

Air Mail  
HR70-14

Department of State

TELEGRAM

APPROVED FOR  
RELEASE DATE:  
13-Sep-2010

67720

SECRET 806

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 13145 290420Z

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ACTION SS 30

INFO OCT 01, CCO 00, SSO 00, NSCE 00, /0-1 W

O R 290355Z SEP 69  
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 468  
INFO AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

Cable Secretariat Routing:  
EXDIS Background Use Only:  
FILE, CS/RF, DCI (orig),  
D/DCI, DDP, SDO, D/OCI,  
D/ONE, C/FE, G/INT,  
D/OER.

S E C R E T BANGKOK 13145

EXDIS

SUBJECT: CHANGE IN PUBLIC POSITION ON US AIR OPERATIONS IN LAOS  
REF: A) STATE 164793; B) VIENTIANE 4612; C) BANGKOK 1308

1. WELCOME DEPARTMENT'S DECISION REPORTED REF A THAT WE SHOULD BE PREPARED TO ADOPT A MORE FORTHCOMING PUBLIC POSITION ON US AIR OPERATIONS IN LAOS WHICH, AS DISCUSSED IN REF C, I BELIEVE CAN BE MANAGED IN SUCH MANNER AS TO HELP FORESTALL OTHERWISE INCREASING PRESSURES TO CURTAIL OR END OUR SUPPORT OF RLG.

2. I BELIEVE TAKING THIS STEP WILL HAVE QUITE FAVORABLE IMPACT ON THAI LEADERS WHO WILL SEE IT AS A REALISTIC DEVELOPMENT AND ALSO APPRECIATE POSSIBLE IMPACT ON US DOMESTIC SCENE. SINCE, HOWEVER, IT IS FROM THAI BASES THAT LAOS AIR OPERATIONS ARE LAUNCHED, RTG SHOULD BE BROUGHT INTO THE PICTURE IN ADVANCE. I URGE THAT SECRETARY OR OTHER SENIOR OFFICIAL RAISE THIS MATTER WITH FONMIN THANAT WHILE HE IS IN WASHINGTON. ALTHOUGH THIS INVOLVES PREEMPTING SOMEWHAT DEPARTMENT' DISCUSSION WITH SOUVANNA, FORESHADOWED REF B, THANAT CAN BE RELIED ON TO BE DISCREET AND CAN BE TOLD WE HAVE YET TO WORK THIS OUT IN FINAL FORM WITH LAO. HOWEVER, I FEEL WE SHOULD NOT ASSUME THERE WILL BE TIME TO WAIT TO DISCUSS THIS UNTIL THANAT RETURNS TO BANGKOK.

3. I WILL BE MOST INTERESTED TO LEARN AT PROPER TIME OF DEPARTMENT'S THINKING ON FUTURE HANDLING OF FAR MORE TRICKY MATTERS SUCH AS PRAIRIE FIRE, STERRA ROMEO, AND THE CASS-ATTACHE ADVISORY EFFORT PARTICULARLY REGION II, AS NOTED PARA 5D REF C. GP-1.

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PAGE 01 VIENTI 06612 280639Z

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ACTION SS 30

INFO OCT 01, SSO 00, CCO 00, NSCE 00, /021 W

O R 280620Z SEP 69  
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6204  
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA  
AMEMBASSY SAIGON  
CINCPAC 3930

Cable Secretariat Routing:  
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S E C R E T VIENTIANE 6612

EXDIS

SUBJ: CHANGE IN PUBLIC POSITION ON US AIR OPERATIONS IN LAOS

REF: STATE 164793

1. DCM AND I CALLED ON SOUVANNA AS SOON AS WE COULD THIS MORNING, AFTER TOUCHING UPON HIS SCHEDULE IN WASHINGTON (SEPTEL) AND READING HIM NEW YORK TIMES EDITORIAL OF SEPTEMBER 27 QUOTED IN DEPTEL 164814. WE WENT OVER WORD BY WORD REFTEL. WE ALSO TRANSLATED PARA 4 DEPTEL 127323 OF JULY 31. THE ONLY POINT WE DID NOT RAISE WAS POSSIBILITY OF HIS CONSULTING WITH DEPUTY PRIMIN. SOUVANNA JOTTED DOWN KEY DATES OF REQUESTS TO CO-CHAIRMEN AND ICC REPORT NUMBER 35. HE ALSO ADDED THAT ONE COULD REFER TO HIS MESSAGE TO THE CO-CHAIRMEN IN JUNE-JULY THIS YEAR. SOUVANNA APPRECIATED THE DEPARTMENT'S ACTION IN SHARING WITH HIM ITS CONTINGENCY THOUGHTS. HE SAID HE WOULD REFLECT ON THE MATTER CAREFULLY AND WOULD BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE SCENARIO WITH DEPARTMENT OFFICERS AS SOON AS HE GOT TO NEW YORK ON OCTOBER 4.

2. WITH REGARD TO A VAGUENESS CONCERNING JUST WHEN US BOMBING BEGAN, SOUVANNA CAUGHT THIS POINT AND SAID HE CERTAINLY AGREED THAT ONE SHOULD NOT BE SPECIFIC, ADDING THAT HE REMEMBERED ONLY

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PAGE 02 VIENTI 06612 280639Z

TOO WELL THAT HE MADE THE REQUEST FOLLOWING HIS PEACE OFFER TO  
SOUPHANOUVONG AND THE FALL OF THE NEUTRALIST POSITIONS IN THE

PDU: GP-1.

