

SECTION VII

SIAM AT THE END OF THE
NINETEENTH CENTURY



Map of the Indochina-Siam Region showing the claimed "zone of French influence" at the turn of the century.

SIAM UNDER SIEGE (1893–1902)

Modern Thailand's Decisive Decade, from the "Paknam Incident" to the First Flowering of the "Chakri Reformation"

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On 13 July 1893, just one day short of the annual French commemoration of Bastille Day, the commander of a small flotilla of French warships ignored Siam's urgent entreaties—and his own government's prior promises—to force the passage of the Menam Chao Phraya at its mouth, off Paknam, and proceeded up the river, under fire, to Bangkok. Thus began what was without question one of the most critical and dangerous decades in Siam's more than seven hundred year-long struggle to maintain her national integrity.

With this action *Commandant* Bory crushed beneath his gunboats' bows much of the substance of Siam's pretension to sovereignty and raised to the point of high crisis the question of whether Siam would be able to retain some significant measure of her independence, or would disappear ignominiously into the colonial empire of one or more aggrandizing European powers. For approximately a decade thereafter, the possibility loomed that the ancient Siamese state would be reduced to the impotence of a French or British protectorate, or worse, be deprived of her national coherence entirely through partition between them.

Despite its crucial importance, this era has remained far from completely understood. Fortunately, a number of important, if fragmentary, studies taken together permit a significantly enhanced comprehension of the decisive events of this period to emerge. The purpose of this paper is to bring together and expand upon a number of salient elements from these studies. It is my hope thereby to illuminate more effectively that crucial ten-year period which spanned the build-up of tension between Siam and France, culminating in the so-called "Paknam Incident" of mid-July, 1893, and the uniquely successful, even extraordinary in otherwise colonized Southeast Asia, preservation of Siamese sovereignty, which had become apparent within the first few years of this century.

The basic outlines for the study of this period were set down

in the pioneering work of Pensri Duke, *Les Relations entre la France et la Thaïlande au XIXe siècle d'après les Archives des Affaires Étrangères* (1962), and have been added to by a number of other scholars subsequently, including Klein (1968), Manich (1970) and Chandran (1972, 1977). But it was only during the late 1980s and early 1990s that a number of essential, but previously neglected, aspects have been adduced to render our comprehension anything like complete; and the roles of a number of unquestionably important figures are now less obscure.

One of the most significant actors in this drama, the Belgian General Adviser to the Government of Siam, Gustave Rolin-Jaequemyns, known in Siam by his title, Chao Phraya Aphai Raja, had been especially neglected until the publication at the end of 1992, on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of his arrival in Siam, of a work on his key role in this whole affair (Tips 1992). And it is to his role in the crucial events of this decade, which almost exactly parallels the period of his active involvement in the affairs of the Siamese Government (1892–1902), that this paper will make particular reference.

To a significant extent the 1992 study on Rolin-Jaequemyns, by fellow Belgian Dr. Walter E. J. Tips, both complements and expands a line of inquiry initiated in 1984 by British diplomatic and foreign relations historian Nigel Brailey in his paper "Robert Morant, R.S.112 and Britain's Siam Policy" and extended by him in his 1989 book, *Two Views of Siam on the Eve of the Chakri Reformation*. Brailey's own study has focused on the figure of Robert (later Sir Robert) L. Morant, the British educational adviser, palace intimate, and through 1893 personal tutor to the Crown Prince of Siam. Much to Morant's regret, he soon found that with the appointment of Rolin-Jaequemyns toward the end of 1892, his own position of influence at court rapidly diminished. It is perhaps for that reason, among others, that Morant appears to have taken a particular dislike to Rolin-Jaequemyns. He subsequently established himself as a major detractor of the

Belgian General Adviser and took considerable pains to denigrate the significance of his achievements.

Brailey, in his two studies, while presenting Morant's highly critical appraisal of Rolin-Jaequemyns, himself refrains from echoing Morant's evaluation. If anything, Brailey evidences a significant measure of sympathy and esteem for the actions of the Belgian. But Brailey, who appears not to have had at his disposal the requisite personal and archival materials necessary for any substantive inquiry into the actual achievements of Rolin-Jaequemyns, had to forego making any definitive judgment regarding him. That has been left to Tips, who has carried out substantial and wide-ranging research in a number of countries and a variety of languages, among them English, French, German and Thai, into the details of the General Adviser's involvement in Thai policy-making between 1892, when he arrived in Siam, and 1902, the year of his death.

It is Tips's contention that far from being the ignorant dupe or unwitting pawn of the Thai royal family as Morant paints him, Rolin-Jaequemyns was in fact the seminal force behind what has been called the "Chakri Reformation." This term denotes the series of far-reaching reforms which, from about 1894, rapidly transformed Siam from an antiquated, inefficient, and, to the Western mind, wholly unacceptable jumble of traditional institutions and usages, into the modernized, reasonable and rationalized state and society that emerged in the twentieth century.

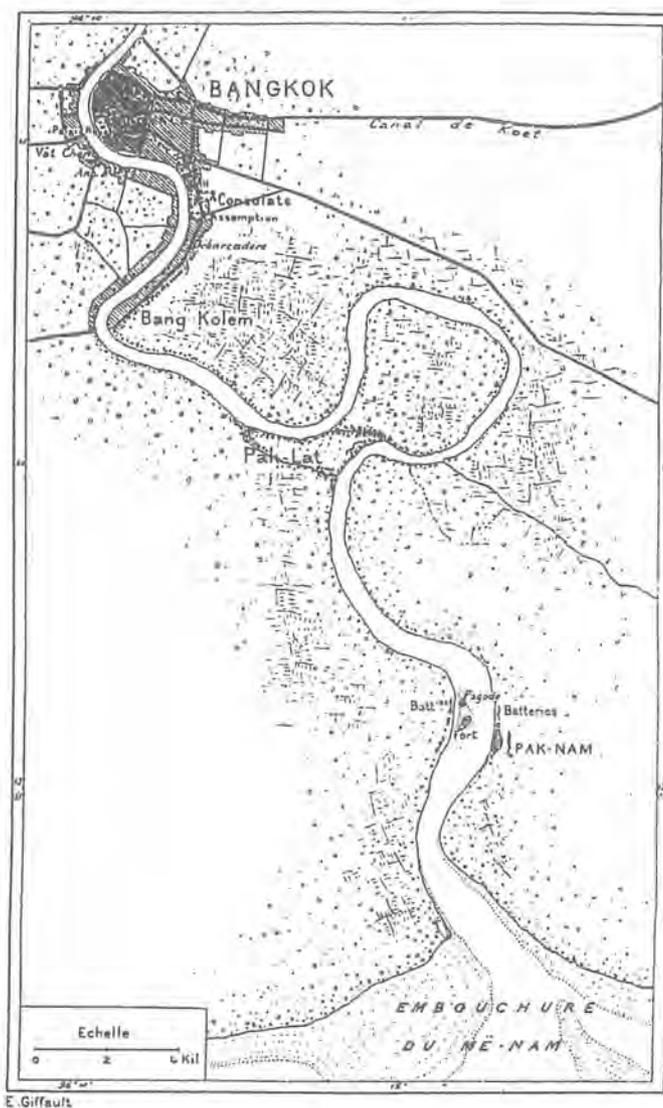
But the antipathy between these two individuals, Morant and Rolin-Jaequemyns, is instructive on more than merely the personal level; for it reflects additionally the contrast of two radically different policies regarding Siam with which these individuals came to be associated. Whereas Rolin-Jaequemyns adhered throughout to a policy of implementing from within a program of thoroughgoing institutional reforms as the vehicle for Siam to best retain control over its own affairs, Morant did all that he could to persuade the government of Great Britain to establish a protectorate over Siam, as the only reasonable alternative for all concerned. The touchstone for his call to action was the dramatic series of events in mid-July 1893 which have become known as the "Paknam Incident."

