Government, however, realised that she could not prevent Japan from establishing herself in either Indochina or Thailand without the close co-operation of the United States. Without definite United States assurance of military co-operation against the Japanese threat in East Asia, Britain was not in a position to take drastic action in Thailand. The War Cabinet, for example, had warned the Commander-in-Chief Far East against making any military commitments to Thailand which Britain was not in a position to fulfill.<sup>106</sup> With regard to Anglo-American relations, Feis remarked: "We walked out with Britain but would not admit an engagement, nor permit our arms to be taken."<sup>107</sup> In another sentence, he said: "Military co-operation between the British Commonwealth and the United States up to this spring of 1941 was only a favoured concept".<sup>108</sup>

Failure to gain United States commitments to the defence of British interests in the Far-East, however, did not prevent the British from getting United States co-operation in joint economic assistance for Thailand. In early April 1941, the Foreign Office informed the State Department its plan, which objectively would minimise Thailand's exports to Japan and, at the same time, encourage Thailand to resist Japanese encroachment.<sup>109</sup>



The Foreign Office was hopeful that the United States Government would be able to use her bargaining power to buy Thailand's products - rubber and tin - in return for oil, financial loans and war materials. It was envisaged that joint Anglo-American purchasing of Thai's products would minimise the flow of these essential materials to Japan or the Axis countries. The proposal was accepted by the United States. A part from stockpiling these essential materials, the Japanese action in Southern Indochina had also influenced the attitude of the United States Government towards Thailand.

In mid-July 1941, Japanese troops were mobilized Southern Indochina and had forcibly occupied air and naval bases in Camranh and Saigon.<sup>110</sup> The Japanese actions were considered as a threat, not only to the British Empire, but also to American interests in Southeast Asia and the Southwest Pacific.<sup>111</sup> After that time, there was close co-operation between Britain and the United States towards providing economic assistance to Thailand, particularly oil, financial loans and construction products.<sup>112</sup>

With the presence of Japanese troops in Southern Indochina, the possibility of a Japanese offensive towards Thailand, Burma and Malaya and the rest of Southeast Asia was deeply felt. Britain continuously reminded Thailand that she should adhere to the Non-Aggression Pact recently signed between the two countries.<sup>113</sup> Thailand, on the other hand, did everything possible to build up her own strength and to convince all concerned of her genuine neutrality. The Thai Government, indeed, realised the unfavourable position facing the country of the possibility of becoming another theatre of war between Britain and Japan. The Government made repeated public pronouncements to the effect that it was determined to prevent the invasion of Thailand and that she would oppose any attempt at violation. Vichitr Vadakarn, Minister without portfolio, in his radio pronouncements, emphasized the precept that "it is better to die as a freeman than to live as slaves".<sup>114</sup> Pibul went further still, declaring that, in case of foreign invasion, the Thai's would pursue the 'scorch's earth policy' and destroyed all vital resources of the country rather than be utilised by the enemy.<sup>115</sup>

In his efforts to strengthen Thailand's defence capability, Pibul requested Britain and the United States to provide him with planes and tanks.<sup>116</sup> Without such supplies, he asserted, it would be difficult for Thailand to maintain her neutrality. Pibul's demands had put Britain in a difficult position. Though she badly needed Thailand's co-operation in resisting the Japanese, Britain felt it difficult to supply Thailand with these materials. Apart from depleting supplies, much of these materials were urgently required in Russia and China.<sup>117</sup> Furthermore, Britain realised that Thailand did not have the necessary trained personnel to operate planes and tanks. Although, the British could not spare these but, in November some field guns, ammunition, and limited quantities of aviation oil were sent to Thailand.<sup>118</sup> The Thai Government, however, was far from satisfied. On 11 November,



Pibul officially rejected the artillery and, instead, continued to press for planes and tanks.<sup>119</sup> Prior to this, Pibul had warned Britain that, without ample military preparation, Thailand would avoid an open clash with Japan and 'would only fight if she must'.<sup>120</sup> Pibul's attitude had irritated some of the Foreign Office officials. Bennett argued that "it would be doubtful wisdom to supply the Thais with aircraft, even if we have any available".<sup>121</sup> Ashley Clarke questioned, "How can any one suppose that the gift of 24-48 aircraft to the Thais will make any difference to the situation in the Far East, except in weakening our position".<sup>122</sup> Seymour retorted: "It has always seemed to be absurd to consider wasting of aircraft in Thailand."<sup>123</sup>

The Foreign Office informed Crosby on 28 November that it was useless for Pibul to go on pressing for forms of assistance which would do him little good and would detract "from our power to help him"<sup>124</sup> "What is the use to him of a few aircraft if British power in the Far East is to be jeopardized for want of them? If he wishes to stand up against Japan, and if he thinks he cannot do so alone, to whom does he look for protection?"<sup>125</sup> Nevertheless, Pibul continued to press for aircraft and, in addition that, he also insisted that the British and United States Governments issued a public statement to Japan that, if she were to attack Thailand, she would find herself at war with them all.<sup>126</sup>

The Foreign Office, however, was not in a position to issue such a statement or give any assurance to Thailand which might provoke Japan and involve Britain in war with the latter. Though Britain had already prepared a military plan which was known as the *Matador* operation,<sup>127</sup> she had to wait for United States approval prior to its operation. The same applied to the issuance of a public statement to Japan.

Meanwhile, the Foreign Office was hoping that the arrival of the *Prince of Wales* and the *Repulse* in Eastern waters would have an effect of assurance on Thailand.<sup>128</sup> Crosby expressed his dissatisfaction at the Foreign Office attitude towards Thailand. In a 'private and personal' telegram to the Foreign Office on 11 December he argued that it was illogical for the British Government to encourage the Thai Government to resist the Japanese but, at the same time, to be unwilling to provide her with military equipment. Crosby thought it would be of more advantage if Britain advised Thailand to give no physical resistance at all and, in the interests of her population, to play a similar role to Denmark's and content herself with a verbal protest against invasion.<sup>129</sup> The Foreign Office, in its confidential message to Crosby on 5 December, however, did not mention British military assistance to Thailand, but only the British *Matador* operation in Southern Thailand.<sup>130</sup>

On 5 December Pibul, once again, begged Britain and the United States to issue a public statement.<sup>131</sup> The Foreign Office was, in fact, alive to the urgency of the Thai Government's request.<sup>132</sup> But the exact form and timing of any such military warning ultimately depended on the United States.



Nevertheless, as the Japanese threat became more imminent, the Foreign Office decided to give a promise of military assistance to Thailand. It was feared that the Thai Government would come to some agreement with the Japanese Government under threat of force.<sup>133</sup> An urgent telegram was sent on 7 December warning Thailand that the Japanese attack seemed likely, and that it was hoped that Thailand would preserve her independence and sovereignty. An attack on Thailand would be regarded as an attack on Britain.<sup>134</sup> However, the telegram arrived too late. On 8 December Thailand was forced to surrender to Japan.

#### POST-WAR PLANNING AND ANGLO-AMERICAN DIVERGENCE OF ATTITUDES TOWARDS THAILAND

Siam's<sup>135</sup> submission to Japan on 8 December 1941 was originally regarded by Britain as an act under duress and she was thus content to consider Siam as a territory under enemy occupation.<sup>136</sup> The position, however, was altered when the Siamese Government hastily declared war upon Britain and the United States on 25 January 1942.<sup>137</sup> From the British point of view, Siam had not only violated the Non-Aggression Pact but had breached earlier treaties between the two countries the sovereignty and integrity of the British territories.<sup>138</sup> Thus, in accordance with international law and regulations, on 2 February 1942 Britain recognized Siam's declaration of war.<sup>139</sup>

The United States, with long-term interests in mind, refused to do so, being satisfied to treat Siam as an enemy-occupied country. This was the first and fundamental divergence of view between Britain and the United States. According to Martin, this was profoundly to affect the post-war settlement negotiations between Britain and Siam.<sup>140</sup>

As she had recognised Siam's declaration of war, Britain was in an advantageous position to impose certain conditions on the Siamese Government in the negotiations for a peace settlement. Fundamentally this was important, as several matters had arisen as a result of Siamese collaboration in the East Asian War. As argued by Crosby, "When the terms of peace are dictated she will thus of necessity be liable to punishment, though if the provisions of the Atlantic Charter are observed,<sup>141</sup> the sovereign status and her territorial integrity will remain unimpaired"<sup>142</sup>

As far as the formulation of policy was concerned, the Foreign Office had no problem. It had received memorandum setting forth proposals for the post-settlement negotiations with Siam as early as January 1943.

The first detailed set of proposals came from Sir Josiah Crosby. In January 1943 he sent a long memorandum to the Foreign Office discussing the importance of Siam to the British territories of Malaya, Burma and



Southeast Asia as a whole.<sup>143</sup> Crosby argued that Britain could not be disinterested in the fate of Siam. It would make all the difference to Britain whether the Government in power in Siam was a friendly or a hostile one. Crosby believed 'in Southeastern Asia, as everywhere else human society in its broad outlines and reactions tends increasingly to become indivisible, and a diseased Siam would be capable of infecting the whole body politic in her part of the world.'<sup>144</sup>

Crosby argued that it was important for Britain and the United Nations to assist in the rehabilitation of Siam, particularly by promoting the growth of democratic Government and by curtailing or disbanding the powerful armed forces. The armed forces, he said, were responsible for the undesirable features of Siam's recent policy. The continuation of a considerable military establishment would act as a hindrance to the growth of democratic institutions. He disclaimed the argument that powerful standing armies in these small states would be needed for purposes of self-defence. This would enable Siam to make a nuisance of herself, as clearly shown in the Franco-Siamese border dispute in late 1940, rather than defend herself against external aggression as, for instance, Japanese invasion. Furthermore, the upkeep of armed forces would absorb a huge proportion of the national income at the expense of economic development.

