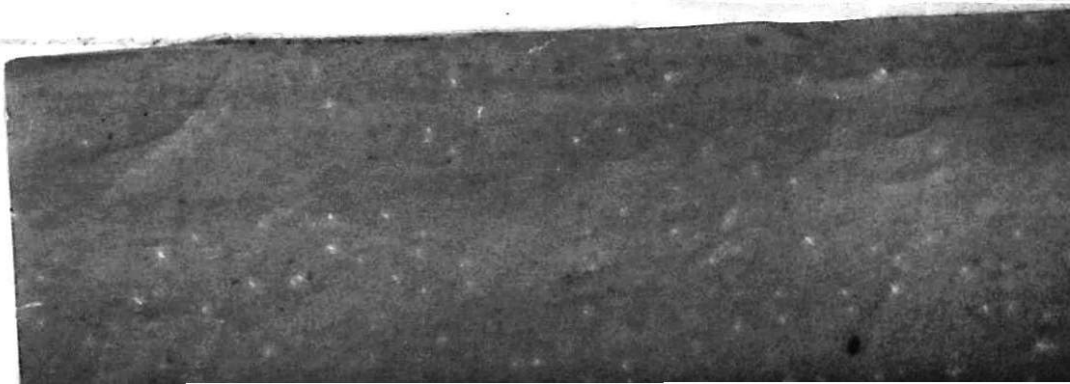
350 POL. AFFAIRS--LAOS (U) 1960

LAOS COUP

AUGUST 9, 1960 OCT. 15



TELEGRAM

Foreign Service of the United States of America

OUTGOING

Charge: UNCLASSIFIED *Classification* Control: 297

Date: Sept. 21, 1960

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 9488.32

To: VIENTIANE 272 PRIORITY

Rptd Info: SECSTATE 523 SAIGON 176 LONDON 54 PARIS 43

CANBERRA 26 MANILA 56 KARACHI 29 CINCPAC POLAD 152

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JUSMAG
USIS
FILE

In television address tonight PRIMIN reviewed Lao situation which Thailand "has been considering with utmost anxiety and concern because it has shown from beginning obvious signs Communist influence" as shown by communiques condemning United States and eliminating all Americans from Laos in spite generous U.S. aid. "Thai Government has reliable ground believe Communist influence has Vientiane under its grip generally" and has detailed information this regard. "If situation persists in this manner Laos will entirely fall into Communist hands". TG "does not wish interfere in internal affairs of Laos, and entertains no ambition exert any influence over Laos". TG fully engaged own problems economic development. However Thai-Laos relationship of special character because long frontier and ties language, religion, custom, complexion and physical features, as well as family ties. Coup has seriously affected Thailand. Externally through accusations Vientiane, Hanoi and Peking radios Thai interference, support of Phoumi, attacks against Vientiane etc. all of which false. Suggests Vientiane attack Communist ruse.

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Vientiane 272 to Dept. Laos (Coup) 350 Rec'd 9-21-60

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Authority NND 9488.32

Internally Thailand affected by growing boldness Communists in Thailand. Much greater danger will befall Thailand of Laos were to fall completely under Communist control.

"TG has therefore taken upon itself the principle that everything will have to be done to combat and defend this danger. TG pledges that if situation in Laos does not become dangerous to Thailand, the Government will not interfere in the least. The Government will refrain from doing anything beyond the necessary measures to be taken to maintain safety our own nation. The Government will not entertain any ambitious plans to expand influence over neighboring countries."

But if Lao situation "develops to point where obvious that it will inevitably becaome danger to nation I shall have to fight in defence of it and in such a fight I hope to receive assistance and coope ration from friendly nations of Free World..." "I will never let Thailand become a slave of Communism whil I am still alive".