THE "PAKNAM INCIDENT"

In 1893 the French authorities were chiding over Thai resistance to the effecting of French dominion over the left bank of the Mekong, in what is today Laos but had at that time been for more than a century under Siamese control. Having determined to dramatize their impatience and indignation with a naval demonstration, the French sent two Saigon-based gunboats steaming up, not the Mekong, but the Menam Chao Phraya itself, under the fire of the Siamese batteries at the mouth of the river. In the course of this action, several individuals were killed. The French gunboats then proceeded up the river to Bangkok, where they moored off the French Consulate, in position to menace the capital itself.

Though Prince Devawongse, the Foreign Minister, bravely tried to put the best possible face on these events by personally congratulating the French officers on their courage upon their safe arrival at the capital (Wyatt 1984, 203)—surely a most remarkable example of the famed Thai "flexibility"—the actual situation of the capital and the kingdom at that time appeared dire. The French soon instituted a blockade of the river to bring the Siamese to terms and moved to increase their demands when the Siamese hesitated to accept them.

The original theater of French actions had been the valley of the Mekong, long a zone of contention between Siam and a rapidly expanding French Indochina. However, it is clear that radical elements within the French *parti colonial*, with significant influence within the French government, were determined to seize not the branch alone, but the tree itself, the entire kingdom of Siam, as a French protectorate (Tuck 1984, 8-9; also Brailey



Map of the Menam Chao Phraya between Bangkok and Paknam, showing the location of the Siamese batteries.

(Source: L. Fournereau, 1894, Bangkok: *Le Tour du Monde* 68 (1), 3)

1984, 14, and Pensri 1962, 152). Had they succeeded at this time they would have realized a scheme not only of their own creation. For although such plans had long lain dormant while France embroiled herself in the tumultuous affairs of Europe and other regions of the world which had a higher priority than Siam, French designs on Siam had first been articulated over two centuries before, in the era of Phaulkon and Louis XIV.

It also seems quite apparent that, despite the conviction of the vast majority of British observers in Bangkok that nothing short of a British protectorate would forestall a French take-over—with such individuals including, in addition to a variety of unofficial commentators, the official British representative in Siam during much of this period, J. G. Scott—the British government in London was at no time willing seriously to countenance a strong British action. Brailey has, I believe, correctly assessed the point of departure for Morant's ill-advised, and ultimately abortive, essay into foreign-policy meddling. He points to the apparent familiarity expressed in a July 1893 article written by Morant's friend and associate, Henry Norman, expressing ideas that are clearly Morant's, with British Foreign Minister Lord Rosebery's famous 1 March 1893 "Pegging Out" speech in the House of Commons (Brailey 1984, 7).

In that speech Rosebery explained the need for Britain to give an indication of areas of the world upon which it had some sort of future designs, but with which it had yet not become actively involved. In tones which seem so alien today, but would be echoed shortly by British poet Rudyard Kipling in his famous "White Man's Burden" poem of 1899, where he referred to "lesser breeds"—a reference presumably not to "non-Europeans," but to "non-Anglo-Saxons"—Rosebery emphasized the importance of affording as many areas in the world as possible the option of an Anglo-Saxon, as opposed to a non-Anglo-Saxon, heritage. What Morant and Norman either did not know, or determined to ignore, was that Lord Rosebery, although he was known as a Francophobe, had no intention, either at that time or any time subsequently, to apply that policy in Asia. As Brailey indicates, the sort of colonialism that Rosebery was chiefly interested in was of the "white colonization" variety; and his chief focus of attention at the moment lay far to the West in East Africa, in particular Uganda (Brailey 1984, 3–4).

As Patrick Tuck in his "The French *Parti Colonial* and the Threat to Thai Independence, 1890–1904" makes clear, at almost the precise same time as his speech, Lord Rosebery was himself giving the go-ahead to the French authorities to begin "a move on the middle and lower Mekong" (Tuck 1984, 7). This concession almost immediately preceded a "police action" on the left bank of the Mekong to drive out Siamese military and governmental posts and bring the area effectively under French control. This constituted the first crucial step in the series that culminated in the Paknam Crisis of that July. Tips quotes J. D. G. Campbell, a British official in Siam, to the same effect: "He [Lord Rosebery] made for the first time the startling statement that his Government did not admit that any part of Siam lay on the left bank of the Mekong, but regarded the country lying on that side as belonging to Annam" (Campbell 1902, 295, cited in Tips 1992, 163). In view of such deliberate authorization by Rosebery, it

should not be surprising that, faced with strong French action in July 1893, Britain was slow to react.

In effect, Morant's direct antagonist and mirror opposite in this drama was less Rolin-Jaequemyns than his French opposite number in the *parti colonial*, French Colonial Undersecretary Théophile Delcassé. Delcassé, by lending his journalistic talents and influence to the cause of an assertive program by France in Siam, helped to set off the whole series of uncontrollable events in 1893 that destabilized the long and carefully constructed balance until then maintained by both Britain's Foreign Office and France's own Quai d'Orsay. It was not long before these two nations, soon to be locked in the embrace of the Entente Cordiale, arrived at the preposterous point where many in either country could actually envision the ultimate outcome of this Siamese crisis to be an Anglo-French war. By contrast, Rolin-Jaequemyns above all sought to temporize and delay the actions of the colonial powers while Siam strengthened itself, hoping that with time the tide of colonialism would turn, then recede, leaving Siam intact.

Looking back from the perspective of a century in which England and France stood side-by-side in what now seem to have been inevitable "German Wars," it is somewhat difficult to view these events of the late nineteenth century as they seemed then. Whereas Germany must have appeared to England as merely a small cloud on the horizon, France was the persistent opponent of nearly a millennium. During all those centuries, the virtually unremitting enmity of these two powers had been broken significantly only once, when they joined hands in the Crimea in 1854–55 in the face of the perceived common threat of Imperial Russia. But that temporary alliance was by no means seen as having established any durable bond between them. In fact, by 1894 France had definitively reversed her affiliation and had alarmed Britain by joining a military alliance with that former enemy, Russia. Indeed, as Tuck makes apparent (1984, 7), the growing cooperation between France and Russia, which long preceded the signing of the formal alliance of 1894, was an important factor in building up French confidence for the assertive moves in Indochina begun by France as early as 1891, and even more so regarding those of 1893 and thereafter.

