



# Intelligence Information Cable

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DIST 7 FEBRUARY 1975

COUNTRY LAOS

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SUBJECT 1. FEBRUARY JCIA PLENARY SESSION, HIGHLIGHTED BY EXCHANGES ON LPF CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS IN MILITARY REGION II, WITHDRAWAL OF NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS, MISSING-IN-ACTION, REFUGEES AND PERSONAL EXCHANGES BETWEEN SOUKAN VILAYSAN, LOUN SISOUNOL AND SOTH PHETRASY

2. DECISION BY VIENTIANE SIDE JCIA DELEGATION TO FORM A NEW POLITICAL PARTY WITH SOUKAN AS ITS HEAD

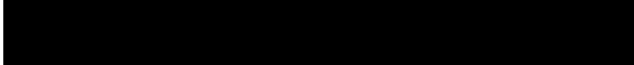
SUMMARY:

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END SUMMARY.

1. ON [REDACTED] FEBRUARY 1975 THE JOINT COMMISSION TO IMPLEMENT THE AGREEMENT (JCIA) MET IN PLENARY SESSION UNDER THE JOINT CHAIRMANSHIP OF VIENTIANE SIDE CHIEF DELEGATE S O U K A N VILAYSAN AND LAO PATRIOTIC FRONT (LPF) CHIEF DELEGATE S O T H PHEPRASY.

2. SOUKAN, AS CHIEF OF THE HOST DELEGATION, PROPOSED DISCUSSION OF THE DESIGNATION OF A HOT POINT AT PHOU SOUNG (TG 3654)-NANAN (TG

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4153) IN MILITARY REGION II, MISSING-IN-ACTION (MIA) AND MISCELLANEOUS QUESTION. SOTH AGREED TO DISCUSS THE HOT POINT QUESTION, ADDING THAT BOTH SIDES MUST CONTINUE TO PUSH UNTIL ALL THE HOT POINTS HAVE BEEN DESIGNATED. THE ISSUE OF THE MIA, HE SAID, REMAINED ON THE AGENDA FROM THE 23 JANUARY PLENARY SESSION. SOTH PROPOSED DISCUSSION OF THE REFUGEE QUESTION BY REMARKING THAT IT MUST BE SETTLED QUICKLY SO THAT THE REFUGEES MAY BE RETURNED TO THEIR HOME AREAS BEFORE THE RAINY SEASON. HE ALSO SAID THAT THE REFUGEE COMMISSION CONSISTING OF MEMBERS FROM THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNION (PGNU), THE JOINT NATIONAL POLITICAL COUNCIL (JNPC), AS WELL AS THE JCIA, SHOULD BE [ \*\* ]

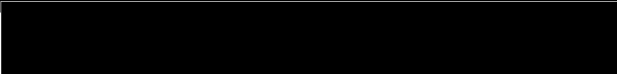
OF THE JOINT POLICE FORCE (JPF) AND PROTECTIVE MILITARY FORCE (PMF).

3. SOUKAN CHARGED THE LPF WITH CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS IN MILITARY REGION (MR) II AND REQUESTED THAT A HOT POINT BE DESIGNATED AT PHOU SOUNG-NANAN TO SEPARATE LPF AND LAO ARMED FORCES (LAR) UNITS IN THE AREA. THE LPF DELEGATION REJECTED DISCUSSION OF THE ISSUE BY CLAIMING THAT WHERE THERE IS VIENTIANE SIDE SMOKE, THERE IS ALSO FIRE. THERE FOLLOWED AN EXCHANGE OF RECRIMINATIONS, WITH THE LPF DELEGATION REFUSING TO ACCEPT BLAME AND ACCUSING THE VIENTIANE SIDE

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AND MR II COMMANDER GENERAL V A N G P A O. AFTER SEVERAL ACCUSATIONS AND COUNTERACCUSATIONS, BOTH SIDES DECIDED TO REFER THE QUESTION BACK TO THE CEASEFIRE SUBCOMMITTEE OF COLONEL S O M B O U N V O N G - P H R A C H A N H AND P H A O B O U N N A P H O L FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION. DURING THE DISCUSSION THE VIENTIANE SIDE DELEGATION TRIED TO PRESS THE LPF INTO PULLING ITS TROOPS BACK FROM THE IMMEDIATE PROXIMITY TO FAR POSITIONS IN THE AREA, BUT THE LPF DELEGATION BLOCKED THE PROPOSAL.