Crosby proposed that some kind of 'quasi-tutelar authority' be established in the country which would implement the recommendations of a group of foreign advisers chosen by the United Nations. But he deprecated the inclusion of any Chinese among the foreign advisers. The appointment of Chinese advisers could not fail to be deeply resented by the Siamese. Crosby gave three main reasons why the Chinese should not be included: first, there was a tendency towards large scale emigration; secondly, the Chinese were very much superior to the indigenous population in economic well-being and, thirdly the close-knit racial communities of the Chinese prevented them from being assimilated.<sup>145</sup>

Crosby also drew attention to the importance of the Kra Isthmus for the defence of Malaya and Burma. He proposed that Britain or the United Nations should establish military bases in the region.<sup>146</sup> He proposed that measures should be taken to stimulate production, introduce diversification of crops and raise the standard of living.

Crosby's memorandum was commented on by G.F. Hudson,<sup>148</sup> who disagreed with Crosby's proposal for the curtailment or disbanding of the Siamese armed forces. Such a step, he believed, would only increase Britain's responsibility and would also be regarded by the Siamese as an infringement of Siam's national self-respect and sovereignty. On the proposal for tutelage, he said such a scheme was to the disadvantage of Britain unless the excessive pro-Chinese bias of American popular sentiment was consistently modified. The United States would probably allow the Chinese to be included in the



foreign advisers who might be chosen to serve in Siam. On that ground, he believed Siam should be retained as an independent nation rather than be under a 'quasitutelary' authority.

The Foreign Office had also received a memorandum from the Colonial Office,<sup>149</sup> dated 30 March 1943, which discussed the future of Siamese territories in the north of the Malay peninsula. The memorandum drew particular attention to the danger to the British Empire threatened by these territories and commented on the danger to the British Empire threatened by these territories and commented on the possibility of a Kra Canal being built in the Isthmus. Enclosed with the memorandum was a letter from Sir George Maxwell,<sup>150</sup> dated 15 March 1945, contemplating direct annexation by the British of Southern Siam, or the establishment of a military base there. Maxwell believed that the region was "the heel of Achilles" for the British Empire. Its importance, he argued, was clearly shown at the time of the Japanese invasion of Malaya. It was in this region that the Japanese landed their forces and wrecked the British defence in Malaya and Burma. He also pointed to the danger of a canal being constructed in the Kra Isthmus by Siam or other foreign powers which would directly threaten the position of Singapore. He argued that it would not be difficult for the British to annex the Southern region. Ethnologically, most of the population there, especially in the region of Patani, Setul, Yala and Narathiwat, were of the Malay race closely connected with the neighbouring states of Malaya. These Malays, Maxwell states, as a result of the intensively nationalistic policy pursued by the Siamese, who abolished the Sultanate of Patani and made Siamese the only official language, were said before the outbreak of war to have been likely, in any proper plebiscite, to vote overwhelmingly in favour of transfer to British Malaya.

The Foreign Office, in its comments, however, felt in difficulty to recommend direct annexation of the region since Britain had already committed herself to the Atlantic Charter.<sup>151</sup> Nevertheless, the Foreign Office agreed to consider the possibility of establishing a military base there sponsored by either Britain or the United Nations.<sup>152</sup>

These memoranda provided the Foreign Office with ample information and guidelines for formulating its terms of condition to be imposed upon Siam in the post-war negotiations.

In the meantime, the Foreign Office abstained from making any political commitments which would affect its interests in Siam. The Foreign Office, for example, did not recognise the 'Free Siamese Movement'<sup>153</sup> as the representative of Siam, fearing that this would constitute a political blunder affecting British future planning for Siam.<sup>154</sup> Although it could not be denied that the British, for example, the Special Operation Executive (SOE), established contact with the Free Siamese Movement either in Europe or in Siam, this was merely for operational purposes.<sup>155</sup> When the Foreign Office



was requested by Lord Mountbatten, the Supreme Commander of Southeast Asia Command (SEAC), to formulate a general statement for Siam, the Foreign Office only clarified the British general attitude towards Siam. It set forth the argument that 'the Siamese people would have to pay a price for the acts of their Government but that if they co-operated with the British they might expect Britain to support the emergence of an independent Siam after the war'<sup>156</sup>

The proposed statement by the Foreign Office had indeed aroused disappointment in the State Department. On 20 March 1944, the Department retorted that the statement "would not be helpful in giving any encouragement to the Thai people to resist the Japanese, might very likely be exploited by the Japanese to the disadvantage of the United Nations..."<sup>157</sup> The statement, it added, failed to give any intimidation that Thailand would be continued as an independent country. Although the two countries were seeking to enunciate a single policy for Siam,<sup>158</sup> they tended to diverge, however, in the long run due to their different responses to the Siamese declaration of war and their perceptions of the future status of the colonial countries in Southeast Asia. Unlike the British, the United States, as stated earlier, did not consider herself to be at war with Siam. As argued by Hull, "We did not declare war, but took the position that the Government at Bangkok, under the domination of the Japanese, did not represent the desires of its people..."<sup>159</sup> On this basis the Siamese Minister in Washington, Seni Pramoj, continued to be recognised by the United States as the Siamese Minister, and she had even declared her support for the formation of the Free Siamese Movement in the United States.<sup>160</sup> In contrast to the British proposed statement, the United States declared publicly that "We favour the restoration to Siam of complete security as a sovereign state, and we favour the creation in Siam of a Government, which will represent the freewill of the Siamese people..."<sup>161</sup> This sympathetic attitude of the United States towards Siam could be explained by her all embracing sympathy with the countries in Asia which had been ruled and exploited for many years by European colonial powers. The traditional anti-imperialist sentiments of the American demanded that the Europeans grant national independence to their colonies in Asia and end the exploitation of these backward people. As far as Siam was concerned, Kenneth A. London, the Advisor on Siamese Affairs to the State Department, argued that:

Any appraisal of Thailand looking forward to a postwar settlement must take into consideration the fact that the Thais are an old nation with a distinct culture... Above everything else, they want their freedom, their continued national existence. They would resist any forced coalition of the countries of Southeast Asia.<sup>162</sup> Any attempt to put them under the domination of an outside power would merely result in the creation of an Asiatic Ireland.<sup>163</sup>



Although the Foreign Office agreed to amend the proposed statement to conform with the United States declaration,<sup>164</sup> the War Cabinet over-ruled the decision on the following principles:

- (a) declaration's terms were too favorable;
- (b) We should be asked to make corresponding statements about neighbouring territories, example certain of Malay States;
- (c) it was undersirable to make a statement about Siam till we had made one about Burma;
- (d) it would be better not to make a declaration of this kind until we had recovered some of the territories we had lost in the East;
- (e) it was doubtful wheather would be much assistance so far as SOE's operational projects were concerned.<sup>165</sup>

Anglo-American divergencies on Siam were of little practical consequence prior to mid-1944. The divergencies became a matter of real concern with the favourable unfolding of the military situation in southeast Asia, accompanied by the downfall of the collaborationist Pibul regime in July 1944 and its replacement by a Government dominated by the regent, Pridi Banamyong.<sup>166</sup> Pridi established contacts with the Allied powers and informed them of his preparation to assist the allies in their fight against the Japanese. While Seni Pramoj, in the United States, intensified his propaganda campaign to gain Allied sympathy and support.<sup>167</sup>

The British 'passive' attitude towards the changing situation in Siam was naturally regarded by the United States as indicating that Britain had definite disigns upon Siam in the post-war period. The United States' suspicion was reinforced by Britain's own attitude. For example, the Foreign Office, apart from not being able to issue its general statement on Siam, was unrecrceptive to the United States proposal that a Free Siamese Liberation Committee be established on Allied soil.<sup>168</sup> In contrast to the United States policy, the British refused to freeze Siamese funds in London for use by the Free Siames Movement.<sup>169</sup>

On 18 August 1944 the Foreign Office received a letter from Winant, the United States Ambassador in London, demanding a confidential statement of British policy towards Siam.<sup>170</sup> Winant expressed his regret for the British policy towards Siam.<sup>170</sup> Winant expressed his regret for the British attitude.

Eden, on 4 September 1944,<sup>171</sup> tried to placate the United States' suspicions of the British attitude towards Siam by declaring that the British were no less favourable than the United States and China to the idea of a free and idependent Siam after the war. However, he said.