Something of the tension of this era, and the flavor of how these two powers perceived each other, may be gleaned from a work of popular fiction published in this period. In Britain on the heels of the signing of the Franco-Russian accord of 1894, there appeared the would-be prophetic, *The Great War in England in 1897*, by William Le Queux (1894). It offered a luridly illustrated projection of French and Russian naval bombardments of British coastal towns, while Russian troops marched in triumph through Manchester, Birmingham, and other Midland cities, and massed batteries of French field artillery unlimbered in London's suburbs and directed their fire on Ludgate Hill and the Strand. In a manner distinctly similar to that offered by H. G. Wells in his roughly contemporary *The War of the Worlds* (1898), the author envisioned Britain as ultimately victorious, but by a hair's breadth. Brailey notes that although Lord Rosebery did as much as he could to downplay at the time the seriousness of the Anglo-French contretemps, he himself subsequently

implied "having risked European war over Siam in 1893" (Brailey 1984, 18).

In clear contrast to Brailey, who appears substantially to credit Morant's accusation of British culpable inaction in the face of French force at Paknam, Tuck (1984, 9) argues strongly for the efficacy of British diplomacy in Paris in the immediate aftermath of these events. He sees the result as the successful diffusion of the crisis, the preservation of Siam's integrity, and in fact the actual reduction of French demands, which at one point in July had been raised to include Battambang and Angkor.

Tuck makes clear that the actions by France on the Chao Phraya River in mid-1893 were those of a government not fully in control of its own house, but temporarily highjacked by a maverick minority element, the *parti colonial*. He clearly pictures an instance of "the tail that wags the dog" in regard to the *parti colonial's* manipulation of the government in the face of a reluctant Quai d'Orsay. That government found itself forced temporarily by popular clamor to do the *parti's* bidding, in order to remain in power itself.

In Tuck's view the Gallic tsunami which inundated Siam in mid-1893 saw its genesis not in the Indochina region, or indeed anywhere in Southeast Asia, but thousands of miles across the Indian Ocean and up the Red Sea, in Egypt. There in early 1893 Britain had opted to strengthen a local regime which had earlier come under its protection. It was this unilateral action, taken with little or no consideration of French desires in the eastern Mediterranean—nearly France's own backyard—that had so enraged *parti colonial* politicians. It soon enabled the *parti*, on the back of intense national resentment over Britain's high-handedness, to catapult itself into what would become, in the case of Siam, a determining role in the Chamber of Deputies, and subsequently in the Cabinet (Tuck 1984, 8). This whole scenario was, of course, contingent upon the chronic instability of French parliamentary politics and the usual insecurity of the party in power.

On the basis of this grievance in Egypt, the Siam activists within the *parti colonial*, led by Delcassé and including both Jean Louis and François Deloncle, Charles Le Myre de Vilers, and Paul Doumer, were able to transfer the debt incurred in Cairo to Bangkok, where they insisted on repayment in the form of Siamese compensation. A valley for a valley, the Mekong for the Nile. And Rosebery, seeking to mollify France closer to home, and astride the key lifeline to India via the Suez Canal, agreed to pay, within limits. But that was the problem. Once engaged in territorial seizures, the *parti colonial's* Siam activists were hard to satisfy; and the demand for the Mekong, once agreed upon, rapidly escalated into Delcassé's insistence on a protectorate over the entire Kingdom. To this, however, Britain, while unlikely to go to war over the issue, was definitely not agreeable.

But, and this is the central premise of Tuck's thesis, the Quai d'Orsay in this period, under Jules Develle, had never sought to enforce radical claims in Siam, and certainly not against active British opposition. It had, Tuck claims, from the beginning and throughout, sought a policy of accommodation with Britain which it saw as absolutely vital for the security of its far more

important European involvements. Tuck argues that the unexpectedly strong position taken by Britain's ambassador in Paris, Lord Dufferin, to the *parti colonial*-sponsored increased demands against Siam in the wake of Paknam, gave the Quai d'Orsay precisely what it wanted: a means of seizing the reins from Delcassé and his friends and getting back into the saddle of French foreign policy-making.

In Tuck's view this was the decisive first step towards ensuring that Siam would survive as a sovereign entity. But all was not yet safe because for several more years the tide of colonial sentiment in France remained strong and *parti colonial* wolves roamed the forests in search of another excuse again to seize control and move for annexation. But in Tuck's interpretation, in fairly clear contrast to that of Brailey, the events of 1893 themselves appear to have been crucial. In his view Siam was correct to accept the bitter pill of British advice to accept the onerous French demands and work from there, rather than undertake further, ultimately futile, resistance. Once this point of maximum danger had passed, once the *parti colonial* wave had crested and declined, as Britain's Foreign Office seems correctly to have judged it would, then Siam could, in conjunction with the recently appointed General Adviser, work to minimize French impositions. Rolin-Jaequemyns chose to do this diplomatically and through the modernization of Siam's institutions to obviate the need for foreign intrusion. He chose especially to concentrate on the efficient functioning of the justice system, whose flaws had invited foreign demands for extraterritoriality in Siam and elsewhere.

It is important to note that Morant at no point spoke for or seriously influenced British policy regarding Siam. His original appointment in 1889 was as an education adviser; and it was in that capacity that he came into temporary close association with Prince Damrong. Damrong was, until more pressing affairs demanded his transfer in April 1892, Education Minister (Brailey 1984, 4). As Brailey notes, Damrong, though not yet fully in his own, was even then clearly ascendant; and it was at this point of separation from Damrong, which coincided with the appointment of Rolin-Jaequemyns as General Adviser and the start of the latter's own close association with Damrong, that Morant's resentment and alienation appears to have begun. Morant was at the time fairly recently graduated from Oxford and, despite whatever gifts and usefulness he may have possessed with regard to this role in education, he held no official significance in the making of British policy in the region. It might be argued that through his temporary association with Prince Damrong, Morant developed a somewhat overblown, and ultimately unrealistic, sense of his own importance, both at the Court and in his role as a British representative in Siam.

As Brailey (1984, 7) points out, Morant's first efforts to influence British policy towards a more assertive role in Siam were made, even before the French charge up the Menam, in clandestine collaboration with the British Liberal Imperialist publicist and journalist, Henry Norman. Under Norman's name the two published a *Contemporary Review* article in July 1893, entitled "The Future of Siam." This was followed by a second, more excited article that November, on the heels of Siam's

alarming capitulation in October to what Morant clearly judged to have been highly excessive French demands, entitled "Urgency in Siam" (Brailey 1984, 7–8). By that capitulation Siam agreed not only to cession of the left bank of the Mekong, but in addition, in Brailey's words, "the demilitarization of a 25-kilometer strip the length of the Siamese West bank, a substantial monetary indemnity, and French occupation as a pro tem guarantee of the Treaty of Siam's second port, Chantaburi, on the Eastern Gulf coast" (1984, 4).

Unquestionably, French actions in this period were highly provocative and heavy-handed. But it would seem that Morant, in his subsequent insistence that British officials in charge in Bangkok were guilty of abetting French aggression through being ignorant and misinformed by the Siamese regarding what was going on (Brailey 1989, 109–111), was himself heavily unaware of the full ramifications of British policy in the region. This is not entirely surprising in view of Morant's position in the country as education adviser originally, but, in fact, from late 1892, as a result of Damrong's transfer and his replacement by a new Minister of Education, Chao Phraya Phatsakorawong (Phon Bunnag), even more narrowly circumscribed in his duties. From that point on he was limited to tutoring the Crown Prince, directing Palaceschools and compiling textbooks (Brailey, 1984, 6). Even this limited purview was lost when Morant, fearing his own imminent replacement and, as Brailey notes, in a "highly emotional state" (Brailey 1984, 8), went "on strike" in late 1893. At that point, Prince Damrong, his former sponsor, moved with Rolin-Jaequemyns to dismiss him. Whereupon even his highly touted personal contacts in the Palace would seem largely to have been lost, and his only hope for real future influence at the Court would seem to have been as a sort of *éminence grise* through the personal relationship he had developed over several years with the Crown Prince. Regrettably for Morant, the Crown Prince, Wachirunhit, himself died prematurely in 1895, ending Morant's last hope.