  
COMMENT:   
  


COMMENT: FAR POSITIONS ARE AT PHOU SOUNG. PATHET LAO UNITS MOVED INTO PHOU THAT (UNLOCATED), ATTEMPTING TO JUSTIFY SUCH ACTION BY DRAWING A MIDDLE-POINT LINE AT NANAN.)

4. ON THE SUBJECTS OF WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN TROOPS AND MIA, WHILE SOUKAN HAD PRESENTED THEM TOGETHER ON THE AGENDA, SOTH ATTEMPTED TO DISPOSE OF THEM TOGETHER AND MOVE ON TO DISCUSSION OF REFUGEES. SOUKAN, HOWEVER, BLOCKED SOTH'S EFFORT, SOTH QUOTED THE VIENTIANE SIDE AS HAVING SAID THAT AMERICAN AND THAI TROOPS HAVE LEFT LAOS. THE LPF HAS ALWAYS SAID THAT THERE ARE NO FOREIGN TROOPS IN THE LPF ZONE. ON MIA, SOTH SAID THAT MANY WERE KILLED ON BOTH SIDES IN COMBAT, WITH SOME HAVING BEEN BURIED AND SOME

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HAVING BEEN LEFT WHERE THEY LAY. LATER, WITH THE AMERICAN BOMBING, HE SAID, ALL REMAINS WERE DESTROYED AND LOST. SOUHA SAID THAT THE LPF DELEGATION KNEW THAT IT WAS THE FOREIGNERS WHO WERE FORCING THE VIENTIANE SIDE DELEGATION TO RAISE THE ISSUE, REMARKING THAT THE LPF DELEGATION DOES NOT UNDERSTAND THE HASTE SINCE THE DEAD ARE DEAD AND DISCUSSION OF THEM WILL NOT BRING THEM BACK TO LIFE.

5. ON THE WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN TROOPS, SOUKAN SAID IN REPLY THAT THE LPF HAD REFUSED FOR SIX MONTHS TO SIGN THE JCIA DRAFT PAPER ON THE SUBJECT, INSISTING THAT THE WORDS THAI AND AMERICAN BE LEFT IN AND THE WORDS NORTH VIETNAMESE BE LEFT OUT. IN THE SEVENTH MONTH THE VIENTIANE SIDE CEDED THE POINT IN ORDER FOR THE DRAFT PAPER TO BE SIGNED SO THAT APPLICATION OF IT MIGHT PROCEED AND THE JCIA AS A WHOLE MOVE ON TO OTHER THINGS. NOW, SOUKAN SAID, THE LPF IS REFUSING TO DISCUSS APPLICATION OF THE JCIA PAPERS JUST SIGNED. SOUKAN SAID THAT WHEN A CLAIM IS MADE THAT THERE ARE NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS AT A PARTICULAR LOCATION, THE JCIA SHOULD PROMPTLY MOVE A TEAM THERE TO SEE WHETHER OR NOT THE CLAIM IS TRUE.