We, like the United States, want to see the restoration of Siam after the war as a free, sovereign and independent state, subject only to its acceptance of such special arrangements for security or economic collaboration as may be judged necessary within an international system. Before this state is reached we have to drive out the



Japanese and to this end we wish, as do the United States, to encourage the Siamese themselves to create the maximum contribution to their own liberation. But at the present we and the United States Government have not got our ideas coordinated and if we are to get this problem straightened out it is essential that we should recognise that we necessarily view it from somewhat different angles. The United States Government do not regard themselves as being at war with Siam. His Majesty's government do.<sup>172</sup>

On Siamese resistance to the Japanese, he said:

... it is in any case of doubtful wisdom to encourage the comfortable view that the Siamese can count on an easy and assured future regardless of their attitude towards the Japanese and the efforts which they make to help themselves and us. We feel, in fact, that if resistance is to be encouraged it may need a spur rather than a sugar-plum.<sup>173</sup>

On territorial integrity, he said that Britain was not thinking of territorial expansion but this did not mean that Siam would be allowed to retain 'the ill-gotten gains which she had accepted from Japanese ally at the expense of Malaya, of Burma and of French Indochina.'<sup>174</sup>

On the Kra Isthmus, he emphasized the need for some special strategic arrangement within the framework of an international security system.

On 21 October 1944 Winant stressed the need for a frank exchange of view between the two Governments in order to achieve a coordination of policy.<sup>175</sup> He demanded that Eden clarify precisely what had intended by those reservations.

Eden, on 15 November, explained that the existence of differences between the two Governments was due to their different approach to restoring Siam as 'a free, sovereign and independent country.'<sup>176</sup> He argued:

To us Siam is an enemy who must 'work her passage' before she can rehabilitate herself; whereas the United States Government regard her, in spite of her declaration of war merely as an enemy-occupied territory.<sup>177</sup>

On the question of reservations, it was quite difficult for the British Government to clarify these in detail as there were many unknown factors as regards the future. Nevertheless, Eden stressed that it was only

as a matter of precedence, even in the case of those who are but the satellites of our main enemies, to reserve the right to stipulate that as a condition of their ultimate freedom, sovereignty and independence they should accept such special arrangements for security or economic collaboration as may be judged necessary to the functioning of the post-war international system.<sup>178</sup>

As regards the special reservation affecting the Kra Isthmus, Eden considered it to be decided and recommended by the respective Allied military experts. However, he stressed that the Kra Isthmus had played an important part in the Japanese plans for the capture of Singapore, and as such



it will have to figure in whatever arrangements may be made for the future security of Southeast Asia, and in particular for the defence of Singapore.<sup>179</sup>

Thus, by the end of 1944, the British Government already had a vivid outline of the post-war arrangements that she contemplated in Siam. However, looking at the United States' concern over the British policy towards Siam and the divergent attitudes, it remained doubtful to what extent the British would be able to realise their post-war arrangements with regard to Siam.

#### ANGLO-AMERICAN NEGOTIATIONS ON THE POST-WAR SETTLEMENT WITH SIAM

Following the defeat of Japan in August 1945, Pridi Banomyong, as regent of Siam, issued a proclamation declaring the declaration of war upon Britain and the United States null and void, and signifying willingness to return the British territories and pay compensation for damages incurred by the citizens of those countries.<sup>180</sup>

Although Pridi's declaration was welcomed by the British Government, Secretary of States for Foreign Affairs Ernest Bevin made it clear that British policy towards Siam would depend on Siam's future action, namely, the outcome of negotiations with Britain for a peace treaty.<sup>181</sup> Ernest Bevin's statement was elaborated in the proposed political and military agreements which were to become the basis for negotiations between Britain and Siam. The proposed political agreement, which was purely a British concern, included Thai measures of repudiation and restitution and steps of post-war co-operation in the economic and strategic fields.<sup>182</sup> The proposed military agreement was mainly concerned with Allied implications and called for the Siamese to help in disarming the Japanese and in turning them over to Allied authorities. The agreement further called for the release of all Allied prisoners of war and internees, the acceptance of military control over Siam and of an Allied military mission. Siam was to make a free contribution of 1,500,000 tons of rice, and to accept Allied controls over exports of tin, rubber and teak.<sup>183</sup> Though the Siamese Government was willing to negotiate on the basis of these two agreements, the British had to appreciate the attitude of the United States Government. As far as the proposed military agreement was concerned, the United States shared responsibility for this since it was an Allied effort.

In its first comment on the draft agreement,<sup>184</sup> the State Department, had, in fact, reminded the foreign Office that such settlement will not conflict with the viewpoints, interests or policies of the United States, but will on the other hand, contribute to Anglo-American unity of action in the Far East.<sup>185</sup> The Department stressed that:



Thailand is the only country within the theatre of a combined Anglo-American command with one of the Governments represented in the command at war, while the other Government is not. It is important therefore that unusual care be exercised by that command in matters which would involve the relationship of those Governments with Thailand.<sup>186</sup>

The State Department demanded clarification on certain clauses in the proposed agreements which seemed to be vague and dubious in intent. The Department urged the Foreign Office to clarify clause D5 regarding the international arrangements for tin and rubber, and hoped that these would be effected under the auspices, or with the approval of, the United Nations or the Economic and Social Council.<sup>187</sup> It hoped that such a commitment would not be made a condition for British recognition of the sovereignty and independence of Thailand. The Department also felt misgiving over the implications of Clauses D2 and D3<sup>188</sup> which envisaged that, if Thai citizens wished to reserve economic, commercial or professional pursuits to their own nationals, they would need British consent so far as British interests were concerned. The Department felt that the British required only non-discriminatory treatment for British nationalis, since demands beyond this would infringe Thai sovereignty and economic independence. The Department concurred that Thailand should pay compensation for losses or damages for which she was directly responsible, but urged that Thailand should not be required to pay compensation until the question of reparations was decided. A requirements that Thailand should make compensation at that juncture might seriously intensify the economic ills of the country, given the fact that Thailand was suffering from a serious financial and economic problem arising from hundreds of millions of baths<sup>189</sup> loaned to Japan during the war.<sup>190</sup>

On the proposed military agreement, the State Department reiterated that this should be limited to matters of Allied concern against the common enemy and requested that the command should not take any action tending to compromise the position held by the United States that Thailand was not an enemy but a country to be liberated from the enemy.

On the rice levy, the Department expressed its concurrence on the tripartite agreement by Britain, the United States and Thailand to stimulate the production and maximise the export of Thai rice through an Anglo-American commission. The Department, however, asserted that the rice levy was unjust in view of the Thai readiness to join the war against Japan and that their deferment of such an action was at the request of the Supreme Allied Command and the United States Government.<sup>191</sup> It noted additionally that the size of the proposed levy might exceed the amount of Thai rice available for export, that the levy would be prejudicial to American interests in Thailand and that the United States Government would not feel free to share the proceeds of the levy.



The Foreign Office made a sharp rejoinder on 5 September that the reason one of the Governments in Southeast Asia Command was at war with Siam, while the other was not, was solely because the United States had chose to ignore Siam's declaration of war.<sup>192</sup> While not questioning that decision, the British Government could not agree that it entitled the United States government to ask that other Governments who were in a state of war with Siam should forego their rights of mitigate the conditions upon which they were prepared to liquidate the state of war. On the contrary, the British Government was entitled to ask that the United States would not take any action which would embarrass them or compromise their position as a belligerentally. They were therefore unable to agree that the actions of the Supreme Allied Commander should be limited to matters of concern affecting the war against Japan.

The British Government would give due weight to the Siamese resistance movement but the state of war between Britain and Siam remained to be liquidated and Siam's association with Japan left many practical questions for settlement. The British Government reiterated that their attitude towards Siam would depend on the way Siam met their requirements.<sup>193</sup> The British Government did not believe that the conditions might constitute an infringement of the sovereignty and spirit of retaliatin for the injury done to allied interests by Siam's association with Japan. But the British Government could scarcely accept a position in which Siam should profit from that association or, in such matters as the export of her commodities during the liberation period, from the needs of countries which had suffered from Japanese aggression. It was British policy to protect the interests of other Allied powers until those powers were in a position to arrive at their own settlement with Siam.

Although the British expressed their desire to met the United States' views on the matter of rice, they could not bring their views into conformity with those expressed in the State Department's *aide memorie*. The pointed out the Siam, alone among the warring nations, had accumulated a very large surplus of an essential comodity and, if permitted to dispose of its stocks at the high prevailing prices, would come out the war in a far better financial position than those who had offered greated resistance to the aggressors. The British maintained that a stockpile of 1,500,000 tons of rice already existed in Siam.<sup>194</sup> On the matter of compensation, they did not agree that claims should be postponed until the general reparations question relating to Japan was decided. They also gave assurances that they sought no exclusive privileges for British commercial interests.

In mid-September 1945 the Siamese Government denounced all political agreements with Japan and, following that, the Siamese military representatives headed by Lt. General Akdi Senanarong arrived in Kandy to negotiate with the Supreme Allied Command for an interi military agreement.<sup>195</sup> At the same



time, arrangements were made for the Anglo-Thai talks on the liquidation of war between the two countries. Dening, Political Adviser to Lord Mountbatten, was appointed as Britain's representative. His appointment, however, had given rise to misunderstanding between Britain and the United States. The United States had mistakenly believed that Dening was negotiating on behalf of the Allied command. The situation was further clouded by the allegation that Dening had pressed the Thai representative to accept the agreement within twenty-four hours.<sup>196</sup> The State Department intervened and warned the Foreign Office against engaging in any agreement with Siam, except military agreement No. 1 until the remaining points of difference between Britain and the United States were solved.<sup>197</sup> Military agreement No. 1 was signed on 8 September 1945 and stipulated the establishment of Allied forces and co-operation with the Siamese Government in disarming the Japanese.<sup>198</sup> Though Anglo-Siamese talks were taking place in Kandy, the decisive role was played by the Foreign Office and the State Department. The Anglo-American differences were exploited by the Siamese, particularly by Seni Pramoj, who became the Prime Minister on 17 September, to mitigate any heavy demands made by the British.<sup>199</sup>

On 26 September,<sup>200</sup> the State Department commented on the proposed C1<sup>201</sup> which it regarded as sounding like a 'protectorate' and might be interpreted as an advance commitment by to accept the steps which the United States opposed. In its place, the State Department proposed that the clause should be substituted by a proviso that Bangkok should agree to co-operate in relevant international security arrangements under the United Nations.