TG earnestly "wishes that all parties and important political personages of Laos come together in an amicable settlement and that Laos be rid of Communist domination. But if such cannot be accomplished and Laos falls into Communist hands and has towards

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 Date:

Thailand an aggressive tendency Thailand will have to decide for itself to defend the nation in every possible way without consideration whether there will be help from any source or not"

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TELEGRAM

Foreign Service of the United States of America

OUTGOING American Embassy BANGKOK

UNCLASSIFIED
Classification

Charge: Embassy

Control: 146

Date: September 10, 1960

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JUSMAG
USIS
FILE

SENT TO: SecState WASHINGTON Routine 461

RPTD INFO: VIENTIANE 245 PHNOM PENH 138 SAIGON 165

CINCPAC ~~XXX~~ POLAD 132

DEPT pass DEPTAR for ACSI, USAF for AFCIN, CNO.

BANGKOK POST Sept 9 reported Prince Khampan, Lao Amb to RTG, has made two unsuccessful attempts obtain RTG recognition of Souvanna Phouma Govt. Acting FonMin Boon Charoenchai cited as source.

Lao Amb informed FonOff of setting up Souvanna cabinet after receiving notification from Vientiane, but RTG did not reply because would constitute recognition Souvanna Govt. Sept 8 Amb called on Nai Boon, inquired why no reply made, tried persuade RTG to recognize Souvanna. Boon told him when news first received of Souvanna's appointment by King and Cabinet's approval by Assembly RTG glad settlement reached. However, Kong Le then announced Phoumi and Inpeng should be ousted. Later Souphanouvong, who invited go Vientiane by Souvanna for negotiations, insisted on Phoumi ouster. As result these maneuverings, conditions and situation Laos uncertain and unstable. Asked when would give recognition, Boon said "Not yet. We are waiting-and-seeing."

However, Boon assured Amb RTG prepared assist Laos in matter of rice,

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Control:

Date:

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other food supplies. Suggested Lao officials make necessary purchases since Thai merchants reluctant go to Laos to trade. Said not border closure which stopping supplies to Vientiane but guns and troops stationed along Mekong and shooting at Thai boats which have made Thai traders afraid of going to Vientiane with supplies.

POST stated RTG does not regard Prince Khampan's call as official visit by Lao Amb on Acting FonMin "but as personal call by Prince Khampan on Nai Boon".

Same paper also carried statement by Min Interior Praphat on possible rice sales: "We ready sell rice to Laos. But Laotians must offer price and guarantee safety to persons transporting rice. Up till now not known whether we to get paid in Russian rubles or Communist China money."

Asked about Lao policy of neutrality, Praphat said nobody had been able to follow such policy except Lord Buddha and Switzerland, latter successful only because of geographical position. "Even India cannot keep neutral. It has now to set up barriers against Commie encroachment."

Praphat reiterated charge Vietminh have entered Vientiane, stating "Lao and Thai who escaped Vientiane have seen Vietnamese who are

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Date:

strangers mixing with crowds in Vientiane." Added that Kong Le has invited Pathet Lao members come to Vientiane, saying "well-known" they trained and supplied by Vietminh. "Who can guarantee that when Pathet Laos members come into Vientiane their teachers would not come also?"

Praphat also said Thai construction company working on Vientiane airfield (Sakol Sathapat) reported seizure of "millions of baht" worth of equipment by Kong Le, arrest and beating of foreman. Said FonOff will be requested [redacted] make necessary approach [redacted] obtain return of machinery.

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LP[redacted]ring:hs
9-10-60

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Following is State Department press release issued afternoon September 10:

According to broadcasts from Laos a revolution has started in that country. Revolutionary movement reportedly is headed by Prince Boun Oum with Phoumi head of military committee.

United States has in past consistently supported duly constituted governments of Laos in their efforts to maintain independence and integrity of Laos against Communist encroachment from without or within. It would regret a situation in which violence destroyed unity thereby increasing danger of such encroachment. United States has no desire to intervene in internal affairs of Laos. It has consistently adhered to and supported policy that their affairs should be settled by peaceful means by Lao themselves. It would, however, be immediately concerned by efforts of any other outside power, or agents thereof, to take advantage of disturbed conditions prevailing and to intervene directly or indirectly.

Department is in regular communication with United States Ambassador in Vientiane. There are no reports of any danger to Americans in Laos. Dependents of Americans were evacuated to Thailand several weeks ago because of disturbed conditions aggravated by dangerous flooding of Mekong River.