6. ON THE MIA SUBJECT, SOUKAN SAID THAT THE VIENTIANE SIDE DELEGATION WISHED TO DISCUSS LAO DEAD, PRISONERS OF WAR (POW) AND MIA, NOT THOSE OF THE FOREIGNERS. FROM ESCAPED POW, HE SAID, THE

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VIENTIANE SIDE DELEGATION KNOWS THAT THERE ARE STILL SOME FAR POW IN LPF HANDS AND THAT THE VIENTIANE SIDE DELEGATION WOULD LIKE TO ASCERTAIN HOW MANY THERE ARE AND WHO THEY ARE. THE VIENTIANE SIDE DELEGATION WOULD ALSO LIKE TO HAVE ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS RAISED IN THE LISTS SUBMITTED TO THE LPF AND FORWARDED TO SAM NEUA; HOW MANY VIENTIANE SIDE PERSONNEL REMAINED IN THE LPF ZONE VOLUNTARILY AND WHO THEY ARE; AND HOW MANY HAVE DIED AND WHO THEY WERE, SO THAT EVENTUALLY BOTH SIDES MAY MOVE ON TO THE MIA QUESTION. ONCE THE QUESTIONS ON THE LAO ARE ANSWERED, BOTH SIDES MAY MOVE ON TO THE SAME QUESTIONS ON FOREIGNERS SINCE THERE ARE WIVES AND MOTHERS WHO DO NOT KNOW WHETHER THEIR HUSBANDS AND SONS ARE DEAD OR ALIVE, SINCE THE WAR IS NOW OVER, SOUKAN SAID, BOTH SIDES SHOULD BE ABLE, FOR HUMANITARIAN

  
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REASONS, TO RESOLVE SUCH QUESTIONS FOR THE FAMILIES OF THE MISSING MEN. BOTH AGREED THAT SOUKAN HAD MADE A GOOD POINT BUT THAT THE TWO SIDES COULD NOT SEND TEAMS INTO THE JUNGLE WITHOUT PRIOR STUDY OF SUCH A COMPLICATED QUESTION. THE TWO SIDES FINALLY AGREED THAT THE PROBLEM SHOULD BE RETURNED TO THE COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF PHAO AND A R Y A PHIMMASONE FOR FURTHER STUDY.  COMMENT: ON 5 FEBRUARY ARYA HAD ATTEMPTED TO MEET WITH PHAO, BUT THE LATTER SAID THAT THE LPF HAD NOT RECEIVED A REPLY FROM SAM NEUA ON THE LISTS OF NAMES OF MIA PROVIDED BY THE VIENTIANE SIDE DELEGATION. THEREFORE, PHAO SAID, HE HAD NOTHING TO TALK ABOUT.)

7. ON THE REFUGEE ISSUE, SOUKAN SAID THAT THE JCIA HAS NOW RECEIVED THE NAMES OF FIVE REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE PGNU AND EIGHT, THREE PERMANENT AND FIVE ALTERNATE, FROM THE JNPC FOR THE REFUGEE COMMISSION, OF WHICH K I T H O N G VONGSAY AND P R A D I T H THIENG-THAM ARE SET TO BE COCHAIRMAN. HE SAID THAT ONCE THE JCIA HAS FORMALLY APPROVED THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMISSION, IT CAN BEGIN OPERATING AND MAKING DECISIONS IN SUCH A WAY THAT THE RETURN OF THE REFUGEES WILL NOT BE DELAYED BY JCIA PREOCCUPATION WITH OTHER THINGS. SOUKAN SAID THAT WHILE ROYAL AIR LAO (RAL) HAS BEEN ASKED TO PROVIDE THE AIRCRAFT TO FLY THE REFUGEES BACK, RAL HAS ASKED FOR MORE MONEY THAN


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THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSION FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR) REPRESENTATIVE IS WILLING TO PAY. THE UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE AND THE PGNU ARE NEGOTIATING WITH RAL ON THE MATTER. IN THE INTERIM, SOUKAN SAID; ONLY TWO LAO AIR FORCE C-123'S ARE AVAILABLE, EVEN THOUGH A LARGER NUMBER WOULD BE DESIRABLE. SOUKAN ADDED THAT THE VIENTIANE SIDE IS NOT TRYING TO DELAY THE RETURN OF THE REFUGEES BUT ON THE CONTRARY WOULD LIKE TO EXPEDITE THE OPERATION.