The British Government accordingly explained to the State Department on 5 October the object of C1,<sup>202</sup> which was to make it easier to negotiate a regional scheme of defence in world organisation by warning Siam that they would in future be expected to play their part in defence schemes in the area specified. The British were ready to accept the State Department's suggestion as a corollary to but not in place of C1. In view of the special concern of Britain with the security of the British territories and of the sea routes adjacent to Siam, the British Government thought it important to have on record that recognition by the Siamese Government of the importance to defend these territories and routes. The C1 would be retained but C2 would be replaced by a new clause.<sup>203</sup>

On 25 October,<sup>204</sup> the State Department reiterated to the Foreign Office its disapproval of the rice levy and its perturbation that the size of the levy was being maintained at 1,500,00 tons. The full levy would be burdensome on the Thai economy and would adversely affect the interests of other nations in Thailand. The Department therefore requested British acceptance of the figure of 780,000 tons or to leave to determination of the exact amount of rice accumulated in Thailand to the rice commission.



The Department was also concerned with the claim situation. It pointed out that it was American policy that no nation be compelled to pay a volume of reparations which, without external aid, would impair its civilian economy. It noted further that the United States was directly concerned with preservation for economic progress without dependence on foreign Governments for financial aid, and that prompt, orderly stabilization of the Thai economy was essential for stability throughout Southeast Asia.

The State Department was doubtful that Thailand could meet all claims for compensation and, in addition, finance the rice levy. It suggested the formation of an allied claims commission to deal with claims and compensations. It was also suggested that the rice levy be recognized as constituting reparations in kind.

On 12 November,<sup>205</sup> the Foreign Office replied that, under the proposed plans, the rice levy would only come from accumulated stocks and that it did not constitute reparations but rather 'a special measure of reconciliation'. The British stated that an allied claims commission was unnecessary. Furthermore, it was inappropriate for any state not at war with a country to be associated in determining its capacity to pay reparations or in deciding the equitable distribution of claims.

The State Department, on 29 November<sup>206</sup> expressed deep concern at the British view that the United States might not properly be associated with the British Government in determining Thai capacity to pay compensation for damages to Allied property and that the claims of the United States and other Allies not at war with Thailand must be subordinated to those of belligerent countries. It stressed that Thailand was in an Allied theatre, under combined Anglo-American command, which meant that the United States was on the same footing as Britain. It also dismissed the Foreign Office proposal that the rice levy was not reparation but a special measure of reconciliation. It reiterated that the rice levy would affect the economy of Thailand and its ability to pay Allied claims.

The Foreign Office, on 10 December, agreed to give the United States an equal footing in an Allied claims commission and was ready to reconsider the questions of rice contribution would not be used to settle claims against Siam.

The State Department, however, continued to remain dissatisfied and continued to press for the exclusion of the rice levy or agreement to an impartial determination of the amount of surplus stocks in Thailand.<sup>208</sup> The Department also would not acquiesce in C1, maintaining it still had the appearance of a protectorate. It had also warned that, if the British failed to consider its proposals, the United States would establish diplomatic relations with Thailand prior to the Anglo-Thai termination of war.<sup>209</sup>

The Foreign Office had also to reckon with the Siamese Government's stubbornness and with international pressure. The Siamese representative,



with the approval of the State Department, had refused to sign the agreement until certain clauses were critically examined and agreed upon, not only by the Siamese Government but also by the United States.<sup>210</sup> Furthermore, the American press had played havoc with the occasion, alleging that Britain was trying to impose economic control over Siam.<sup>211</sup> The alleged news had created a furore in the United States and, at one point, led Congressmen to hold up a proposed multi-billion dollars loan to Britain.<sup>212</sup>

Thus, probably to achieve Anglo-American unity in the Far East and to avoid and unnecessary delays, the Foreign Office agreed to revise some of the terms of the agreement. On 18 December,<sup>213</sup> it informed the State Department that the amount of the rice levy would be determined by the proposed United States-United Kingdom Commission. On 21 December, the Foreign Office agreed to link clauses C1 and C2.<sup>214</sup>

With the State Department's concurrence, Siam signed a peace treaty, completely in modified, with Britain at Singapore in 1 January 1946. Among the major points of the treaty were:

Siam would return the Malay and Burmese territories acquired during the war would turn over free one and a half million tons of rice to the United Kingdom [for distribution in Malay, India, Burma and Singapore], would not build a Canal across the Kra Isthmus without British approval, and would sell rubber, tin, rice and tea in accordance with prices fixed by International Committee. In return, Britain and India agreed to support Siam's membership in the United Nations.<sup>215</sup>

## CONCLUSION

One important factor that determined British policy towards Thailand before the war was that the Japanese had to be prevented from advancing into Southeast Asia. However, due to Britain's involvement in the European crisis and, after, her state of war and America's reticence, she was discouraged from taking a firm policy against Japan and Thailand. The importance of Thailand to Britain was based on two fundamental factors: her closeness to the British territories of Malaya and Burma and her independent status. Her geographical location made Thailand an ideal place from which Japan or any external power would attack Southeast Asia. The unpredictable nature of Thai foreign policy and Thai irredentism, coupled with Britain's military neutral, made it difficult for British policy towards Thailand was tuned: firstly, towards maintaining and cultivating Anglo-Thai relations and, secondly, towards encouraging her to remain neutral in the international crisis. To some extent, Britain was able to achieve her objectives in June 1940 when Non-Aggression Pacts were signed between Britain and Thailand and between France and Thailand. It was hoped that the Pacts would not only contribute towards a regional stability, particularly by solving the Franco-Thai border dispute, but would also reinforce Thailand's neutrality.



June 1940, however, was not only marked by Britain's success in finalising a non-aggression pact with Thailand and the parallel Franco-Thai pact, but by the sudden reverse the Allied forces suffered in Europe against the Germans and the collapse of France, which drastically affected British hopes for regional stability in Southeast Asia and a means of checking the Japanese advance. The collapse of France made it necessary for Britain to be cautious in her dealing with Thailand. The event had brought two main consequences in Southeast Asia. Thai irredentism had risen tremendously because France's collapse had placed Indochina in a delicate position. Franco-Thai relations deteriorated perceptibly when the French refused to solve the border problem, as agreed secretly between the two countries. As a result, the Thai's retaliated by refusing to ratify the Non-Aggression Pact signed between herself and France. Secondly, the Japanese had exploited the situation by extending their influence in Indochina and, at the same time, demanding that Britain and France close their respective frontiers with China.

Although Britain was in favour of maintaining Indochina's status quo, these considerations caused Britain to 'sympathize' with Thai aspirations, lest failure to do so should force Thailand to collaborate with Japan. The Thai mission to Tokyo in late August 1940 pointed to that possibility. Despite Britain's 'appeasement' attitude, the Foreign Office had clearly pointed out to the Thai Government that Britain would only recognise Thai aspirations as long as they were achieved through Franco-Thai negotiations, but not as a present from Japan.

Due mainly to her own weakness and American's attitude, which supported continued maintenance of Indochina's status quo, France was encouraged to remain obdurate and refuse to submit to Thai demands. This led to open border clashes in November 1940 between Thailand and Indochina. The Japanese, who at the time were present in Indochina, intervened and settled the crisis, predominantly in favour of Japan.

Despite Britain's setbacks, she did not lose hope but continued to promote close relations with Thailand. The need for this became more urgent, especially after mid-July 1941, when the Japanese intensified their military moves in Indochina. This resulted in Anglo-American co-operation to assist Thailand economically. Although the measure was partially successful, especially in encouraging Thailand's resistance against Japan, it also gave rise to a problem for Britain. In her desire to resist the Japanese, Thailand demanded military assistance from Britain and the United States. Britain, however, failed to provide this but exhorted Thailand to adhere to the Non-Aggression Pact and to be satisfied with passive resistance if she were attacked by Japan. Thus, it was due to Britain's own weakness that Thailand submitted to Japan in early December 1941.

The war period (1942-45) was historically important for Britain. During these years Britain discussed and formulated policy for post-war security and



economic arrangements in Thailand and Southeast Asia. In formulating these, the Foreign Office had secured close co-operation from the Colonial Office, Sir George Maxwell and Sir Josiah Crosby. The importance of Thailand to the security and economic well-being of British territories and Southeast Asia was noted and examined thoroughly. Nevertheless, in formulating the arrangements, the Foreign Office had to consider two fundamental factors:

1. the proposed policy must be in line with the Atlantic Charter and the Cairo Declaration that stipulated the ultimate freedom of the subjected people and countries;
2. the views put forth by the United States.