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1000 Cmd's Letter
350 Pol Affairs - Laos (Corps)

9-1760

TELEGRAM

Foreign Service of the United States of America

OUTGOING AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

Distr:
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Attaches
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UNCLASSIFIED
Classification

Charge: EMBASSY

Control: 132

Date: Sept. 9, 1960

SENT TO: SECSTATE 452

RPTD INFO: VIENTIANE 240, PHNOM PENH 136, SAIGON 162,
CINCPAC/POLAD 129

DEPT PASS DEPTAR for ACSI, USAF for AFCIN, CNO.

BANGKOK WORLD Sept 9 carried fol statements Primin Sarit on Laos:

Souvanna Phouma's calling Pathet Laos join Gvt provided clearer proof he supporting them and giving welcome sign to Laotian Commies. According reports here all provinces except area around Vientiane supporting Gen Phoumi. Laos and especially Vientiane in critical situation. Thailand worried because Commies now at front gate while formerly in Peking; we will have face Commie subversion and interference now. No doubt Commie influence behind Lao trouble which reflected stepped up Commie offensive in Far East as result reduced field for subversion in Europe and Middle East. Convinced Souvanna Phouma would not ask SEATO help since he supporting Commies. Gen Phoumi unable demand SEATO help since he not Lao Primin. Laos could not expect more aid from US. Thailand unable aid Laos since we only poor neighboring country.

Sarit also noted without comment reports that Cambodia had offered ally with Laos in federation.

3 5 0 Dep. Afghanistan (Kaw, Emb.)

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9/9/60

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Foreign Service of the United States of America

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Charge:

Control:

Date:

POST reported additional Sarit statements to effect Thailand most concerned Laos situation but America considers Laos small matter giving greater attention to Congo. Vietminh soldiers would be unable get along with Kong Le soldiers because each group would try be more important.

WORLD also quoted Gen Thanom saying Thai Gvt right in not recognizing new Lao Gvt since it obvious Souvanna Phouma wanted run Laos with aid Commie Pathet Lao. Asked whether Gen Phoumi would be considered rebel if he fought Souvanna Phouma Gvt, Thanom replied "not if he successful."

POST reported opinion Gen Thanom that Souvanna Phouma having been Primin before had greater political cunning than Gen Phoumi. Flow food Vientiane stopped by Vientiane authorities, not Thailand. Thailand awaiting official Lao request purchase rice.

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POL:JSRoy/sra
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Foreign Service of the United States of America

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Classification

Charge: EMBASSY

Control: 30

Date: Sept 2, 1960

SENT TO: SECSTATE 416

RPTD INFO: VIENTIANE ~~XXX~~ 228, PHNOM PENH 132, SAIGON 155,

CINCPAC/POLAD 119

DEPT PASS DEPTAR for ACSI, USAF for AFCIN, CNO.

POST and WORLD reported Primin Sarit interview with reporters Sept 1 as follows:

Thai Gvt still deliberating whether recognize new Souvanna Phouma Gvt in view reports indicating Lao situation still serious. Kong Le able speak with stronger voice since estimated 2,000 Pathet Lao guerrillas and Vietminh disguised as Lao in Vientiane. If Kong Le unable reconcile with Souvanna this increased strength makes difficult attack on Vientiane. We do not like interfere Laos but Thailand concerned with situation because Laos so close. Commie activity increasing, for example Peking radio broadcasts attacking Sarit and Thai Gvt and leaflets distributed here accusing Sarit of interference Lao affairs and siding with Phoumi's Anti-Rebel Comite.

Comment: Above statement apparently made prior news that Kong Le approved new Gvt.

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POL: JSRoy/sra
Sept 2, 1960.

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350 Pol Affairs - Foreign (Comp)
X320 Pol. Mil. Affairs / Thailand

9-2-60

TELEGRAM

Foreign Service of the United States of America

OUTGOING AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

Secstate 398

Distr:
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ADCM
Pol 2
Files
Econ
SA
SEATO
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Classification

Charge: EMBASSY

Control: 435

Date: August 30, 1960

SENT TO: SECSTATE 398

RPTD INFO: VIENTIANE 220, PHNOM PENH 129, SAIGON 151

CINCPAC/POLAD 114

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 9488.32

DEPT PASS DEPTAR for ACSI, USAF for AFCIN, CNO.