8. AT THE  FEBRUARY MEETING OF THE VIENTIANE  
{ \*\* } FAR COLONEL T H O N G, REPRESENTATIVE ON REFUGEE MATTERS UNDER FAR DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL WAREFARE GENERAL E T A M SINGVONGSA, GAVE A REPORT ON REFUGEES. HE REPORTED THAT 1,107 REFUGEES, CONSISTING OF 209 FAMILIES, HAD SO FAR BEEN SENT TO PHONE SAVANH ON THE PLAINE DES JARRES. THAT FLIGHTS WERE CONTINUING AND THAT APPROXIMATELY 14,000 REFUGEES HAD ASKED TO RETURN TO THEIR VILLAGES IN THE LPF ZONE. THONG THEN PRESENTED A REPORT, DATED 24 JANUARY, ON LPF ORGANIZATION AND PLANS FOR HANDLING REFUGEES RETURNING TO THE LPF ZONE. THE INFORMATION WAS ACQUIRED FROM THE DEBRIEFING OF A DEUANIST NEUTRALIST SOLDIER WHO RALLIED TO FAR ON 11 JANUARY. THE REPORT INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING:

A. POLITICAL AND MILITARY TRAINING FOR OFFICIALS IN CON-

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TACT WITH RETURNING REFUGEES.

B. INSTRUCTIONS FOR VILLAGE OFFICIALS, ELDERS AND OTHERS ON HOW TO KEEP WATCH ON RETURNING REFUGEES.


C. COUNTERINTELLIGENCE TRAINING FOR POLICE OFFICERS, VILLAGE LEADERS AND MILITIAMEN TO COUNTER RIGHTIST FACTION ESPIONAGE PLANS.

D. DISPATCH OF LPF OFFICIALS TO STAY IN EACH VILLAGE TO WHICH THE FIRST REFUGEES WILL BE RETURNING.

E. SELECTION OF SPECIFIC VILLAGES FOR THE REFUGEES, WITH ONLY 20 HOUSES PERMITTED IN EACH.

F. FOUR-PHASE DISPATCH OF VILLAGERS, REGARDLESS OF THEIR VILLAGES OF ORIGIN, TO WORK IN THE PADDY FIELDS ON SPECIFIC VILLAGES.

G. EXPROPRIATION BY THE LPF OF PRIVATELY OWNED ASSETS, INCLUDING LAND, BELONGING TO THE PEASANTS IN XIENG KHOUANG AREA.

9.  COMMENT: DURING THE PERIOD 30 JANUARY - 6 FEBRUARY, LPF MEMBERS OF THE JNPC WERE BUTTOLING THEIR VIENTIANE SIDE COUNTER-PARTS AND COMPLAINING THAT MANY REFUGEES HAVE NOT BEEN OPTING TO RETURN TO THEIR HOME VILLAGES IN THE LPF ZONE. THEIR COMPLAINTS CENTERED ON MR II REFUGEES, POINTING OUT THAT THE MEO, LAO THEUNG AND OTHER HILLTRIBE PEOPLES HAVE NOT YET AGREED TO RETURN IN THE NEAR