Sir Josiah Crosby proposed the establishment of a tutelage system and the curtailment or disbandment of Thai armed forces, as this was considered to be responsible for the failure of the Democratic system in Thailand. Sir George Maxwell advocated either complete annexation or the establishment of a British military base in Southern Thailand. The Foreign Office, however, was forced to reject these proposals in order to bring the arrangements into line with the Atlantic and Cairo principles and so a more lenient policy, but one in line with British principles, was adopted.

As for as the United States was concerned, it had influenced the formulation of the British policy to be adopted towards Thailand. The emerging role of the United States as a major post-war power had to be reckoned with by Britain. Both economically and strategically, Britain depended on the United States not only for war efforts but also for post-war economic reconstruction. It had been United States policy, as expressed by Hull,<sup>216</sup> to bring the British policy into line with the interests and view points of the United States. Although the British agreed to achieve a unity of views with the Americans in certain aspects concerning Southeast Asia, East Asia and the Pacific regions, she found it difficult to be reconciled to the American view-point as far as Thailand was concerned. The divergent viewpoint of the two countries with regard to Thailand had affected Thailand's declaration of war, their differences were also due to their varying perceptions of the future role that Thailand would play in post-war Southeast Asia. As mentioned earlier, Britain considered Thailand, her nearest neighbour, to be important as far as the security and economic well-being of her territories, Burma and Malaya, were concerned, and this necessitated that Britain imposed certain post-war arrangements on Thailand. The United States, on the other hand, envisaged post-war Southeast Asia as a region free from colonialism and economic exploitation. As far as Thailand was concerned, she wanted to see her as a 'forerunner of the new political order for Asia, free of colonialism'<sup>217</sup> and as a model for the former European colonies.

Thus, not surprisingly, there were clauses in the proposed British agreement with Thailand with which the United States was not satisfied and



which it demanded should be either modified or cancelled. Although the negotiations for the liquidation war between Britain and Thailand took place in Kandy and, later, in Singapore, the final decision for the successful conclusion of the peace agreement was made in London and Washington.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>This argument is based on Sir Josiah Crosby's view in his book, *Siam: The Crossroads*, Hollis and Carter, London, 1945. The author believes that, as an experienced serving officer and diplomat in the region, Crosby's view is authoritative. Crosby had served in the Foreign Service and had been posted in Southeast Asia since 1904, which marked the last stage in the Anglo-French dispute over Thailand. He had served in Thailand until early 1942. From the existing Foreign Office records, the author found that prior to 1938, the Foreign Office was interested in commercial matters, especially opium. That is not to say that there are no political reports but the political importance of Thailand is not so apparent as in the late 1930s.

<sup>2</sup>The term "Siam" was used by the British Government during the war in all official matters. Prior to 1942, the country was known as "Thailand". It is important to note here that the term "Thailand" was used by the United States Government throughout the war. In this essay when the author refers to "Siam" it is used mainly as the British term.

<sup>3</sup>Crosby, *Siam: the Crossroads*, p.5.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup>Japan's "New Order Policy" was proclaimed on 2 November 1938. It was a long term policy to bring East Asia countries under Japan's domination. Summarily, it was aiming at (1) achieving economic self-sufficiency and, (2) freeing the region from western domination. A short discussion of Japan's New Order and Britain's response is found in Bernard A. Lee, *Britain and the Sino-Japanese War 1937-1939*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1973, chapter 6.

<sup>6</sup>Appreciation by the Chief of Staff, 14 June, 1937, F4772/9/40; British Defence arrangements for Far East, June 1940, F3560/61.

<sup>7</sup>In the late 1930s, Britain was facing an imminent attack from the Germans and thus she was unwilling to risk provoking an incident with the Japanese which, as argued by the Foreign Office, "would face us with the choice of climbing down or depleting our forces in European waters." FO to Clerk Kerr, 17 October 1938, F10720/78/10.

<sup>8</sup>Appreciation by the Chief of Staff, *op. cit.*

<sup>9</sup>For a brief understanding of Thai irredentism see, L.V. Vadakarn, Thailand's case, Bangkok, 1941, and Kenneth Perry Landon, "Thailand's Quarrel with France Perspective", *Far Eastern Quarterly*; vol. 1 (1941).

<sup>10</sup>Crosby to FO, 10 June 1938, F66'8.

<sup>11</sup>Crosby to FO, 8 June 1938, F6172.

<sup>12</sup>Cordell Hull, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1948, pp. 532-533.

<sup>13</sup>Victor Purcell, "The Relinquishment by the United States of Extraterritoriality in Siam", *Journal Malayan Branch Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. 37, no. 1, 1964, pp. 99-120. A brief outline of the United States influence upon Thailand is discussed in Frank C. Darling, *Thailand and the United States*. Public Affairs Press, 1965.



<sup>14</sup>Craigie to FO, 11 February 1939, F2339/40. In this instance, Craigie suggested that the Foreign Office hinted to the Thai leaders regarding the views of the British Government on the Anti-Comintern Pact. He argued: "while it is no concern of ours what pacts other countries see fit the enter into, we feel that it is only right and fair to make clear to these countries with whom we wish to maintain and strengthen good relations that our general policy was against ideological blocs and pacts directed against others, for we are convinced that really satisfactory realtions can only be established with countries which are free and untrammelled in the respect." In early July, Crosby informed Pibul Songgram, the Thai Prime Minister, and advised him to maintain a neutral Policy, Crosby to FO, 7 July 1939, F7016.

<sup>15</sup>See the introduction for a brief outline on the importance of Thailand to Britain.

<sup>16</sup>Crosby to FO, 6 September 1939, F10314. Thailand declared her neutrality on 5 September 1939.

<sup>17</sup>Crosby to FO, 8 September 1939, F10320; Crosby to FO, 14 September 1939, F10509.

<sup>18</sup>M.Coultas (B), very confidential, 16 May 1939, F5250. See also minute by M.J.R. Talbot in Foreign Office minutes, 21 June 1939, F6310.

<sup>19</sup>Crosby to FO, 3 August 1939, F10131.

<sup>20</sup>Crosby, *Siam: The Crossroads*, p. 114 The movement, according to Crosby, with the full blessing of Pibul Songgram, issued a special map, with legend attached, which was displayed in schools and public buildings throughout the country. This showed the boundaries in former times of the Thai Kingdom along the Mekong river, Lower Burma and Northern Malaya. To protests by the British and French ministers, Pibul replied that the map was intended for educational purposes only, in order to teach the Thais moer about the history of their country.

<sup>21</sup>Pibul Songgram became Minister of Thailand in 1938. For a detailed understanding of Pibul Songgram see, Crosby, *Siam, The Crossroads*, pp. 101-103.

<sup>22</sup>Crosby, *Siam: The Crossroads*, p. 113.

<sup>23</sup>The French Government was, in fact, suspicious towards Thailand's neutrality. In late June, 1939, the French Government had gone to the extent of pressing Britain to obtain an assurance from Thailand that she would remain neutral in case of a war with Japan. M. Roche, the French representative in London, alleged that there was a military pact between Thailand and Japan. Crosby, however, denied it. Crosby to FO, 29 June 1939, F6628.

<sup>24</sup>Crosby to FO, 9 September 1939, F10316. Pibul Songgram, in explaining the idea of a Non-Aggression Pact to Crosby expressed his concern regarding French military preparations in Indochina and said that he had no better way of stopping rumours of French invasion than by the conclusion of a Non-Aggression Pact. According to Flood, France made the first proposal but this was not accepted by Thailand. E.T. Flood, "The 1940 Franco-Thai Border Dispute and Phibum Songkhraam's Commitment to Japan". *Journal of Southeast Asia History*, vol. 10, No. 2, 1969, p.307.

<sup>25</sup>Crosby to FO, 6 October 1939, F11118.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup>Lee, *Britain and the Sino-Japanese War 197-1939*, pp. 147.149.

<sup>28</sup>Crosby to FO, 20 October 1939, F11136. See also, Flood, "The 1940 Franco-Thai Border Dispute ...", and L.V. Vandakarn Thailand's case for a brief account on the Mekong issue.



<sup>29</sup>Crosby to FO, 20 October 1939, F11136.

<sup>30</sup>Crosby to FO, 20 October 1939, F11460.

<sup>31</sup>French Embassy to FO, 1 November 1939, F11483.

<sup>32</sup>Minute by Gage of French Embassy to FO, 1 November 1939, F11483. Gage based his argument on the report he received from Eden of the Thailand Consular Service.

<sup>33</sup>Minute by Ashley Clark on French Embassy to FO, 1 November 1939, F11483.

<sup>34</sup>Minute by Gage on Crosby to FO, 11 November 1939, F211516.

<sup>35</sup>FO to French Embassy, 1 January 1940, F476.

<sup>36</sup>Crosby to FO, 25 January 1940, F583.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup>FO to Campbell (Paris), 1 January 1940, F583.

<sup>39</sup>Harvey (Paris) to FO, 24 January 1940, F593; FO to Campbell (Paris), 7 February 1940, F593.

