

Copy sent to Mr. Casey.

Thailand. 76/155/41

Copy sent to P.O. in P.L. No. 415

April 23.

AIDE - MEMOIRE

135
136

His Majesty's Government are anxiously awaiting the comments of the United States Government on the two aides-memoire regards ^{the} situation in Thailand, which were communicated to the Secretary of State by His Majesty's Ambassador on April 8th. In the meantime in view of the fact that vital British strategic interests are involved, His Majesty's Government feel bound to do their utmost to retrieve the present highly unsatisfactory position in Thailand. They would therefore propose to proceed in three stages as follows:-

(A) Sir J. Crosby, on his return to Bangkok at the end of April, will be instructed to have a very frank and comprehensive talk with the Thai Prime Minister. He would explain that His Majesty's Government were most dissatisfied with the present position; that they felt that the Thais had placed themselves in the hands of the Japanese as the result of the mediation settlement and that nothing could be said to the Thai Prime Minister without the risk of its being passed on at once to the Japanese. His Majesty's Minister would go on to say that there were persistent reports of Japanese infiltration into Thailand, that there was a common rumour that this was in pursuance of plans against Burma, and that there was ample evidence of commodities being diverted, as a result of measures taken by the Thai Government, from their normal channels for the benefit of the Axis powers. Sir J. Crosby would point out that at the same time, the Prime Minister of Thailand had asked for the assistance of His Majesty's Government and explain that it could hardly be expected that such assistance would be forthcoming without satisfactory assurances that Thailand would not lend

herself /

herself to any measures detrimental to the security of the British possessions, that a preferential position in Thailand would not be given to the Japanese, and that Thai commodities would not be diverted for the use of the Axis powers. His Majesty's Minister would make it clear that if the Prime Minister can demonstrate to the satisfaction of His Majesty's Government that these things will not happen, His Majesty's Government will do their best to help him. Sir J. Crosby would however emphasise that in the contrary event His Majesty's Government would be obliged to look to their own interests and defences.

(B) If the Thai Prime Minister's response is unsatisfactory, His Majesty's Government would start a propaganda campaign for two or three weeks emphasising Japanese infiltration into Thailand. They would also initiate progressive measures of economic pressure.

(C) When this campaign had been in progress for a little time His Majesty's Government would make certain changes in the disposition of the R. A. F. in the Far East. A propaganda campaign might be necessary even if the Prime Minister's response were satisfactory, in order to create for him in his own country the support required to resist further Japanese infiltration. In that case the movements of British Air squadrons could be represented to him as further support for Thailand.

2. The possibility of success would be greatly increased if His Majesty's Government could count on the cooperation of the United States. His Majesty's Government cannot provide arms, their financial proposals are dependent, at least so far as the supply of dollars is concerned, on

States participation, and they are thus left with oil as their only important inducement to offer the Thais. Their own means of economic pressure can of course be exerted independently of the United States, and any strategic moves would be the responsibility of His Majesty's Government. But if the United States Government were to associate themselves with the British approach to the Thai Prime Minister the effectiveness of this approach would be very greatly increased.

3. His Majesty's Government are at present hard pressed; they do not regard the Thai situation as having passed beyond repair, and they earnestly invite the cooperation of the United States Government in assisting to retrieve it, and at the same time in frustrating what would inevitably lead to a more complete encirclement of China.

His Majesty's Government consider it important that representations in the sense suggested above should be made as soon as possible after the return of His Majesty's Minister to Bangkok at the end of this month.

BRITISH EMBASSY,

WASHINGTON, D.C.

21st April, 1941