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FUTURE. LO FOUNG, A MEO, HAS BEEN ESPECIALLY CAUSTIC AND ANGRY IN HIS REMONSTRATIONS AND HAS BLAMED THE VIENTIANE SIDE FOR NOT ENCOURAGING THE REFUGEES TO RETURN AND, IN FACT, FOR ENCOURAGING THEM TO ADOPT A WAIT-AND-SEE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE REFUGEES' CHIEF BONE OF CONTENTION, THE RIGHT OF FREE MOVEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO ZONES. LO FOUNG, T H A M M A S I N, (MAKA) B O U D D I SOURIYASAK AND THE OTHER REPRESENTATIVES TAKE A POSITIVE APPROACH AND TRY TO PERSUADE THE REFUGEES TO RETURN AT THIS TIME. WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE RIGHT OF FREE MOVEMENT, THE LPF REPRESENTATIVES CONTINUED TO PRESENT THE STANDARD LPF RESPONSE THAT THE TIME FOR OPENING THE TWO ZONES WAS NOT YET PROPITIOUS, WITH SECURITY PROBLEMS REMAINING TO BE RESOLVED. ALL DEMARCATION STAKES MUST BE PLANTED. REGARDING THE REFUGEES' SECOND MAJOR PROBLEM, NORTH VIETNAM { \*\* } THE LPF REPRESENTATIVES AVOIDED THE QUESTION.)

10. THE JCIA DISCUSSED AT LENGTH THE 12 INDIVIDUALS BEING HELD AT PMF JOINT HEADQUARTERS. THE VIENTIANE SIDE DELEGATION AGREED THAT THEY ARE TO BE CONSIDERED SUSPECTS, NOT PRISONERS, UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THE RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION BEING CONDUCTED, INCLUDING THEIR INTERROGATION, PROVED OTHERWISE. THE LPF DELEGATION REQUESTED THAT THE 12 BE SET FREE DURING THE PERIOD OF INVESTIGATION. THE VIENTIANE

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SIDE DELEGATION REFUSED BUT POINTED OUT THAT THE 12 ARE NOT CONSIDERED AS PRISONERS NOR ARE THEY TREATED AS SUCH, RECEIVE BETTER FOOD, HAVE BETTER MATTRESSES AND MAY HAVE VISITORS, EVEN REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PRESS. SOUKAN SAID THAT RESTRICTIONS EXISTED FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE 12 SINCE NEITHER SIDE COULD AFFORD TO HAVE ANYTHING HAPPEN TO THEM WHILE THEY ARE IN CUSTODY, SOUKAN SAID THAT THE VIENTIANE SIDE DID NOT LIKE BEING ACCUSED WHEN EFFORTS WERE BEING MADE TO PROTECT THE 12.

11. SOTH GAVE A LONG DESCRIPTION OF HIS AID-SEEKING MISSIONS TO FRIENDLY COUNTRIES, ENDING WITH CHARGES THAT SOUKAN AND LOUN HAD BEEN ATTACKING HIM AND THE LPF IN THE PRESS. SOTH THEN MADE ACCUSATIONS CONCERNING PRESS COVERAGE OF CURRENT DELIBERATIONS OF THE KING'S COUNCIL ON DISSOLVING THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, THERE WERE SEVERAL EXCHANGES OF CHARGES AND COUNTERCHARGES INVOLVING SOUKAN, SOUN AND SOTH. SOTH THEN QUOTED THE STATEMENT BY RADIO SAM NEUA THAT LOUN'S HOME IS IN AMERICA, LOUN REPLIED THAT HE KNEW OF RADIO SAN NEUA CRITICISM OF HIM, WHICH SOTH DID NOT DENY. LOUN SUGGESTED THAT SOTH GO LIVE IN HIS FATHER'S HOUSE, WHICH IS MUCH CLOSER TO LAOS THAN AMERICA AND IS LOCATED JUST ACROSS LAOS' EASTERN BORDER. LOUN WENT ON TO SAY THAT IN THE PRESS HE WAS SPEAKING FOR HIMSELF, AS A CITIZEN OF VIENTIANE, WHICH ONE IS STILL FREE TO DO IN VIENTIANE. HE ADDED

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THAT HE WAS GOING TO KEEP ON CRITICIZING THE LPF AND ITS METHODS, AND THE LACK OF SINCERE EFFORTS ON ITS PART TO UNIFY THE COUNTRY. HE TOLD THE LPF DELEGATION THAT IF IT THOUGHT HIS EARLIER REMARKS DISTURBING, THERE WILL BE A REAL SURPRISE WHEN HIS NEXT PRESS RELEASE APPEARS IN A FEW DAYS. [REDACTED] COMMENT: LOUN, WITH POLITE IRONY, DID AN EFFECTIVE JOB OF COUNTERING SOTH'S CHARGES.)