<sup>40</sup>Paris to FO, 9 February, F1048. Crosby, in his telegram in March explained to French Government's idea of the readjustment of frontiers on the river Mekong by administrative means. He said: "The idea is that in order to facilitate the task of administrative a deep water channel should be assured to the Thais which would be navigable all the year round; and that the islands between the channel and Thai heartland should be held to belong to Thailand. In order to implement this arrangement, a committee would be formed to study the question under the presidency of an expert who would be sent out from France as soon as an understanding in principle had been reached. On receiving a written promise from the French Minister that prompt steps will be taken to the above end the Thai Prime Minister is ready to sign pacts of Non-Aggression immediately with both France and Britain." See, Crosby to FO, 16 March 1940. F1896.

<sup>41</sup>FO to Campbell (Paris), 18 March 1940, F1713. At that time Britain was negotiating with Thailand for a readjustment of boundary between Keng Tung (Burma) and Thailand along the river Mek Sai and Pak Chan, which was also based on the 'thalweg' principle.

<sup>42</sup>Crosby to FO, 17 June 1940, F2888.

<sup>43</sup>Coults (B), 11 June 1940, F3204. The Non-Aggression pact was signed in Tokyo on 12 June 1940.

<sup>44</sup>This assumption was based on the information provided by Prince Varnvaidya to Crosby, see, Crosby to FO, 12 June 1940, F3236.

<sup>45</sup>See minutes by Gage and Heniker-Major on Crosby to FO, 12 June 1940, F3236.

<sup>46</sup>Minute by Henniker-Major on Crosby to FO, 12 June 1940, F3236.

<sup>47</sup>This was part of the message sent by Sir Winston Churchill to Pibul Songgram on the successful conclusion of the Non-Aggression Pact signed between the two countries. FO to Crosby, 13 June 1940, F3395.

<sup>48</sup>For further details on the Vichy government's policy towards Indochina see, Robert O. Paxton, *The Vichy France*, Barrie and Jenkins, London 1972, pp. 90.91. See also, Levy, Lacam and Roth, *French Interests and Policies in the Far East*. Institute of Pacific Relations, New York, 1941, pp. 154-55.

<sup>49</sup>The Consul at Hanoi to the Secretary of State, 1940, Foreign Relations of the United States (hereafter FRUS); The Consul at Saigon to the Secretary of State, 25 June 1940, FRUS.



<sup>50</sup>Flood, "The 1940 Franco-Thai Border Dispute ..."p.311.

<sup>51</sup>Crosby to FO, 8 July 1940, F3690. The aspirations to the return of Thailand's lost territories, viz., the Trans-Mekong part of Cambodia and Cambodia itself, were not limited to the irredentist party headed by Luang Vichitr Vadhakarn, Director of the Fine Arts, but were also held by the liberalist group. Among this group were Prince Varnvaidya Varavan and Luang Pridi Banamyong.

<sup>52</sup>Flood, "The 1940 Franco-Thai Border Dispute ...", p. 312.

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup>Crosby to FO, 1 July 1940, F3690.

<sup>55</sup>Among the personalities whom Crosby described as being anti-British elements were Luang Vichitr Vadhakam, Vice-Admiral Sindhu Songgramjaya and Colonel Proyoon Bhamorn Montri. Those who were pro-British were Luang Dhamrong, Nai Direck Jayanama and Prince Varnvaidya Varavan. See chapter XVII, "Personalities in the New Siam" in Crosby, *Siam: The Crossroads*, pp. 100-111.

<sup>56</sup>Crosby to FO, 5 July 1940, F3690.

<sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup>Flood, "The 1940 Franco-Thai Border Dispute ...", p. 313.

<sup>60</sup>Crosby to FO, 6 August 1941, F3706.

<sup>61</sup>Minute by J.S.C. Bennett of FO memo, 10 August 1940, F3880, Sir J. Brennan minuted that the American doctrine was different from those of Japan because the disposal of European possessions in the western hemisphere would be declared no by the United States alone but by agreement between the independent nations of the American continent. But he warned that "if the Thais do what they propose, the Japanese will be able to retort that disposal of European possessions in East Asia is similarly being decided by agreement by the only independent countries in that part of the world, i.e. Japan (puppet) China and Thailand."

<sup>62</sup>Minute by Gate on FO memo, 10 August, F3880.

<sup>63</sup>Crosby to FO, 6 August 1940, F3706.

<sup>64</sup>Minute by J.S.C Bennett on FO memo, 10 August 1940, F3880.

<sup>65</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup>FO to Crosby, 14 August 1940, F3706.

<sup>67</sup>Crosby to FO, 6 August 1940, F37006.

<sup>68</sup>FO to Crosby, 24 August 1940, F3984.

<sup>69</sup>Flood, "The 1940 Franco-Thai Border Dispute ...", pp. 318. The mission was led by Colonel Prayoon Bhamorn Montri. Prior to its despatch, an official communique was issued on 30 August 1940 that described the purpose of the mission as "promoting towards good relationships with all countries in general, to send special missions for such purpose and also to observe the various events and courses as mentioned." Crosby to FO, 23 August 1940, F4002.

<sup>70</sup>Crosby to FO, 24 August 1940, F4524.

<sup>71</sup>Flood, "The 1940 Franco-Thai Border Dispute ..." p. 319.

<sup>72</sup>Crosby to FO, 28 August 1940, F4002.

<sup>73</sup>Sir Llewellyn, Woodward, *The British Foreign Policy in the Second World War*, vol. 1, HMSO, 1962, p. 168.

<sup>74</sup>Flood, "The 1940 Franco-Thai Border Dispute..."p. 321.

<sup>75</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup>*Ibid.*



<sup>77</sup>On 5 September the Vichy Government had allowed Japan to move her troops through Indochina territory and had recognised the predominance of the political and economic interests of Japan in the Far East. On 22 September, Japan was allowed to use certain airports north of the Red River. On 27 September, a Tripartite agreement was concluded between Germany, Italy and Japan promising mutual aid if one of the parties were attacked by power not already taking part in the European war or hostilities in China. Clearly, it showed that Japan was preparing to establish a New Order in East Asia which would include Thailand and Indochina. See, Sir Llewellyn Woodward, *The British Foreign Policy ...*, p. 168.

<sup>78</sup>*The Thai Rasdr Daily New wrote*: "The patience of the people is nearly exhausted if nothing is to be achieved peacefully then an immediate declaration of war is necessary." Quoted in Levy, Locam and Roth, *French Interest ...*, p. 174.

<sup>79</sup>Crosby to FO, 21 September 1940, F4281.

<sup>80</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup>The small scale demands were for the adoption of the Mekong as the Thai-Laos frontier and the retrocession to Thailand of the two enclaves opposite Luang Prabang and Pakse.

<sup>82</sup>Crosby to FO, 21 September 1940, F4281.

<sup>83</sup>FO to Crosby, 25 October 1940, F4342. The original telegram was, however, suspended when the Foreign Office knew that Indochina had submitted to Japan's demands. The original telegraph disapproved Thai claims at that moment which, it reiterated, would still further complicate the situation by encouraging the idea of the break-up of Indochina.

<sup>84</sup>The British Embassy to the Department of State, 6 January 1941, FRUS.

<sup>85</sup>The State Department to British Embassy, 10 January 1941, FRUS.

<sup>86</sup>Crosby to FO, 1 February 1941, F1208. Crosby regarded the acceptance of the Japanese mediation in the border dispute by Thailand and Indochina as "a most unfortunate happening." He believed that the Japanese would use the opportunity to weaken both countries and provide opportunities for further penetration.

<sup>87</sup>As far as Indochina was concerned, the Japanese had already occupied certain French airports in Northern Indochina and had also been given the privilege of using Indochina territory for the passage of Japanese troops by virtue of the Indo-China France agreement of 5 September 1940, See, fn. 30.

<sup>88</sup>*British Defence arrangements for Far East*, June 1940, F3560/61

<sup>89</sup>The United States Government, for example, had imposed an embargo upon Japan for all grades of iron and steel scrap in October 1940 as result of Japan's actions towards China. See L. Woodward, *The British Foreign Policy ...*, p. 111.

<sup>90</sup>Japan found it difficult to obtain in, iron rubber and oil from either Malaya or Indochina because of the restrictions imposed on the export of these materials.

<sup>91</sup>The British Embassy to Department of State, 3 June 1941, FRUS.

<sup>92</sup>The British Embassy to Department of State, 8 April, 1941, FRUS.

<sup>93</sup>For a brief background see, "Introduction".

<sup>94</sup>The United States Government was still undecided about her commitments to help Britain in resisting the Japanese in East Asia, or Southeast Asia in particular. Through negotiations were taking place between the two countries, the United States felt that the defence of Europe and Britain, in particular against the German threat, was more important. For further details see, Herbert Feis, *The Road to Pearl Harbour*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey 1950.



<sup>95</sup>Minute by Gage on Crosby to FO, 9 February 1941, F710.

<sup>96</sup>Crosby to FO, 28 February 1941, F1451.

<sup>97</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup>*Thai Rasdr* was described by Crosby as having "always been pro-Japanese and unfriendly to ourselves." In one of its editions, *Thai Rasdr* asserted: "There can be no architects of the new order other than Japan and Thailand." *Thai Rasdr*, 29 December 1940 and 3 January 1941, attached to Crosby to FO, 2 January 1941, F597.

<sup>99</sup>Crosby to FO, 7 April, F2713.

<sup>100</sup>Crosby to FO, 9 February 1941. F710. This report was based on covert information gathered by the secret agents sent by the Government of Burma to Thailand to investigate the matter.

