POL. AFFAIRS—LAOS

OCTOBER

File Copy



Thailand at the Geneva Conference on Laos

350 Laos

Information Department,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Saranrom Palace, Bangkok.

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CONTENTS

1. Statement by H.E. Thanat Khoman on May 23, 1961 — 1

2. Statement by H.E Thanat Khoman on May 31, 1961 — 18

3. Statement by H.E. Direck Jayanama on June 12, 1961 — 23

4. Statement by H.E. Konthi Suphamongkhon on June 27, 1961 — 30

5. Statement by H.E. Konthi Suphamongkhon on July 5, 1961 — 38

6. Statement by H.E. Konthi Suphamongkhon on July 13, 1961 — 44

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AIRGRAM

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PAGE 1 OF 1 PAGES

Date Sent: September 15, 1961

FROM: Amembassy BANGKOK

TO: Secstate WASHINGTON

NO: A-77

INFO: CINCPAC for POLAD A-19 ; Amcongen GENEVA FOR FECON A-9 ; Amembassy SAIGON A-11 ; Amembassy VIENTIANE A-11 .

350 Pol Lao - Laos

According BANGKOK WORLD Sept. 14, Primin's Office issued communique Sept. 13 which made following points:

a. Commie Vietnamese, Chinese and Lao have charged that Thai military forces conducting exercises Laos, and that Thailand sent five battalions to Vientiane "in order join armed forces of US, SVN and Phils which already stationed Laos." Communique called charge "totally false" and "ridiculous lie."

b. "However," communique said, "Office of Primin wishes point out to public that Commie action in deliberately spreading false news usually motivated by hidden intentions. Several times in past when Commies planned aggression or subversion they issued false statements accusing others of planning aggression or subversion. This is method usually employed by Commies." May be same this time.

c. Thai Govt. therefore taking strong precautions meet any aggression which may be initiated by Commies.

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POL:WWHitchcock:ls
September 14, 1961

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PAGE 1 OF 2 PAGES

Date Sent: Sept. 11, 1961

FROM: Amembassy BANGKOK

TO: Secstate WASHINGTON

NO: A-64

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INFO: GENEVA A-6 VIENTIANE A-6 CINCPAC POLAD A-13 LONDON A-8
PARIS A-7 SAIGON A-6 KARACHI A-7 MANILA A-8 WELLINGTON A-5
CANBERRA A-5 OTTAWA A-1 NEW DELHI A-4 PHNOM PENH A-5 USUN A-3

GENEVA FOR FECON.

In interview Sept 6 with visiting members American National Editorial Association (who touring FE), PRIMIN Sarit Thanarat made following points:

a. Laos situation "potentially dangerous." If Laos truly neutral with proper guarantees and verifications, no great danger to Thailand. If Laos only nominally neutral, however, with controls in hands of Communists, would be "serious dangers" for Thailand in future.

b. SEATO should be reformed enable it act more expeditiously and more effectively. (He did not spell out.)

c. More attention needed not only for security Laos, its immediate neighbors and rest of region, but also for security of rest of world.

d. US aid appreciated and Thai very grateful. Indeed Thai showed gratitude in more concrete ways than did others which received much more aid. Some even rewarded US aid with "Yankee, Go Home" signs, which not seen here.

e. Aid received is supplemental Thailand's own efforts. More and more Thailand depending on self and own resources. Thailand now aiming at moving from building infrastructure to increasing actual production and bettering living standards. Must depend on revenue from agricultural products for long time to come and this unsatisfactory because dependence on foreign markets over which Thai have no control. Industrial development would focus on processing agricultural products to permit cushioning price variations. Loans very helpful and would be paid back. (He praised aid received from UN, World Bank, Exim Bank and DLF, received through Colombo Plan, and especially aid received from Australia.) Thailand had long-range 18-year program development main highways; some highways built with US funds and others with Thai funds.

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f. Association Southeast Asia (ASA) established for purposes quite different from that of SEATO. ASA limited to economic, cultural, social and technological cooperation. Had nothing do with political questions or defense SEA.

g. North Vietnamese Communists threatening South Vietnam, but situation under control thanks to Diem's leadership. Hoped that with Free World's help SVN can preserve independence and freedom.

h. Re Belgrade meeting, did not understand how any nation can be non-aligned, for nations must accept some commitments if only to peace, justice and freedom and to UN principles. Had no full report on meeting but hoped it would produce results beneficial not only for participants but also for whole world.

i. Thailand able maintain its independence through the centuries because of "wisdom of former monarchs and realistic policies followed by them."

j. Believed visit by these newsmen beneficial to Thailand. Had instructed that all facilities be given them. He confident in their ability and sense of justice, "which characterizes American journalists," and wished them success in strengthening bonds of friendship between Thailand and US.