BANGKOK WORLD Aug 30 quoted Interior Min Praphat Charusathien saying Kong Le not pro-Commie after all since he did not let Pathet Laos into Vientiane soon as city in his power. He first strict neutralist but like man with two wives soon found it difficult be neutral both sides. Under these circumstances easy fall into political trap. Reports indicate position ousted Somsanith Gvt and Anti-Rebel Comite improving while that Vientiane rebel group deteriorating. Mekong incident involving shooting at two Thai patrol boats should be taken seriously but long history friendly relations between Laos and Thailand should be considered also. Laos troops who caused incident undisciplined and when incident occurred Mekong flooded and Thai boats may have drifted too far toward Lao side. Further shooting could be avoided by staying away from border and giving no provocation. No economic blockade of Laos. Trade stopped because Lao situation uncertain. Trade would resume when Vientiane

330 Re Laotian - Laos (Coup)

P-30-60

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situation normalized. Thailand had forwarded postal matter to Vientiane.

WORLD also quoted Acting Fonmin Boon Charoenchai saying Khampan Panya came Bangkok in official capacity as Somsanith Gvt Fonmin to inform Lao Emb Bangkok of real Lao situation. Thai Gvt entirely correct in not recognizing Vientiane Gvt Prince Souvanna Phouma. Re Mekong incident, Thai Emb Vientiane ordered investigate and warn Lao authorities refrain from further acts violence; otherwise, Thailand would be forced sue for damages and point to fact intl law violated in several instances.

Meanwhile, Thai press speculated that Kong Le and key members coup group had fled from Vientiane to foreign country Aug 26 to avoid court-martial. Kong Le aided in escape by foreign country behind coup group. SARN SERI noted additional reports of rebels firing at Thais. SIAM NIKORN reported Phoumi had set up new paratroop unit to be employed in seizure Vientiane and was trying hire two-engine aircraft from foreign airline to transport paratroopers to strategic points around Vientiane.

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DWB
JOHNSON

JG

POL: JSRoy/sra
Aug 30, 1960.

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Foreign Service of the United States of America

OUTGOING AmEmbassy, Bangkok

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Charge: Embassy

Control: 368

Date: 26 Aug 60

SENT TO: SecState WASHINGTON 352

RPTD INFO: AmEmbassy VIENTIANE 201

" PHNOM PENH 118

" SAIGON 136

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 9488.32

Primin Sarit quoted Bangkok World today saying Thailand would not like any Communist backed party take over Laos and that TG would not even be happy with compromise brought about with influence Pathet Lao. Although Thailand would adhere to policy non-interference Laos, country would be forced protect itself against expansion Communism. Primin said he had received unofficial reports that Prince Souphanouvong staying in Souvanna Phouma's house and that 300 PL rebels had joined Kong Le's battalion Vientiane armed with weapons brought Laos under U.S. aid program. Thousands of rifles had been distributed. Referring to meeting 23d between Souvanna Phouma and Phoumi, Sarit said he only informed that Phoumi had agreed halt military movements during negotiations and implied he not sure problems could be settled by peaceful means. He expressed hope situation would return normal as soon as illegal Souvanna Phouma government dissolved. Sarit also dismissed charges Radio Vientiane that Thai paratroopers arrested Vientiane and said Thai Fonmin had asked

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350 Pol Afghan - Laos

8-26-60

TELEGRAM

Foreign Service of the United States of America

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Date:

Souvanna Phouma government substantiate charges, but no reply received from Vientiane. Emphasized Thailand "will not interfere domestic affairs of neighbor".

Thai language press carries similar stories (except most say 600 PL in Vientiane) with additional items concerning press interview Thanom, Deputy Primin and Defense Min, who said Kong Le supported by Hanoi and Peking and that six to seven hundred PL soldiers now in Vientiane. He stated results Souvanna Phouma-Phoumi discussions not yet disclosed but added Phoumi will probably move closer Vientiane if Kong Le refuses carry out orders for PL withdraw from Vientiane.

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UNGER

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POL:DNBatson:la
Aug. 26, 1960

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