Despite Morant's acquaintance with a number of British foreign office officials in Bangkok, it is clear that he was not privy to the inside intricacies of British foreign policy, either in the immediate Indochinese area, in the larger Southeast Asian region, or more widely throughout the world. His attempts to sway that policy to a more assertive role in Siam by urgently pressing upon Whitehall an interpretation of events in Siam that was discovered, only just in time, to be unsubstantiated, contributed to a dangerous near confrontation with France in what one scholar (Chandran 1977, 113–116) has termed the "crisis of 4 July" (1894). Though the Foreign Office was able to correct its course in time, it would appear to have been sufficiently chastened by the experience to determine to have no further dealings with him. Morant's misdirected activism would appear to have been rooted, not only in an exaggerated view of what was occurring in Bangkok, but also in a lack of understanding of the larger context of British foreign policy worldwide, and of what that context implied for the specifics of British policy in Siam. If this interpretation is correct, the actual ignorance, alleged so loudly by Morant regarding British policy-makers in London and Bangkok, was in fact his own. Rather than exposing what

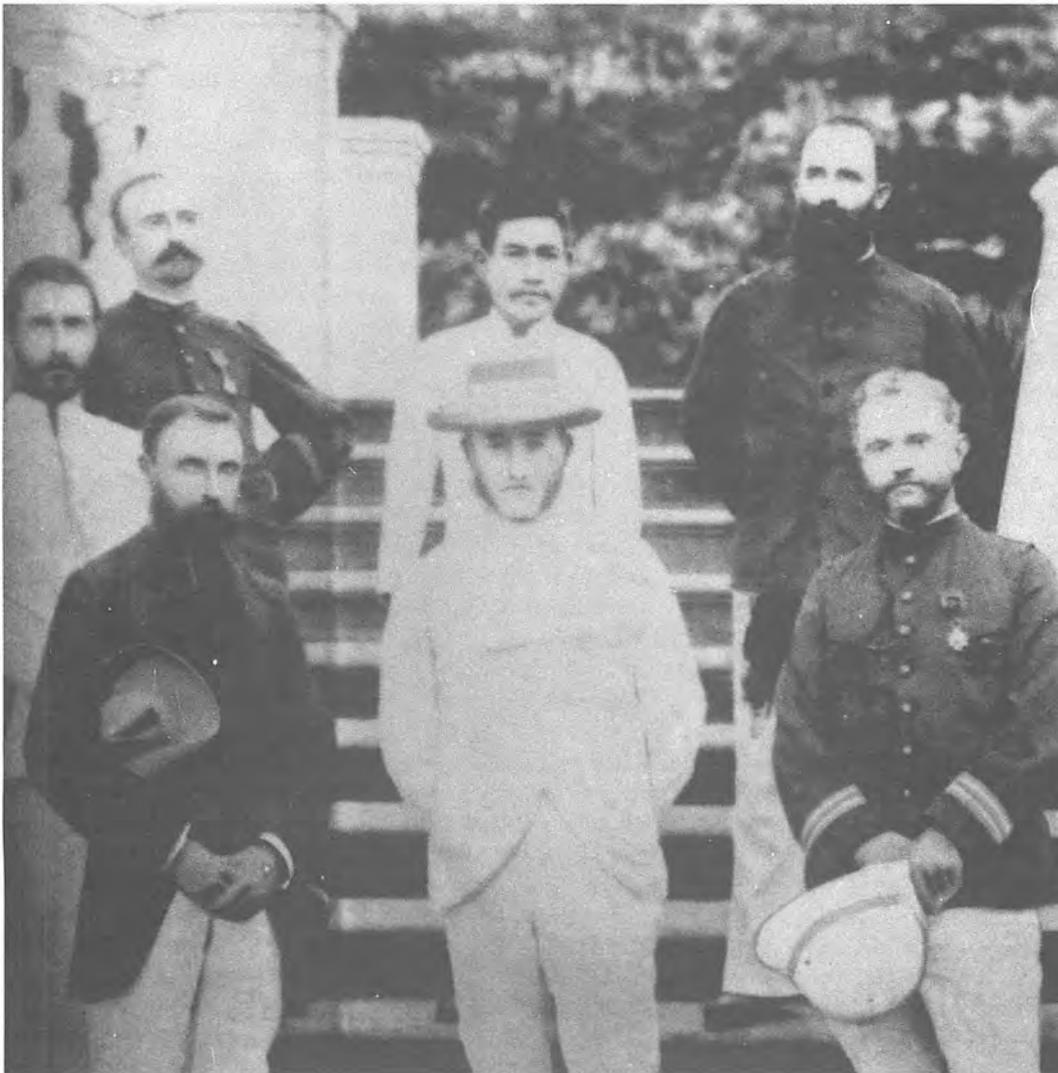
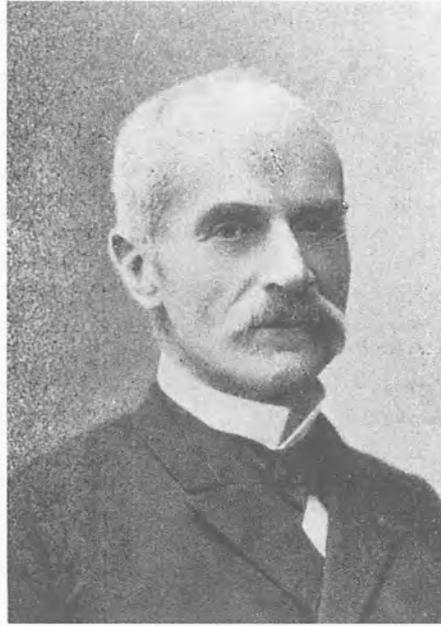
Brailey has described as British Foreign Minister Lord Kimberley's "lack of a policy at all" (Brailey 1984, 11), it might be alleged that what Morant exposed was merely his own lack of understanding of foreign policy matters that should surely have been left to his betters. In this view it might be argued that notwithstanding the light that Morant, through his memoranda, sheds upon certain details regarding the palace and events in this period, Brailey has to some extent possibly overestimated Morant's importance.

In the light of the continuing *parti colonial* danger, it is necessary now to turn to the figure of Rolin-Jaequemyns and his labors, in conjunction with Rama V's two most important ministers, Prince Devawongse, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Prince Damrong, Minister of the Interior. Together, they sought to thrust their fingers into the dike and stem the tide of French interference in what was left of Siam, now deprived of its East bank territories, and French interlopers active, both legally and illegally, in the twenty-five kilometer demilitarized strip on the right bank of the Mekong.

