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FROM: AmEmbassy BANGKOK

Date Sent: Aug. 29, 1960

TO: AmEmbassy VIENTIANE

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During assignment Vientiane last fall, Embassy officer Dixon had number long discussions with Quinim Pholsena in connection with protection case. Some of discussions which were of particular interest to Embassy Vientiane at time were written up by Dixon. In view of fact that Pholsena now Minister Interior in Souvanna Government, Dixon's recollections Pholsena character and personality may be of interest to Embassy Vientiane. Dixon's opinion is that although Quinim may not be communist he follows the Pathet Lao line fairly closely and is cleverly manipulated by them. At that time he did not give impression of being deceitful but rather well intentioned. Nevertheless his activities are inimical to objectives of the United States Following is basis for this conclusion:

Pholsena appears not to be theoretical or academic marxist but rather emotional man who has taken on views of the extreme left from propinquity and associations in opposing government and being "have-not". Quinim is inclined to be loquacious and gregarious. Invariably at his bookshop he dressed in sampot and sat in back room talking with group of men, women or children, seemingly present as members of the family or of a social group. Quinim would change into Western clothes and lead Western caller to more formal salon upstairs. He was almost uniformly serious with only occasional show of humor. His main preoccupations seemed to be absence of justice and presence of corruption in Laos about which he talked recurrently. He discussed inequalities and need for fair deal between regions, members of families, and factions. However, this never took on any of aspects of espousal of working class or any other particular class. An example of this was that he felt in the integration of the Pathet Lao there had been selective integration with many people "integrated out". His view was that if there were to be real pacification or settlement such partialities and injustices could not provide sound base which was necessary for pacification in Laos.

In discussing political matters having international implications, he did not seem to follow the communist line. His thoughts seemed to be postulated upon the basic concept that the Soviets and Chinese communists were essentially an evil force. In mentioning communists, he would call

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them "they" and their opponents "we". He obviously considered Soviet and Chinese communism as facts of life which had to be taken into account in working out practical problems of today. North VietNam he seemed to consider natural adversary of Laos. In talking about Pathet Lao, he said that it contained some communists but that great majority were simply misguided, dislocated people and persons otherwise subjected to injustices who had nowhere else to turn. With regard to Pathet Lao acceptance of aid from North VietNam, he took position that to educated man understanding political niceties, utilization of aid from outside country by legally constituted government could be strongly contrasted to situation where Pathet Lao received help from North VietNam. To average simple Lao and majority of Pathet Lao, however, there was no difference.

Quinim, although reputedly lawyer, did not show any real knowledge legal concepts and appeared to know very little about law generally. Impression gained he has not had extensive formal education. However, he seemed to be "long" in reasoning and making emotional pleadings for "justice". An example: Last fall he had read in newspaper that he had been appointed defense counsel for Prince Souvannanong at trial which was scheduled. He went to prison and asked to see Prince in order to discuss case. When he was turned down, went to Ministry Justice. There someone gave him pass to see Prince. Returning to prison he was again turned away because the chief of prison guards was not present to accept pass. When chief of guards was found, Quinim was referred to someone else in Defense Ministry. This person in Defense Ministry said he unable deal with matter. Quinim was unable to see anyone else in the Defense Ministry. After Quinim had had several repetitions of this experience, he told Dixon in detail of his attempts to see Prince, developing his exposition eloquently and cogently to emphasize injustice of situation.

In discussions with Quinim he never raised his voice loudly, although frequently he had strong feeling upon subject about which he spoke, but used a moderate tone which ranged between that of a reasoning discussion to serious pleadings. He seemed to be wound up with an infinite amount of premises concerning internal Lao relationships, examples of which he would recite in great detail. Although slow in getting into a discussion, once started he was hard to stop and gave the impression of not being able to "get it off his chest". While there were some signs of frustration and bitterness, there were also clear signs of ability to keep himself in check.

Quinim was quite frequently absent from Vientiane for periods of few days in order supervise construction his service station at Pakse. There was not the opportunity to confirm the truth of this, but he was convincing in remarking upon its progress. He seemed intensely concerned about getting it into operation. In general his attitude towards the exploitation of this commercial enterprise seemed most unMarxian. He took violent exception to the monetary reform which he said threw Laos into a depression. Something had to be done for business, and he suggested turning military aid into economic aid.

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Quinim seemed accept company of Americans gladly. Rather than showing expected reticence, he accepted invitation dine readily, was standing in front of bookshop on time and carefully dressed when picked up. He ate and drank with enjoyment and discussed almost anything which was brought up including some matters which must have been somewhat embarrassing to him, all in a friendly and willing manner.

He spoke with self-confidence and seemed to be assured of solid support of his electorate. While he would listen to an opposing view, he always gave the impression that his mind was already made up and did not need to reflect or consider what had been said to him. Sometimes he would explain the fallacy of one's view or distinguish it from his own. In short it would be most difficult to convert him to another view-point although his thinking did not appear to have any Marxist basis. His views coincided closely with the Pathet Lao on matters concerning internal Lao matters but varied a few degrees on some points. Although he was careful to distinguish himself and followers from Pathet Lao, he argued that consideration should be given the Pathet Lao point of view with strong inference of its validity. Although intelligent, he seemed to have limited horizons and was very parochial in his outlook. His reasoning is guided more by emotion than analysis. He appears well intentioned and sincere but does not have any practical understanding of the dangers of communism, and probably believes that he can use the communists to help further his objectives without being ensnared, rather than realizing that he is a useful tool in their designs.

Quinim is nice looking from a Western point of view, medium-sized but rather large for a Lao, and has a rather friendly and sympathetic expression. It is not believed that he speaks any English but speaks French comparatively well.

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