<sup>101</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup>Craigie to FO, 11 March 1941, F1867.

<sup>103</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup>Crosby to FO, 9 February 1941, F710.

<sup>105</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>106</sup>War Office to Commander-in-Chief Far East, 14 May 1941, F4005.

<sup>107</sup>Herbert Feis, *The Road to Pearl Harbour ...*, p. 125.

<sup>108</sup>*Ibid.* From January to March 1941, the British and American Government were still in the process of negotiating a plan and program towards achieving military cooperation in East Asia. However, no conclusion was ever reached. As Feis put it, "The American Government had refused to obligate itself to enter the war or even to specify the circumstances in which it might do so." *Herbert Feis The Road to Pearl Harbour*, p. 167.

<sup>109</sup>FO to Halifax (Washington), 9 April 1941, F3540; the British Embassy to the Department of State, 8 April 1941, FRUS; British Minister to the Assistant Secretary of State, 4 June 1941, FRUS. The British Government was taking the opportunity of Thailand's desperation for oil, as a result of her dispute with oil companies, to use oil as a weapon to induce Thailand to sell tin and rubber in the open market.

<sup>110</sup>James V. Martin. "Thai-Americans Relations in World War II", *The Journal of Asia Studies*, vol. 22, 1963, p. 457.

<sup>111</sup>Both the British and the United States Governments froze Japanese assets in their respective countries in response to Japan's action in Indochina.

<sup>112</sup>For a brief survey of Anglo-American-Thai economic assistance, see, Martin, "Thai-Americans Relations in World War II", pp. 457-458.

<sup>113</sup>The Minister in Thailand to the Secretary of State, 16 July 1941, FRUS.

<sup>114</sup>The Thai Government's Official communique entitled, "Act to preserve to duties of the Thai people in time of hostilities", B.E. 2482, enclosed in Crosby to FO, 22 September 1941, F10720.

<sup>115</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>116</sup>The Minister in Bangkok to the Secretary of State, 15 October, 1941, FRUS.

<sup>117</sup>Minute by Ashley Clarke on Crosby on FO, 17 November 1941, F12453.

<sup>118</sup>The Minister in Bangkok to the Secretary of State Government, on the other hand, did not supply either planes or artillery to Thailand, as required. Hornbeck, Adviser on Political Relations of the State Department, argued that "it is better for the United States and Britain to strengthen themselves against Japan rather than distribute arms to others." Quoted in Memorandum by the Adviser on Political Relations (Hornbeck), 7 November 1941, FRUS.



<sup>119</sup>Crosby to FO, 22 November 1941, F12666.

<sup>120</sup>Crosby to FO, 20 November 1941, F12660.

<sup>121</sup>Minute by J.S.C. Bennett on FO to Crosby, 28 November 1941, F12666.

<sup>122</sup>Minute by Ashley Clark on FO to Crosby, 28 November 1941, F12666.

<sup>123</sup>Minute by Seymour, on FO to Crosby, 28 November 1941, F12666.

<sup>124</sup>FO to Crosby, 28 November 1941, F12666.

<sup>125</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>126</sup>Crosby to FO, 25 November, F12662.

<sup>127</sup>The aim of the Matador operation was to forestall a Japanese landing in the Kra Isthmus or to be a reply to a Japanese violation of any other part of Thailand. It was also aimed towards strengthening the defence of Northern Malaya, to deny the Japanese the use of the railway junction at Haayai which connected west and east Malaya, to safeguard the reinforcement route from India and, lastly, to secure rubber, tin and rice in the area. See, FO to Crosby, 5 December 1941, F13230 and War Office to Commander-in-Chief Far East, 5 December 1941, F13230. The information on the operation was, however, denied to the Thai Government. It was agreed that the Thai Government would only be informed after the issuance of a warning to Japan, i.e. after getting an approval from the United States Government. FO to Washington, 3 December 1941, F13440.

<sup>128</sup>FO to Craigie, 11 November 1941, F12359.

<sup>129</sup>Crosby to FO, 1 December 1941, F13164.

<sup>130</sup>FO to Crosby, 5 December 1941, F13230.

<sup>131</sup>Crosby to FO, 5 December 1941, F13279.

<sup>132</sup>FO to Crosby, 6 December 1941, F13279. The Foreign Office, in fact, had drafted the proposed statement to be delivered to Japan.

<sup>133</sup>FO to Halifax, 6 December 1941, F13303.

<sup>134</sup>FO to Crosby, 7 December 1941, F13329.

<sup>135</sup>After the outbreak of war, Britain had officially referred to Thailand as Siam. The British's objection at the word "Thailand" was due to its association with an irredentist programme. However, the United States continued to refer to the country as Thailand.

<sup>136</sup>Despite the Japanese-Siamese military alliance on 12 December 1941, Britain had refrained from declaring war against Siam. There were two main reasons for this attitude. Firstly, she believed that the majority of the Siamese people were anti-Japanese, if not pro-Ally, and were likely to become increasingly anti-Japanese as the Japanese proceed to respect the sovereignty of Siam". Secondly, she felt that a declaration of war might change that trend and would encourage the Siamese to collaborate with Japan.

<sup>137</sup>Foreign Office memorandum, 19 December 1944, F6089.

<sup>138</sup>In return for Siamese collaboration, the Japanese agreed to give Siam the Northern Malay States [Kelantan, Kedah, Terengganu and Perlis] and the Shan States [Keng Tung and Mongpan]. In accepting this promise and readily declaring war on Britain, Siam had violated the Non-Aggression Pact which had stipulated, in Article 5, the sovereignty and integrity of the British territories. Furthermore, the Anglo-Siamese agreement of 1909 had firmly stated that the Northern Malay States belonged to the British. See, Donald E. Nuchterlein, *Thailand and the Struggle for Southeast Asia*, Cornell University Press, New York, 1965, pp. 73-74.



<sup>139</sup>Foreign Office memorandum, 19 December 1944, F6089. Following Britain's example, India, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, but not Canada, declared war upon Siam.

<sup>140</sup>Martin, "*Thai-American Relations in World War II...*", p. 461.

<sup>141</sup>The Atlantic Charter was signed between Britain and the United States on 14 August 1941. Among other things, it stipulated the agreement between the two countries against seeking territorial aggrandizement and the desire to see no territorial changes without the expressed wish of the people concerned. See, Cordell Hull, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull*, pp. 975-976.

<sup>142</sup>Sir Josiah Crosby, "Observations on a Post-War Settlement in Southeast Asia," *International Affairs*, July 1944, p. 362.

<sup>143</sup>Crosby to Ashley Clarke, 9 January 1943, F222. Crosby had also advocated his proposals through various books and articles, among them: Sir Josiah Crosby, *Siam: the Crossroads ...*; *idem*. "Observations on a Post-War Settlement in Southeast Asia" *International Affairs*, July 1944; *idem*, "*The Failure of Constitutional Government in Siam...*", *The Asiatic Review*, October 1943.

<sup>144</sup>Crosby to Ashley Clarke, 9 January 1943, F222.

<sup>145</sup>For a detailed discussion on this aspect see, Crosby, "Observations on a Post-War Settlement ...", pp. 365-367.

<sup>146</sup>Crosby had discussed this aspect in his *Siam: The Crossroads*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>147</sup>See *Siam: The Crossroads*, Ch. XXVI.

<sup>148</sup>G.F. Hudson to Ashley Clarke, 2 February 1943, F696. Hudson was a member of the Royal Institute of International Affairs. He was requested by the Foreign Office to comment on Crosby's memorandum.

<sup>149</sup>Colonial Office to Foreign Office, 30 March 1943, F1732.

<sup>150</sup>Sir George Maxwell was a former Chief Secretary to the Government of the Federated Malay States.

<sup>151</sup>See fn. 7, p. 41.

<sup>152</sup>See minutes by T.E. Bromley on Colonial Office to Foreign Office, 16 June 1943, F3083, and Ashley Clarke to Monson (CO), 8 July 1943, F3083; Monson (CO) to Ashley Clarke, 7 October 1943, F5293.

<sup>153</sup>The "Free Siamese Movement" was formed in the United States of America by Seni Pramoj, the Siamese Minister in Washington, as soon as the Siamese Government under Pibul collaborated with the Japanese in declaring war against Britain and the United States, Seni Pramoj, who did not recognise the Pibul Government, refused to submit his Government's note of declaration to the State Department. Apart from Seni Pramoj's Free Siamese Movement, in Siam itself, Pridi Banamyong had established his own movement" see, Jayanta K. Raj, *Portraits of Thai Politics*, Orient Longman Ltd., New Delhi 1972, especially pp. 101-105, 149, 150 and 203. See also, Manich Jumsai: *History of Anglo-Thai Relations*, Chalermint Press, Bangkok 1970, pp. 263-272.

<sup>154</sup>Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs: "Proposed S.O.E. operations in Siam". 9 September 1944, F4285.

<sup>155</sup>Sheridan to Bennett, 20 November 1944, F5473.

<sup>156</sup>British Embassy to the Deputy Director of Far Eastern Affairs, 26 February 1944, *FRUS*.

<sup>157</sup>Washington to FO, 22 March 1944, F1486.