GUSTAVE ROLIN-JAEQUEMYNS

It is possibly significant that the origins of Rolin-Jaequemyns's recruitment go back to a time several years before the crisis with which we have been primarily concerned, to another serious period of tension between France and Siam: the era of the ultimately aborted "Mission Pavie." That mission, as Tuck notes, was launched by the *parti colonial's* leading "Siam expert," François Deloncle, in 1889, to preclude Quai d'Orsay attempts to stabilize France's relations with Britain in the Indochinese region through the neutralization of Siam (Tuck 1984, 6). It appears to have been Britain's slowness in responding to the Quai's overtures which first opened the *parti's* opportunity, since Tuck notes this silence was apparently interpreted in France to mean rejection. This in itself might have been a lesson to Britain in terms of the lost opportunity, though she subsequently declined several additional French proposals to largely the same effect, in February and May of 1892, and again in February of 1893 (Chandran 1977, 16, 21–22, 46). In all of these cases Britain's hesitation to enter into an agreement appears to have been based, at least partly, on reservations expressed by the Government of India and the India Office.

Led by that most energetic and assertive Siam-activist of this period, Auguste Pavie, the "Mission Pavie" appears to have had essentially the very same purpose as the "police action" of March to July 1893: to "confront the Thai East bank garrisons individually and ease them back to the West bank by a mixture of menace and persuasion" (Tuck 1984, 6). Only in this case, in contrast to 1893, the French appear to have tried to use more "persuasion" than "menace;" and on those grounds they were rebuffed with Siamese insistence in December 1889 that all negotiations be held in Bangkok. As Tuck notes, Pavie in consequence "contented himself with surveying and exploring the Mekong Valley and in 1891 reported the failure of the political objective of his mission" (Tuck 1984, 6). But this was far from



Top left:
French Indochina Governor-General, J.-M. A. de Lanessan, whose troops carried out the Trans-Mekong "police action" in March 1893.

Top center:
Charles Le Myre de Vilers, prominent *parti colonial* leader and French negotiator in 1893.

Top right:
Paul Doumer, *parti colonial* activist and Governor-General of Indochina, 1896-1902.

Left:
Auguste Pavie (hat under arm) and members of the Mission Pavie, whose actions in the Trans-Mekong Territories in 1889 initiated tensions in the region.



Above:
Gustave Rolin-Jaequemyns,
General Adviser to the Siamese Government.

Inset:
Robert J. Kirkpatrick, Belgian Legal Adviser to the Government of Siam,
who initiated negotiations for the Siam–Japan Treaty of 1898.
(Photos courtesy of Baron Edouard Rolin-Jaequemyns.)

being the end, as we have seen; and the consciousness of this near-disaster would obviously have lain heavily on the minds of Siam's rulers.

Despite the effecting of reforms within Siam's military establishment which might have facilitated a somewhat enhanced projection of its power when dealing with local rivals such as the Chinese Ho (Terwiel 1983, 253–4, 257), it would appear that Siam's military still left much to be desired and were clearly unequal to an encounter with European forces. Frank Swettenham, the British Resident in Perak, describing the Siamese army sent to reestablish order in Laos in 1891 on the basis of information provided him by exiled Siamese Prince Pritsdang, stated, "the so-called army is more-or-less a myth ... the French would not have much to fear" (Brailey 1989, 82). And as late as 1901, Belgian Assistant Legal Adviser Émile Jottrand, having observed the Siamese forces firsthand in Korat, severely criticized their ability to carry out their military function, declar-



Above:
H.R.H. Prince Devawongse Voraprakar, Siamese Minister of Foreign
Affairs during most of the French–Siamese affair.
(Photo Courtesy of the Archives of the City of Brussels, Collection Ch. Buls.)

ing the army the equivalent of "a shambles" (Tips 1992, 236). In view of the obvious weakness of the Siamese military, and noting that in this first encounter the French came bearing both words of reason in the one hand and weapons in the other, it would not seem impossible that Siam might have sought some way to enhance its ability to deal in the former. Any rapid transformation of the latter must have seemed impossible. In this context the selection of Rolin-Jaequemyns, who appears to have first placed his services on the market sometime in 1891 (Tips 1992, 18), would have made excellent sense. Rolin-Jaequemyns was undeniably one of the most renowned practitioners of international law of his day, as well as having served as Belgium's Minister of the Interior.

Rolin-Jaequemyns's own personal character and principles would also appear to have suited Siam's needs ideally, as he was very much committed to the protection of small nations, like his own, whose only real defense in the face of larger and stronger

neighbors lay in the strictures of international law (Tips 1992, 21). Rolin-Jaequemyns's first contacts with representatives of the Siamese Government appear to have been made sometime in 1891, at a time when Prince Damrong was in Europe on a mission seeking advisers for Siam. Rolin-Jaequemyns had already submitted to Frederick W. Verney, secretary of the Siamese Legation in Bombay, a memorandum listing his previous work experiences, honors, etc. before the end of that year (Tips 1992, 11).

The context of that recruitment appears clearly British, involving Verney, Lord Reay, and Damrong, all of whom appear to have been acting in close collaboration. The venue was the recently acquired British protectorate of Egypt, where Rolin-Jaequemyns had been offered the post of Attorney-General in the Khedive's Government. Ultimately, he would turn down that appointment, apparently to the regret of both the Khedive and Lord Cromer, in order to become on 27 September 1892 the General Adviser of Siam. The fact of this British context to his recruitment, together with Tips's indication that according to one source it was "a British personality" who first mentioned Rolin-Jaequemyns to the Siamese (Tips 1992, 18), might lead one to speculate whether as early as 1891 the British Foreign Office knew it would almost certainly be unable to take a strong hand in Siam and was quietly doing what it could indirectly by pointing the Siamese in the direction of someone who could be of use to their cause.

Tips is insistent, however, that although Rolin-Jaequemyns had in the past been frequently critical of France, including affording his support in 1871 to the awarding of Alsace-Lorraine to Germany, he was at no time a British pawn but rather acted fully independently. This conclusion would appear to be consistent with the facts. Rolin-Jaequemyns's advice to the Siamese, particularly in the first few years of his employment, seems to have been significantly out of accord with advice from the British Foreign Office, who maintained their own ties to Siam's Government and to whom the Siamese appear for some time to have accorded considerably greater heed.

There appears to be evidence that in this early period of the 1893 crisis, Rolin-Jaequemyns, who had only recently taken up his duties and was something of an unknown quantity, was sometimes kept less than fully informed by his Siamese employers of all the ramifications of their policies. This may have led him initially to an overly sanguine estimation, in the few months between the initiation of French pressure on the Mekong in March 1893 and their resort to a more dramatic action at Paknam in July, of Siamese abilities to resist. His tone, in a private letter to his son Edouard, prior to the Paknam assault, is unmistakable: "As you may know, things have been largely spoiled since March 21st [shortly after the initiation of the Mekong police action]. Until now, my Siamese have demonstrated surprising pluck. May it last!" (Quoted in Tips 1992, 24)

This may have led to what Brailey (1984, 8) describes as "Foreign Minister Devawongse and his General Adviser, the Belgian M. Rolin-Jaequemyns, currently [in November 1893] bickering over whether the 3 October negotiations have been mishandled." It would seem almost certain that Rolin-

Jaequemyns would have preferred a far more obdurate Siamese resistance to what he, in this period, clearly saw as nothing less than armed extortion by the French, and what must have appeared to him as an overly hasty capitulation by Prince Devawongse in the face of the French threat. But this interpretation may overlook the signal importance to Siam of official British advice, which though it came without a promise of military assistance and in fact appears to have made clear that Britain was certainly not prepared to offer such, may nevertheless have been of great significance through its implication of diplomatic support. Tuck (1984, 9) has shown that such support was almost immediately forthcoming in Paris through Lord Dufferin's impassioned discussions with the Quai d'Orsay over the French demands.