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PAGE 01 STATE 164793

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INFO OCT 01, 00, 00, 00, NSCE 00, FILE 01, 032 R

66607 DRAFTED BY: EA/LC:MSPRATT:TJBARNES. APPROVED BY: THE ACTING SECRETARY EA/LC - MR. CORCORAN EA/ - MR. GREEN LVCA - MR. FUTTERMAN DDD/ MR. PACKARD WHITE HOUSE - MR. KISSINGER (SUBSTANCE) EA - MR. MOORE S/S - MR. ELIOT

Handwritten notes and a circled number 5.

101176

Z R 271725Z SEP 69 ZFF4 FM SECSTATE WASHDC TO AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE FLASH INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON AMEMBASSY BANGKOK AMEMBASSY MOSCOW AMEMBASSY PARIS AMEMBASSY OTTAWA AMEMBASSY SAIGON CINCPAC

SECRET STATE 164793

EXDIS: TODEL: 3289

ALSO FOR EMBASSY PARIS

SUBJECT: CHANGE IN PUBLIC POSITION ON US AIR OPERATIONS IN LAOS

REF: STATE 127323

1. THE DEPARTMENT HAS CONCLUDED THAT DESPITE DISADVANTAGES WE SHOULD BE PREPARED TO ADOPT A MORE FORTHCOMING PUBLIC POSITION ON US AIR OPERATIONS IN LAOS IN THE COMING WEEKS. WE BELIEVE IT ESSENTIAL IN THAT EVENT FOR SOUVANNA TO BE THE FIRST TO

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ADMIT TO AND TO JUSTIFY THESE AIR OPERATIONS. YOU THEREFORE SHOULD INFORM SOUVANNA THAT WE ANTICIPATE THAT IT MAY WELL BE COME DESIRABLE FOR HIM TO MAKE A PUBLIC STATEMENT AT SOME POINT DURING HIS VISIT IN THE UNITED STATES. HIS STATEMENT WOULD BE SUBSEQUENTLY CONFIRMED BY THE US IN A STATEMENT OF ITS OWN.

2. WHILE THIS IS MERELY CONTINGENCY PLANNING AT THIS STAGE-- AND THIS POINT SHOULD BE UNDERScoreD WITH SOUVANNA-- WE THINK THAT IT IS NOT TOO EARLY FOR HIM TO BE CONSIDERING THE ELEMENTS THAT SHOULD BE COVERED IN ANY SUCH STATEMENT, AND WE ALSO ASSUME THAT HE WOULD PROBABLY WISH TO TOUCH BASES WITH THE KING AND DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE.

3. AMONG THE POINTS THAT MIGHT BE CONSIDERED AS HE BEGINS TO TURN OVER IN HIS MIND THE ELEMENTS OF A DISCLOSURE STATEMENT ARE, FOR EXAMPLE, THOSE CITED IN PARA 4 REFTEL. HE COULD CITE ANTECEDENT DRV VIOLATIONS OF THE GENEVA AGREEMENTS IN EARLY 1964, AS CONFIRMED IN ICC REPORT 35 OF 16 SEPTEMBER 1965 TO THE CO-CHAIRMAN. HE COULD CITE THE MAY 1964 NORTH VIETNAMESE ATTACKS AGAINST SOUVANNA'S NEUTRALISTS ON THE PLAIN OF JARS, AS WELL AS INCREASED INFILTRATION THROUGH LAOS INTO SOUTH VIETNAM. HE COULD EMPHASIZE THAT HE HAD ASKED THE US -- AS HE HIMSELF HAD PREVIOUSLY REVEALED TO THE PRESS -- TO BEGIN CONDUCTING RECONNAISSANCE FLIGHTS OVER LAOS IN MAY 1964 AS A NECESSARY ALTERNATIVE TO THE LACK OF ICC MONITORING OF THE MILITARY SITUATION IN HIS COUNTRY. BECAUSE OF THE NVA ATTACKS, SOUVANNA ON 19 MAY 1964 REQUESTED THE CO-CHAIRMAN TO CALL FOR ARTICLE 4 CONSULTATIONS, AS PROVIDED UNDER THE GENEVA AGREEMENTS. FOLLOWING THE FAILURE OF THE ARTICLE 4 CONSULTATIONS TO RESTORE TRANQUILITY, AND IN RESPONSE TO FURTHER NORTH VIETNAMESE ATTACKS, SOUVANNA, IN EXERCISE OF THE INHERENT RIGHT OF SELF-DEFENSE OF THE KINGDOM OF LAOS, ASKED THE US FOR DIRECT AIR OPERATIONS TO HELP DEFEND LAOS AGAINST DRV INTERVENTIONS AND AGAINST ILLEGAL DRV USE OF LAO TERRITORY TO ATTACK SOUTH VIETNAM. IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF SOUVANNA WERE VAGUE AS TO JUST WHEN US BOMBING OR TACTICAL AIR SUPPORT BEGAN IN LAOS. FYI. IT BEGAN IN JUNE 1964. END FYI.

4. FOR THE SAKE OF FORM, SOUVANNA SHOULD BE PREPARED TO INFORM THE UK AND USSR AS CO-CHAIRMAN OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE PRIOR TO STATEMENT TO PRESS. HE CAN SEND A LETTER AND PERHAPS CONTACT THEIR REPRESENTATIVES IN NEW YORK.

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5. YOU SHOULD UNDERSCORE WITH SOUVANNA THAT IF ANY DEPARTURE FROM OUR MUTUAL POLICY OF NON-ADMISSION OF BOMBINGS SHOULD APPEAR NECESSARY, US WOULD COORDINATE WITH HIM ON THE MATTER AND WE WOULD EXPECT SOUVANNA TO COORDINATE WITH US PRIOR TO ANY MOVE ON HIS PART.

GP-1: RICHARDSON

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