<sup>158</sup>The two Allied countries, Britain and the United States, had in fact agreed to maintain a unity of effort, not only to establish a new international order in the post-war period as a greed upon in the Atlantic Charter (signed in August 1941), but also towards defeating the Japanese in East Asia as stipulated in the Cairo Declaration (signed in mid-1943). As far as Siam was concerned, the Anglo-American policies were supposed to be based on the stipulated agreements.

<sup>159</sup>Hull, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull* ..., p. 1588.

<sup>160</sup>Darling mentioned that these Free Siamese Volunteers were trained under the direction of Dr. Kenneth London and the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). See, Frank C. Darling, "British and American Influence in Post-War Thailand," *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, vol. 4, 1936, p. 91.

<sup>161</sup>Washington to FO, 18 March 1944, F1327. Henry Wallace, the Vice-President of the United States, at a banquet in Chungking on 22 June 1944, declared that the United States favoured the restoration of the national sovereignty of Siam. Extract from Daily Express, 22 June 1944, F3010.

<sup>162</sup>Darling mentioned that there was a proposal submitted to the British Government that Siam be included in a Southeast Asia Federation which would then gradually merge with the British Commonwealth. See, Darling, Thailand and the United States, p. 41.

<sup>163</sup>Kenneth P. London, "Thailand", *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, March, 1943.

<sup>164</sup>Memorandum from Secretary of Foreign Affairs to War Cabinet, 20 March 1943, F1399. On behalf of the Foreign Office, Anthony Eden informed the War cabinet of his agreement to revise the original draft on the lines of the American declaration.

<sup>165</sup>Extract from War Cabinet Conclusion: 89(44) 11 dated 10 July 1944, F3366.

<sup>166</sup>Herbert A. Fine, "The Liquidation of World War II in Thailand," *Pacific Historical Review*, February 1965, p. 67.

<sup>167</sup>Raj, *Portraits of Thai Politics*, pp. 149-160; See also, Manich Jumsai, *History of Anglo-Thai Relations* pp. 263-272.

<sup>168</sup>Fine, "The Liquidation of World War II in Thailand...", p. 67.

<sup>169</sup>Martin, "Thai-American Relations in World War II ...," p. 465.

<sup>170</sup>Winant to Eden, 18 August 1944, F5550.

<sup>171</sup>Eden to Winant, 4 September 1944, F5550.

<sup>172</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>173</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>174</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>175</sup>Winant to Eden, 21 October 1944, F5550.

<sup>176</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>177</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>178</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>179</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>180</sup>Siam: Summary of Regent's broadcast, 16 August 1945, F5521.

<sup>181</sup>Ernest Bevin, in his speech in the House of commons on 20 August 1945, spelt out that the British policy towards Siam would depend on the way in which the Siamese met the requirements of the British troops that were about to enter their country, the extent loss and damage caused to British and Allied interest and the extent of their contribution to the restoration of peace, good order and economic



rehabilitaiton in Southeast Asia. Dominion Office to Dominion Governments, 29 August 1945, F5647/40. It should be noted that Byrnes, United States Secretary of State, had declared otherwise. He said: "The American Government has always believed that the declaration of war did not represent the will of the Thai people." He concluded that the American Government regarded Thailand not as an enemy but as a country to be liberated from the enemy, and that she looked "to the resumption by Thailand of its formed place in the community of nations as a free, sovereign, and independent country." See, Nuechterlein, *Thailand and the Struggle for Southeast Asia*, p. 86.

<sup>182</sup>The British Embassy to the Department of State, 20 August, 1945, FRUS.

<sup>183</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>184</sup>Washington to FO, 1 September 1945, F6195.

<sup>185</sup>Sumarily, the United States' policy in the Far East, as outlined by the State Department, was as follows:

1. to establish a political and economic freedom;
2. the elemination of these conditions favouring foreign nationals in the economic sphere;
3. co-operation between the new emergent countries;
4. to remove the Far East as a source of colonial rivalrt and conflict;
5. the maintenance of unity in the United Nations in meeting the problem.

For details, see, the State Department's paper, entitled, "an estimate of conditions in Asia and the Pacific at the close of the war in the Far East and the objectives and Policies of the United States' economic policy towards Siam was concerned, it was based on two principles, namely:

1. to favour the restoration of the freedom, independence and sovereignty of Thailand;
2. to support the appropriate efforts of the Thai Government to make their own decisions with respect to entry into agreements and other commitments on economic matters of international importance.

For details, see, "Memorandum: United States's economic policy towards Thailand," 18 August 1945, FRUS.

<sup>186</sup>Washington to FO, 1 September 1945, F6195.

<sup>187</sup>Clause D5 reads: "Undertake to participate in any general international arrangement regarding tn the rubber."

<sup>188</sup>Clause D2 reads: "Undertake to negotiate as soon as practicable a new Treaty of Commerce and Navigation and a Consular and Establishment Convention based on the principles in the following paragraph." Clause D3 reads: "Pending the conclusion of the Treaty and Convention referred to in paragraphy 2 above, undertake to observe the provisions of the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation signed at Bangkok on the 23rd November, 1937, and in addition, not to enforce measures excluding British commercial or industrial interests or British professional men from participation in Siamese economy and trade (subject to such exceptions, if any, as may be agreed between His Majesty's Government and the Siamese Government or requiring them to maintain stocks or resevesin excess of normal commercial, shipping, industrial or business practice, provided that if the Treaty or Convention have not been concluded within a period of three years this undertaking shall lapse unless it is prolonged by agreement."

<sup>189</sup>*Baht* is Thailand's national currency.



<sup>190</sup>According to Blanchard: "Thailand was required to supply the Japanese with baht in exchange for yen credits. Under this system enormous 1942". See Wendell Blanchard, *Thailand Human Relations Area Files Press*, New Haven, 1958, p. 267.

<sup>191</sup>Martin argued that Lord Mountbatten had censured the Siamese from staging an uprising against the Japanese in Siam, due to the British design to establish her sovereignty on that country. It should be noted that Siam was brought under the British SEAC in early 1945 from the Chinese theatre of war. See, Martin, "Thai-American Relations in World War II ...". p. 463 and p. 465.

<sup>192</sup>FO to Washington, 5 September 1945, F6195.

<sup>193</sup>See, fn. 181.

<sup>194</sup>The Foreign Office made use of Seni Pramoj's promise to offer the allies 1,500,000 tons of rice as its argument against the United States' opposition. Seni Pramoj made this promise in his talks with Bennett at the Foreign Office on 3 September 1945, Bennett minuted that Seni Pramoj remarked: "That there was a stockpile in Siam at present of about one-and-a half million tons." F.O. minutes, 3 September, 1945, F6285. See also, Jayanta K.Raj, *Portraits of Thai politics* p. 169. Seni Pramoj said: "In fact, I had informally agreed to this supply of rice even before I returned to Thailand."

<sup>195</sup>Supreme Allied Command, Southeast Asia (SACSEA) to FO, 5 September 1945, F6646.

<sup>196</sup>Dening (SEASC) to FO, 24 September 1945, F7439; FO to Washington, 25 September 1945, F7439.

<sup>197</sup>FO to Dening, 26 September 1945, F7439.

<sup>198</sup>Dening to FO, 9 September 1945, F6989.

<sup>199</sup>For the brief role played by Seni Pramoj in manipulating the Anglo-American differences, See, Raj, *Portraits of Thai politics*, pp. 160-170. See also, Manich Jumsai, *History of Anglo-Thai Relations*, pp. 276-282.

<sup>200</sup>Washington to FO, 26 September 1945, F7505.

<sup>201</sup>C1 reads: "Recognise that the course of events in the war with Japan demonstrates the importance of Siam to the Defence of Burma, Malaya and Indochina and the security of the Indian Ocean and South West Pacific areas."

<sup>202</sup>FO to Washington, 5 October 1945, F7504.

<sup>203</sup>The new clause was drafted as follows: "Agree to collaborate fully in all international security arrangements approved by the United Nations Organisation and its Security Council which might be pertinent to Siam and especially in international security arrangements as may relate to the countries or areas specified in the preceding clause."

<sup>204</sup>Washington to FO, 25 October 1945, F9034.

<sup>205</sup>British Embassy to Department of State, 12 November 1945, *FRUS*.

<sup>206</sup>Department of State to British Embassy, 29 November 1945, *FRUS*.

<sup>207</sup>British Embassy to the Department of State, 10 December 1945, *FRUS*.

<sup>208</sup>Acting Secretary of State to Winant, 13 December 1945, *FRUS*.

<sup>209</sup>Acting Secretary of State to Winant, 17 December 1945, *FRUS*.

<sup>210</sup>For details see, Raj, *Portraits of Thai Politics* ... pp. 167-168.

<sup>211</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 169. Also mentioned in Neuchterlein, *Thailand and the Struggle for Southeast Asia*, p. 87.

<sup>212</sup>Darling, *Thailand and the United States* p. 43; Raj, *Portraits of Thai Politics* ... p. 167.



<sup>213</sup>Dominion Office to Dominion Governments, 20 December 1945, F9926.

<sup>214</sup>Dominion Office to Dominion Government, 21 December 1945, F9926.

<sup>215</sup>See, Nuechterlein, *Thailand and the Struggle for Southeast Asia* p. 308.

<sup>216</sup>Hull, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull* ... p. 1601.

<sup>217</sup>*New York Times*, quoted from Darling, *Thailand and the United States* ... p.