J. G. D. Campbell offers the opposing view to that assumed here for Rolin-Jaequemyns: "The pity was that Siam by neglecting Lord Rosebery's sound advice had played into the hands of the French. But, the heads of the Siamese had been turned, and they had foolishly imagined that they were capable of resisting a first-class European power" (Campbell 1902, 302; quoted in Tips 1992, 164). Tips notes here that "Lord Rosebery had advised them to give in at once." He also goes on to maintain that any flaws that may have existed initially in the process of thorough communication between the General Adviser and the Throne were soon eliminated by a system of duplicate record-keeping that kept both sides informed of what came into the hands of the other. This was supplemented by a system of almost daily audiences of Rolin-Jaequemyns with Prince Devawongse or the King. Together these present a picture of far greater intimacy and connection than that asserted by Morant, though Morant's claims may have had some limited validity for the pre-Paknam period.

Once he had accepted as unavoidable the shackling stipulations of the Franco-Siamese Treaty of 3 October 1893, Rolin-Jaequemyns set about employing all of his considerable skills and experience as an international lawyer to ensure that the French would not be permitted to exceed the limits of those rights which the Treaty afforded them. This effort, which began substantially in 1894 when Rolin-Jaequemyns submitted to the King his comprehensive plan for reforms (Brailey 1984, 12), rapidly focused especially on the question of extraterritoriality. It was through that loophole, which had existed since the treaties approved under King Mongkut and was based on claims of the barbarity of Siamese judicial procedures, and the resultant demands that they and their protégés be explicitly exempted, that the French and perhaps other foreign nations hoped to further erode Siamese jurisdiction.

It was all too apparent to Rolin-Jaequemyns that the French would be looking for every opportunity to create incidents in the country, as they soon did. And it became his own determination to eliminate the possibility that such incidents might be utilized to call for a French defense of their own subjects through something impeccable. This work brought him into close association with the Oxford-educated, favored son of King Chulalongkorn, Prince Rabi of Ratchaburi, Minister of Justice, and with Prince Damrong, the Minister of the Interior.

The latter's able administrative reforms were accorded a particular prominence in order to preclude, as much as possible, frictions with foreigners and their protégés by increasing the efficiency of the government's administrative machinery.

With Prince Rabi, Rolin-Jaequemyns went about the restructuring and modernization of the Siamese justice system, both in the capital and in the far-flung provinces, where foreign companies were engaged in mining and logging operations. In so doing, Rolin-Jaequemyns attempted to introduce his own principle of effecting key, but limited rather than wholesale, reforms. The purpose of this was to bring these institutions into accord with accepted international standards, but without destroying the essence of their indigenous character. This was something Rolin-Jaequemyns was ideally suited for, given his long and prestigious involvement in international legal affairs both in Europe and abroad, and as a prime founder and twice former president of the Institut de Droit International in Belgium.

It might particularly be noted that Rolin-Jaequemyns had previously undertaken reforms of a similar kind for the government of the Congo Free State to whose High Council he had been recruited by Leopold II. In his letter of recommendation for Rolin-Jaequemyns to Frederick Verney, M. Guillery, former President of the Congo Free State High Council, pointed specifically to Rolin-Jaequemyns's proven ability to distill, from a wide range of models throughout the world, a legal framework appropriate for a society like that of Siam, which was on the verge of modernization (Tips 1992, 47–48).

Together with Prince Devawongse, he spent countless hours devising methods to oppose insidious and relentless French schemes to exempt ever larger numbers of marginal elements within Siam's population—Cambodians, Chinese, Vietnamese, Laotians, Christian converts and others—from the jurisdiction of Siamese law and place them under the legal jurisdiction of international courts which included French representatives. This tactic which most often relied on the often-false claim that the individual had been born in what by this time had become French Indochina, was patently designed to create a state within a state. The French clearly aimed to alienate a considerable body of individuals residing in Siam from Siamese jurisdiction. By their tenacious struggles to minimize the legal authorization of such protégés, Prince Devawongse and his General Adviser were largely successful in preventing the French from getting their foot in the door by this dubious means. Through an endless series of arguments and compromises on a variety of issues over the years, they managed to reduce drastically the number of protégés.

But perhaps the single most important achievement of Rolin-Jaequemyns and his princely counterparts in this period concerned the newly emerging Asian power of Japan, which worked out with Siam an agreement which would have revolutionary implications. In the Siam-Japan Treaty of 1898 Japan set the course for the other powers by agreeing to the eventual elimination of extraterritoriality entirely, except for diplomats, contingent upon Siam's completion of its program of judicial reforms. As later Adviser in Foreign Affairs to the Siamese

Government, Eldon R. James, wrote subsequently: "The Japanese protocol marked a very real advance ... as it contained, for the first time in the history of extraterritoriality in Siam, a recognition of the principle that consular jurisdiction was a temporary expedient and not a permanent arrangement" (James 1922, 594). James notes that in making this agreement Japan was extending to Siam a concession virtually identical to that which had only recently been granted to herself by the European powers, who promised "to relinquish the system upon the promulgation of the Japanese codes, a promise which was redeemed the following year (1899) when the codes were put into force" (James, 1922, 594). It was thus through an accord with a fellow Asian state that Siam was able to take her first halting step toward eventually establishing herself as a member of equal standing in the family of nations.

The role of Rolin-Jaequemyns in this groundbreaking accomplishment, though customarily unstated and with formal acknowledgment accorded to Prince Devawongse (See Oblas 1988, 45–58), must nevertheless be readily apparent. His association with Devawongse in this period was extremely close, and it is difficult to imagine any undertaking of this importance or sophistication in which the Foreign Minister would not have involved the General Adviser. Oblas notes that the initial negotiations in Tokyo were undertaken on the Siamese side by the Belgian Legal Adviser, Mr. Robert J. Kirkpatrick (Oblas 1988, 47), who was, as Tips indicates, Rolin-Jaequemyns's most intimate and able assistant and, in the absence of the General Adviser himself, virtually his alter ego.

The difficulty in the negotiations and the high level of skill displayed on the Siamese side are also indicative of a more than cursory role by Rolin-Jaequemyns. At several points, asserts Oblas, the Japanese insisted on language unacceptable to Siam. Devawongse stood firm, however, and in the end the Japanese gave in. Although it appears clear that Japan may well have had its own reasons for its ultimately conciliatory stance (Oblas 1988, 52–53), Rolin-Jaequemyns's diplomatic skills appear likely to have constituted an additional factor in Japan's decision to accept the Siamese terms. Oblas quotes the language of the critical clause, proposed by Prince Devawongse and ultimately agreed to by Japan:

The Japanese Government will agree to, at once, abandon the jurisdiction reserved to Japanese Consular Officers in Siam, whenever the judicial reforms of Siam shall have been completed—that is whenever the following codes or organic law will come into force: a Civil Code, a Code of Civil Procedure, a Criminal Code, a Code of Criminal Procedure, an Organic Law on the Administration of Justice. (Oblas 1988, 55)

All of these elements are part of the Judicial Reforms which the General Adviser had for some time been laboring to accomplish. It is perhaps no accident that soon after the signing of the treaty on 25 February 1898, Rolin-Jaequemyns departed Siam on a trip that took him to Japan, where he was very well received. He retained until his death several close Japanese

acquaintances, including the Japanese Assistant Legal Adviser assigned to Siam, Toshiki Masao.

