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September 25, 1969

NODIS REVIEW
Cat. A - Caption removed; transferred to C/FADRC
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Reviewed by: Ambassador W. Wilman, II
Date: 9/16/96 19

SECRETARY'S DELEGATION
TO THE
TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
NEW YORK, September, 1969

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

Date: September 23, 1969

Time: 12:30

Place: US Mission

SUBJECT: Secretary's Bilateral Meeting with Foreign Minister Thanat on September 23, 1969 -- U.S. Congressional Concern over Laos (Part 3 of 6)

PARTICIPANTS:

U.S.: The Secretary
Amb. Yost
Mr. Clark

FOREIGN: FonMin Thanat
Amb. to UN Anand
Amb. Designate to US Sunthorn
Spec. Asst to the FonMin Birobhangse

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The Secretary said we are now under pressure from Congress over the situation in Laos. Thanat asked what we planned to do in this regard. The Secretary said we still have time and will be prepared for the pressure when it comes. He said he would have a better idea of our actual position after he returned from his trip to Washington on Thursday. He went on to add that the present questioning on Laos was being done by the Symington Committee which was reasonable and said it was entirely possible we would be able to work it out. Thanat said he saw the concern over Laos as one more aspect of the same

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problem. The initial focus was on Thailand and had now shifted to Laos. He was concerned over talk of US backing for Lao units and reports of Thai soldiers operating within Laos in Lao uniforms. He said just today someone had made the ridiculous statement that there were 5,000 Thai troops in Laos. He went on to say that yesterday the Lao representative had made a very good speech in the GA, giving the number of North Vietnamese forces in Laos and outlining in detail the crimes that had been committed there by the North Vietnamese. It was indeed unfortunate this was not covered in the US press, not even to the extent of giving the figure of 40,000 North Vietnamese troops in Laos. Thanat said he was going to Washington on October 3 to address the Institute on Foreign Affairs. With the Secretary's agreement, he would again hit the number of Vietnamese troops in Laos. He said first it had been Viet Nam, then Thailand, and now Laos, and he was beginning to feel like one of the three Musketeers. He cited Prime Minister Souvana Phouma's denial of any Thai forces operating in Laos and said, in fact, there were none. Those Thai who might be in Laos had resigned from the Thai army and gone as volunteers. They were cut off from any official tie with the Thai Government. The Secretary said such an approach would be helpful. Thanat said he did not plan to use a text for his speech, but hoped to have his remarks recorded. The Secretary asked if Thanat would be in Washington on the 4th and the Foreign Minister replied he would be coming back right after his speech, but the timing was not yet definite. The Secretary said he hoped to see Thanat in Washington.

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