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September 8, 1961

TELEGRAM

Foreign Service of the United States of America

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Charge: EMBASSY

UNCLASSIFIED
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Control: 238

Date: August 11, 1961

ACTION: SECSTATE WASHINGTON UNCLAS 212 PRIORITY

INFO: GENEVA for FECON UNCLAS 31 PRIORITY

VIENTIANE UNCLAS 54 PRIORITY

This mornings Bangkok press prominently reports statements yesterday by PriMin Sarit re Laos and Berlin.

PriMin expressed concern critical situation in Europe where people thought Berlin issue might start war since announcements military mobilization or defense budget increases imply deterioration situation. However, he added, political observers still felt that there would be no war while chance remained for negotiation.

PriMin cautioned on other hand that Laos crisis more important to Thailand than Berlin situation and troubles in neighboring kingdom could lead to general war. Western powers could not keep Berlin and drop Laos since if Laos lost Berlin meant nothing. However US Pres had said he would [redacted] take responsibility for SE Asia.

PriMin also commented: "It looks like Premier Boun Oum would have no objection to Souvanna Phouma being PriMin. As far as it concerns Thailand, I prefer present Laos to Laos under Souvanna."

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August 11, 1961

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Vientiane 212
350 Rel Bkk - Laos
+ 350 Rel Bkk - Embassy (& Berlin)
F-11-61

AIRGRAM

Foreign Service of the United States of America

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PAGE 1 OF 4 PAGES

Date Sent: July 12, 1961

FROM: Amembassy BANGKOK

TO: Secstate WASHINGTON

NO: A-9

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 9488.52

INFO: Amcongen GENEVA A-2, Amembassy LONDON A-4, Amembassy NEW DELHI A-2, Amembassy PARIS A-4, Amembassy VIENTIANE A-2.

350 Pol affairs - Laos

Ref: Our A-6.

Geneva for FECON.

New Delhi see para 1 in particular; London and Paris, para 6b.

Laos.

Following points of interest made here in recent public statements concerning Laos in addition to those made concerning SEATO (ref airgram):

1. Fonmin Thanat June 28 to TIMES of India correspondent, according Fonoff memo June 30:

a. Change in Thai foreign policy (because of Lao developments) not in sight but there question of adaptation to new situation.

b. Thailand wants real neutrality with guarantees and inspection for Laos. Thailand neutral too, in her way, and longing for peace. She now closer to India since India also has moved from its present position.

c. Meaning of "neutrality" has changed lately. It now cover for commie entrance.

d. Laos cannot remain truly neutral under Souvanna because his party is but one-man party. His supporters have gone to other side. He dependent on other side now more than ever. (Fonoff memo added that Indian correspondent agreed completely with Fonmin.)

e. No need for Fonmin return Geneva if only purpose to listen to propaganda. Perhaps when there prospects for agreement acceptable to all participating nations he might go back.

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2. Lao Primin Boun Oum June 30 to press during his visit Bangkok while en route Vientiane from Zurich:

a. Has three point proposal for Laos. (1) Announce Lao neutrality to all countries. (2) Establish guarantees against aggression and infiltration. (3) Have a committee of neutral nations supervise Lao neutrality.

b. New gvt an internal matter. It up to King to appoint new Primin.

c. Other side boasted at Zurich that gvt headed by anyone other than their man would not be able administer whole country. Other side said it "might" recognize gvt headed by Souvanna.

d. Boun Oum rejected other side's suggestion that National Assembly be dissolved before new gvt appointed.

3. Primin Sarit July 1 to press:

a. Present situation in Laos alarming. Nothing improved. Commies consider selves victors. Only way gain victory over Commies is by force.

b. "Laos is lesson to us. We must help ourselves."

c. Boun Oum told him day before that he had not reached total agreement with Souvanna and Souphanouvong at Zurich. Boun Oum stressed that he had not promised anything at Zurich. Final Zurich communique and report of agreement by three princes was work of Souvanna, Boun Oum said. (BANGKOK WORLD reported Sarit as saying Boun Oum had denied any knowledge of joint communique.)

d. He had advised Boun Oum against dissolving National Assembly in accordance other side's demands, for "if Lao Assembly dissolved it means the finish." He told Boun Oum if Souvanna really upholds King and Constitution Souvanna should allow King to appoint new gvt.

4. Interior Min General Prapart July 3 to press: Lao Commies trying establish bridgehead in Northeast Thailand. (Text of press report follows, Despatch No. 18.)

5. Lao Deputy Primin General Phoumi July 4 to press during his visit Bangkok while en route Vientiane from Zurich and Washington:

a. Future of Laos will be decided "next week at the latest" when three Lao princes meet for final talks at Luang Prabang. His hopes for amicable settlement based on amicable atmosphere that prevailed at Zurich. (Cf.6a below)

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b. He did not care whether he included in future gvt as long as it neutral, non-Commie and works for people. It agreed at Zurich that "no Cabinet Minister should be permanent official, like active military officer."

c. Gvt "should be in hands of someone of greater caliber" than Souvanna, Boun Oum or Souphanouvong. In any case neither Souvanna nor Souphanouvong should be Primin since three princes agreed at Zurich that new Primin should be someone who generally popular and who has done nothing to cause country suffering or to bring division to country.

d. Gvt must be appointed first before question of dissolving National Assembly may be discussed.

e. He not afraid of Commies influencing any new elections. If Gvt not Commie, Commie influence will not be important.

f. He believes Souphanouvong not Commie, but simply a Lao patriot with Commie backing.

g. Xieng Khouang supposedly under control of Pathet Lao but actually administered by Vietminh.