Tips credits Rolin-Jaequemyns with contributing to a variety of other achievements in Siam between 1892 and his death in 1902, including the substantial increase of royal revenues. This was achieved partly by reorganizing the structure of provincial administration, so that revenues earmarked for the central government actually proceeded into its hands rather than being diverted into the pockets of provincial officials; and partly by designating official forest reserves to prevent uncontrolled and untaxed logging by foreign companies. Rolin-Jaequemyns also had a role in the formal abolition of the last vestiges of debt-slavery and participated in the very necessary reform of an antiquated penal system.

The comment of a perceptive British observer, Mr. H. Warrington Smyth is instructive:

In all these matters, the largest share of the credit is due to M. Rolin-Jaequemyns, the general adviser to the Government, who against much opposition, both among Siamese and Europeans, has toiled with a loyalty and a singleness of purpose which cannot but have their reward. He has had some, at least, of the work of nearly all the divisions of the Government on his shoulders, and his assistance and advice to the heads of the various departments have been invaluable. (Quoted in Tips 1992, 303)

In addition to his actions on behalf of Siam while inside the country, Rolin-Jaequemyns was arguably of even greater usefulness to her through both his formal and informal connections to a wide variety of European statesmen via his international renown as a jurist. The range of influential contacts he had established before going out to Siam extended even to France. In this fashion Rolin-Jaequemyns was himself to play a direct role in exploiting that polarity which, as Tuck noted, existed from the beginning between the Quai d'Orsay and the French *parti colonial*. He thereby initiated the process of reestablishing a bridge of relations with that propensity towards reasonableness and accommodation which had always marked the former, in contrast to that opposite tendency toward confrontation, and even violence, which had characterized the latter.

It was in this spirit that during a trip to Europe in October 1895, Rolin-Jaequemyns called upon French Foreign Minister Hanotaux in an unofficial capacity and found him agreeable to Rolin-Jaequemyns's proposal to work towards the creation of a Siamese buffer state grounded in the core Menam Chao Phraya valley (Tips 1992, 167-168). Unfortunately, Mr. Hanotaux indicated he was unable, due to the likelihood of strong opposition from the *parti colonial*, to actually propose such a course of action to the Chamber of Deputies. However, as Tips notes regarding this interview, "Enough can be read to gauge its importance in creating the January 15, 1896 Anglo-French Treaty guaranteeing the Menam Valley" (Tips 1992, 167).

Thus, just slightly more than two years since the nadir of the French naval assault, and a little more than one year since King

Chulalongkorn effectively retrieved the reins of power and initiated Rolin-Jaequemyns's proposed reforms, there are strong indications that the key corner had been turned. The *parti colonial* was losing control and authority was returning to the Quai d'Orsay. As Tips quotes Rolin-Jaequemyns in a letter of 18 October 1895 from Paris to Prince Devawongse: "The present state of opinion in France is very curious ... there is a reaction going on in the Government and in the majority of the population against colonial enterprise ... It is very possible that this may lead sooner or later to a general distrust of all colonial enterprise..!" (Tips 1992, 167).

It has been the opinion of a number of commentators on this period that the critical turning point for the securing of Siam's national integrity was the January 1896 Anglo-French Treaty. In this regard, however, Brailey has offered (1984, 14) what he considers to be a necessary corrective, insisting that "neither was it any sort of final solution, as earlier scholarship has already indicated" (that earlier scholarship includes Pensri 1962, Klein 1968, and Chandran 1972). And continuing

the real area of uncertainty regarding Siam's fate, if there is one, lies between the 1896 Chaophraya Agreement and 1900, or at latest 1902, the year of Delcassé's presentation of his initial concessionary convention. It is during these four to six years, when the reputation of imperialism still burned bright in Europe, that a French move into Bangkok, and a compensatory British annexation of the Peninsula might surely have occurred. The 1896 guarantee ... is not sufficient on its own to explain Siam's non-partition. (Brailey 1984, 16-17)

That the portions of Siam under threat of foreign seizure may not have been limited to the peninsula and the capital region, however, may be indicated by the reported speculation of Hector Jean-Baptiste Lugan, former member of the Pavie expedition and subsequently French Consul in Nan and Chiang Mai, that had the Shans taken Lampang during the Shan rebellion of 1902, the likely occupation of Chiang Mai by Anglo-Indian forces would have eventuated in the partition of Northern Siam between France and Britain (Wood 1992, 43). And we shall see that just before the end of the century a concrete proposal for a French military occupation of the Northeast was also advanced. It would thus appear, if these allegations are correct, that virtually all of the key zones of present Thailand were still in contention at least as late as the turn of the century.

Brailey sees as definitive the period just after the turn of the century when

the Quai d'Orsay had already shown its hand through the Convention of 1902, and as the momentum subsequently grew for the alliance so long desired in many quarters, between Europe's two leading democracies, there was a corresponding willingness to sacrifice or at least compromise in the cause of the Alliance the colonial quarrels most likely to bring them into conflict. Existing responsibilities, and the threat of competition

of new European rivals doubtless also helped to persuade them to abstain from the long expected division of the Siamese spoils. (Brailey 1984, 16)

In this regard it might be noted that it was only in the last several years of the nineteenth century, when, among other factors, the implications of Kaiser Wilhelm's naval building program had become apparent, that Britain began to view Germany rather than her traditional enemy France as her most likely opponent in any future war on the Continent. This would appear to be a realization which counted significantly in her decision to embrace the Entente Cordiale not long thereafter.

Tuck has shown that *parti colonial* schemes continued to be advanced with energy through at least 1899. In that year French Indochina Governor-General Paul Doumer, *parti colonial* Siam activist in *extremis*, "intending overall to create a 'Greater-Indochina' which might become a credible counterpart to British India, suggested a military solution, [fortunately not acted upon] to the problem of halting the decline of French influence and replacing British with French informal ascendancy at Bangkok." He proposed "the annexation of the whole Western half of the Mekong Valley" ... with "the French in control of Korat and garrisoning the crest of the Menam-Mekong watershed ..." (Tuck 1984, 16–17).

One can easily see in this context how vitally important Rolin-Jaequemyns's vigorous efforts to regularize and modernize Siamese institutions, both administrative and judicial, in the Lao-speaking Northeastern provinces bordering the Mekong, must have been. But in clear contrast to Brailey, Tuck argues that the likelihood of any such French schemes being actually implemented was remote. He maintains that from the beginning, but especially since 1893 when the dangerous potential of the *parti colonial* had manifested itself fully, the foreign offices of both England and France, cooperated to the extent possible to retain control of these affairs in the hands of the professional diplomats. Specifically, they attempted to keep these affairs not only out of the hands of what both regarded as dangerous and erratic popular and parochial elements such as the *parti colonial*, but also of individuals such as Morant, who remained ignorant of the supervening European realities. In this view the British Foreign Office's treatment of Morant can be seen as paralleling that of the Quai d'Orsay towards Deloncle, Doumer and company. Initially these individuals or groups had to be treated carefully, even coddled, and to the extent possible used; but ultimately they were squelched.