12. [REDACTED] COMMENT: FOLLOWING THE PROTEST IN THE JCIA AGAINST LOUN'S 14 JANUARY ARTICLE IN THE NEWSPAPER "SIENGSERI" WHICH ATTACKED SANAN SOTHICHAK AND THE LPF FOR THEIR ROLE IN STRIKES AND DEMONSTRATIONS, LOUN AND ANOTHER VIENTIANE SIDE MEMBER WORKED OUT A STRATEGY ON [REDACTED] FEBRUARY TO DETER THE LPF IN ITS CURRENT EFFORTS TO ISOLATE AND DENIGRATE HIM. A REBUTTAL TO THE PROTEST WRITTEN BY SOTH, WRITTEN BY LOUN AND EXPANDING ON THE INVOLVEMENT OF SANAN AND

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THE LPF IN DEMONSTRATIONS, WAS TO BE SENT TO VIENTIANE NEWSPAPERS FOR RELEASE ON 8 FEBRUARY. CONCURRENTLY, SELECTED INDIVIDUALS IN THE MILITARY, IN THEIR OWN NAMES, WERE TO PREPARE ARTICLES SUPPORTING LOUN'S POSITION. SIMILARLY, ONE OR TWO INDIVIDUALS FROM THE CIVILIAN SECTOR WERE TO BE APPROACHED TO WRITE SIGNED SUPPORTING ARTICLES. AN OPEN LETTER WITH MORE { \*\* } WAS ALSO TO BE PREPARED FOR MASS SIGNATURES. THE TWO-FOLD OBJECTIVE WAS TO DEMONSTRATE THE CONSIDERABLE SUPPORT FOR LOUN'S VIEWS AND THE FUTILITY OF ANY MOVEMENT TO ISOLATE HIM AND DESTROY HIS CREDIBILITY, WHILE JOINING TOGETHER HIS FAR SUPPORTERS AS A POSSIBLE NUCLEUS FOR FUTURE ACTIONS. THE WEEK OF 10 TO 15 FEBRUARY WILL SEE THE EMERGENCE OF A VIENTIANE SIDE NEWSLETTER OF FACT SHEET WHICH WILL BE SENT REGULARLY TO APPROXIMATELY 200 LEADERS AND OPINION-MAKERS IN LAOS, AND WHICH WILL CARRY THE LOUN STORY IN ITS FIRST ISSUE).

13. THE VIENTIANE SIDE WENT INTO THE [ ] FEBRUARY PLENARY SESSION MUCH BETTER PREPARED THAN USUAL, HAVING DECIDED ON FIRM POSITIONS ON A VARIETY OF TOPICS AT THE [ ] FEBRUARY VIENTIANE SIDE JCIA MEETING, LARGELY ATTRIBUTABLE TO A CONVERSATION BETWEEN SOUKAN AND PRIME MINISTER S O U V A N N A PHOUMA, HELD IN LUANG PRABANG DURING THE WEEK OF 2 FEBRUARY. THE PRIME MINISTER TOLD

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SOUKAN OF HIS DISMAY OVER THE LACK OF COHESION AMONG THE MEMBERSHIP OF VIENTIANE SIDE AND URGED SOUKAN TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO UNITE AND STRENGTHEN THE VIENTIANE SIDE POSITION WITHIN THE JCIA. AT THE END OF THE SESSION SOTH APOLOGIZED TO SOUKAN, STATING THAT WITHIN THE JCIA THE MEMBERS OF NEITHER SIDE COULD AFFORD TO LET THEIR ATTITUDES RESULT IN PERSONAL ATTACKS ON ONE ANOTHER. SOUKAN WAS NOT MOLLIFIED BY SOTH'S APOLOGY AND WAS STILL LIVID LONG AFTER THE CLOSE OF THE SESSION.

14. IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE PLENARY SESSION, THE VIENTIANE SIDE DELEGATION MET INFORMALLY AND DISCUSSED THE POSSIBILITY OF FORMING A NEW POLITICAL PARTY ENCOMPASSING ALL MEMBERS FROM THE VIENTIANE SIDE, CIVILIAN AND MILITARY. THE DISCUSSION WAS AN OUTGROWTH OF SOUKAN'S EARLIER DISCUSSION IN LUANG PRABANG WITH THE PRIME MINISTER. MEMBERS OF THE VIENTIANE SIDE JCIA DELEGATION, INCLUDING SOUKAN AND LOUN, AGREED THAT THE JCIA WAS THE ONLY ORGANIZATION IN WHICH THE VIENTIANE SIDE POSITION WAS PUT FORTH VIGOROUSLY AND THAT THE LPF DOMINATED THE JNPC AND THE CABINET. SOUKAN, STILL ANGRY OVER LPF ARGUMENTS DURING THE PLENARY SESSION, URGED THAT THE VIENTIANE SIDE DELEGATION START TO EXERCISE LEADERSHIP. AFTER CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION, IT WAS TENTATIVELY DECIDED THAT A POLITICAL PARTY WOULD BE FORMED WITH

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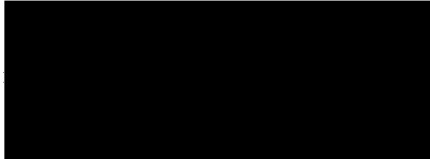
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THE VIENTIANE SIDE JCIA DELEGATION AS THE NUCLEUS. THE PARTY WILL BE CALLED THE NATIONAL PROGRESSIVE PARTY. THE NAME OF THE PARTY OF K A T A Y DONGSASORATH, PRIME MINISTER OF LAOS IN THE MID-1950'S. SOUKAN WAS CHOSEN TO HEAD THE PARTY. IT WAS DECIDED THAT ON 10 FEBRUARY SOUKAN WOULD TRAVEL TO LUANG PRABANG TO DISCUSS THE FORMATION OF THE NEW PARTY WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AND SEEK HIS GUIDANCE AND APPROVAL. NO FURTHER ACTION WAS TO BE TAKEN UNTIL AFTER SOUKAN'S TALK WITH THE PRIME MINISTER.

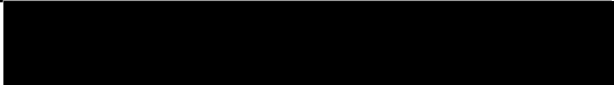
15. DURING THE 30 JANUARY GENERAL MEETING OF THE VIENTIANE SIDE LEADERSHIP, CHAIRED BY DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER L E U A M INSISIENGMAY AND ATTENDED BY MOST VIENTIANE SIDE MINISTERS AND SECRETARIES OF STATE AS WELL AS EIGHT OF THE VIENTIANE SIDE JNPC MEMBERS, SOUKAN DELIVERED A 15-MINUTE IMPASSIONED ADDRESS ON THE VIENTIANE SIDE'S LOSING THE POLITICAL CONFLICT TO THE LPF BY DEFAULT. IF THE VIENTIANE SIDE DOES NOT ROUSE ITSELF GET ORGANIZED AND ACTIVELY COMPETE WITH THE LPF, HE SAID, THE LPF WILL MOST CERTAINLY WIN AND TAKE OVER LAOS. SOUKAN'S SPEECH AROUSED MUCH POSITIVE RESPONSE AMONG HIS LISTENERS, WITH EVEN LEUAM SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF HIS REMARKS.

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