6. Primin Sarit July 5 to press:

a. Phoumi had told him day before that he does not expect early settlement at forthcoming meeting of three princes. (Cf. 5a above) Phoumi also told him that RLG is taking military preparations for any eventuality that may arise should talks fail and no agreement or solution reached.

b. (In response reporter's remark) England and France would be the SEATO countries that would recognize Souvanna as Primin, should he be appointed.

c. Important thing in Laos is that whoever holds more territory has bigger voice. Souvanna's side has taken more territory. Souvanna clever propagandist too.

d. He "uncertain about safety of Laos as long as Lao King does not take up premiership." Lao King refuses on constitutional grounds. Should Commies take Laos over however they will not permit monarch to occupy throne.

7. Deputy Primin and Defense Min Gen Thanom Kittikachorn July 6 to press:

a. Chicoms concentrating troops in Sipsongpanna (reported in Embtel 35, info Geneva 8, Hong Kong 5, Vientiane 12).

b. Lao situation deteriorating. PL have scored several local military victories.

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c. Commie rebels short of food and other supplies and have asked North Vietnam for rice, oil and salt.

d. Souvanna's charge not true that Thailand had sent troops to Luang Prabang. ICC is there and can go anywhere in RLG territory. ICC could easily investigate such a report.

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POL:WWHitchcock:ls
July 10, 1961

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TELEGRAM

Foreign Service of the United States of America

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Charge: EMBASSY

Control: 06

Date: 1 July 1961

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ACTION: Secstate WASHINGTON 05

INFO: GENEVA 01 (1ast 71)

VIENTIANE 01 (1ast 989)

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Authority NND 9488.32

GENEVA FOR FECON

REF: EMBTEL 2353 RPTD GENEVA 71 VIENTIANE 989

Fol text POST June 30 article (unnecessary words omitted);

QUOTE

Primin this morning informed Prince Boon Oum, Laotian Premier, Thailand does not want Laos fall under Communist control.

"Reporting above, Prince Boon Oum told reporters at Laotian Embassy after his meeting with Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat 'if the Communists take Laos, they can move into Thailand."

"Two Primins met at Government House from 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. today. Present at the opx consultations were Nai Thanat Khoman, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Luang Vichit Vadakan, Asst to the Primin.

"Prince Boon Oum scheduled leave by special plane for

350 Rel Laos-Laos

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Vientiane at 2 p.m. today.

"To newsmen, he made fol three-point proposal for Laos:

'1. Laotian neutrality should be announced to all countries.

'2. There should be guarantees against ~~xgxx~~ aggression and infiltration of Laos.

'3. Committee of neutral nations should supervise neutrality of Laos.

"Prince Boon Oum said he proposed in Zurich conference that a committee comprising Malaya, Switzerland and Cambodia be appointed to take over from the International Control Commission to ensure Laotian neutrality maintained and respected.

"However, other two Laotian princes - Prince Souvanna Phouma and Prince Souphanouvong - opposed proposal, saying 'it would mean interference in internal affairs of Laos.' Prince Boon Oum remarked that 'they want only the Chinese Communists'.

"Stressing Laotian people want real neutrality, Laotian Premier said there are ~~xxxxxxx~~ differences between the kind of neutrality Royal Laotian ~~Gxxxxxxxx~~ Govt wants and the kind of neutrality 'the other side' wants.

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"He explained Laotian Govt wants 'true neutrality, neutrality that is just, neutrality that will bring happiness to the people of Laos.' "If the new govt does not want this kind of neutrality, we will have nothing to do with it," he said.

"He said 'other side' wants 'neutrality of the Kaew (North Vietnamese) kind.'

"On new govt, Prince Boon Oum said: 'It is an internal matter. It is up to King to appoint new Primin.'

"He revealed when the matter of the new govt discussed at Zurich 'the other side' boasted that a govt headed by any other person than their own would not be able administer the whole country of Laos. 'The other side' (presumably, Pathet Laos' Prince Souphanouvong) said they 'might' recognize a govt headed by Prince Souvanna Phouma.

"Prince Boon Oum said he rejected suggestion by 'the other side' that the National Assembly be dissolved before appointment of new Govt."

WORLD July 1 ran essentially same account with additional remark attributed Sarit: "We are pleased help Laos," and Boon Oum: "There no change (in Laos' attitude toward Thailand). Thailand and Laos have long been related as kin." In answer to reporters' questions, Boon Oum said opposition princes would show sincerity their claim to respect for King and Constitution

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by whether or not they came to Luang Prabang to carry on further negotiations for settlement Lao problem. "If they still think Souvanna real premier Laos they wrong because govt has been dissolved."

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