By 1896, in Tuck's view, the professional diplomats in both countries had effectively regained control. And the situation, though liable to occasional flare-ups caused by the parliamentary influence of the *parti colonial* in Paris, rapidly returned to normal (Tuck 1984, 15). In clear opposition to *parti colonial* scholars C. M. Andrew and A. S. Kanya-Forstner, who maintained that a *parti colonial* majority was still seeking Siam's annexation, Tuck argues that the agreement of 1896 "effectively settled the issue of Thai independence and ... only an extremist element of the *parti colonial* continued to defy its implications thereafter" (Tuck 1984, 2). Tuck sees the majority of the *parti*

colonial, now increasingly focused on North Africa, especially Morocco, as having lost all significant interest in Siam, in which most of them had never been really interested in the first place. Even one-time ardent Siam expansionist, now Foreign Minister, Théophile Delcassé, who in 1893 had led the *parti colonial*'s demand for Siam's annexation, now opposed radical Siamese projects, and in Tuck's terms, "preferred to call a halt to French territorial expansion in Asia" (Tuck 1984, 17).

As the *parti colonial* mainstream directed their attention increasingly to the possibility of a trade-off with Britain which would permit a French protectorate over Morocco in return for French acknowledgment of a British-dominated Egypt, the few *parti colonial* loyalists like Doumer and Joseph Chailley-Bert who still held out hope for a renewal of a forward policy in Siam were left increasingly high and dry. In this situation, then, it was but a short step to the Quai d'Orsay-proposed Franco-Siamese Convention of 1902, which, though blocked temporarily by *parti colonial* actions, reemerged shortly thereafter as the fairly definitive Franco-Siamese Treaty of 1904.

If we accept the date of the 1902 Convention as the key date in this process of resolution, we arrive at an interpretation chronologically quite close to Brailey's for the securing of Siam's more-or-less definitive national boundaries. I add "more-or-less," because, of course, two more agreements which deprived Siam of certain additional territories were signed in 1907 and 1909. But the basic delimitations of what would be modern Siam, subsequently Thailand—the core of the Menam Chao Phraya river valley, plus the North, the Northeast, and the peninsular South—were in sight by 1902, the year of Rolin-Jaequemyns's death. Having returned to Belgium for health reasons in the previous year, he planned to return as soon as he was better. Unfortunately his condition worsened and Rolin-Jaequemyns died on 8 January 1902, having continued to advise the Siamese Government, virtually from his deathbed, on details regarding the negotiations with France for the 1902 Convention.

THE "CHAKRI REFORMATION"

It remains necessary to say a few words about the comprehensive program of reforms presented by Rolin-Jaequemyns to the Siamese Government in September of 1894, which Brailey has described as "the basic blueprint for the whole Chakri Reformation" (Brailey 1984, 12). The timing of their presentation may be misleading, since it coincides with the return of King Chulalongkorn to the capital and his resumption of his duties after a fairly prolonged period of illness and comparative inactivity beginning in late 1893 (Brailey 1989, 90–91, 96). Tips (1992, 24–25) argues strongly that Rolin-Jaequemyns had formulated these reform plans long before that, since they are mentioned in a letter to his son Edouard written in January 1893, before the events at Paknam.

The purpose of that letter was the recruitment of personnel to begin the reform of the legal system, Rolin-Jaequemyns's first major endeavor and the most essential of all the reforms in the

face of the French aggression. In his letter the General Adviser asserts: "I have convinced the government to enter resolutely into the codification and revision of its civil and criminal laws, and, to this effect, to give me the support of a legal adviser whom I shall designate ... It remains now only to find the man ... " (Letter dated 15 January 1893, Gustave Rolin-Jaequemyns, Bangkok, to Edouard Rolin, Brussels; General Archives of the Kingdom of Belgium, Papiers Rolin-Jaequemyns I-IV. I wish here to thank Dr. Walter E. J. Tips for allowing me to consult and to cite this letter, a portion of which appears in publication here for the first time.) Ultimately, the man chosen for this work was Robert J. Kirkpatrick, whose important role has been previously noted.

Tips considers that Rolin-Jaequemyns's working out of the reform plans may have been completed as early as the last months of 1892. He suggests that the eighteen-month delay in their formal presentation was attributable directly to the crisis in the Siamese Government which was occasioned in March 1893 by the French military actions on the left bank and which escalated ever more dangerously in July. He further suggests (Tips 1992, 18, 24-25) that it could even have been a major objective of those French actions to cause just such a delay in the Siamese effort to reform their institutions. After all, Rolin-Jaequemyns was known in *parti colonial* circles as an opponent of their policies (Tips 1992, 18), and those reforms would, of course, have drastically undercut France's purview for criticism of Siam, through which she hoped to justify her own intervention in Siamese affairs.

Perhaps because of their dire fear that Siam would ultimately prove unable to defend herself against the relentless designs of French colonial predators, virtually all of the British non-official commentators on the scene in this period (Robert Morant, H. Warington Smyth, J. G. D. Campbell, and others) and even some of the official British representatives, such as J. G. Scott, would appear to have preferred an outright British protectorate over Siam to the pursuit of that tortuous, prolonged, and uncertain path to the securing of her national sovereignty. Although the British Foreign Office in London consistently

avoided that course and appears always to have "hoped for the best" regarding Siam's eventual emergence intact, only Rolin-Jaequemyns seems to have maintained throughout the explicit faith that Siam's sovereign independence could ultimately be achieved and devoted himself tenaciously and tirelessly to its realization.

It is therefore regrettable that he did not live to see this important result of his work and struggle reach fruition. Truly he was that most unusual figure of the late nineteenth-century: a European statesman who chose to lend the best of his talents, knowledge and skills in the service of frustrating European colonial designs. In initiating steps towards eliminating extra-territorial privileges in Siam, he introduced a new era in the relations between the European powers and the traditional states of Asia and Africa. Unquestionably, Rolin-Jaequemyns more than fulfilled the commitment he made upon his appointment to the office of Siam's General Adviser in January 1892, which he expressed in a letter to Frederick Verney:

If I enter the service of the Siamese Government, I will consecrate to them the whole of my faculties, experience and energy, and consider their interests as I should consider the interests of my own country. I will, in one word, be as faithful and loyal a counselor to His Majesty the King of Siam as I was to His Majesty the King of the Belgians. (Quoted in Tips 1992, 19)

As for Siam, notwithstanding the many problems she has faced subsequently and perhaps in some cases errors she might have made in working out her own fate, it seems assured that the policy followed by her King and his ministers in the closing years of the last century and the opening few of this, of doing all she could to maintain her national integrity and to avoid being drawn into the imperial fold of any European power, no matter how "benevolent," has been unequivocally the correct policy and has served her well. For that she owes that King, Rama V, his ministers, and even those few foreign advisers who held tenaciously to that ideal, a debt of gratitude.

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