

~~SECRET~~EO 12958 3.4(b)(1)>25Yrs
(C)TO : OPERATIONAL IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON INFO OPERATIONAL
IMMEDIATE [REDACTED] SAIGON [REDACTED]EO 12958
3.4(b)(1)>25Yrs
(C)

FROM: [REDACTED] dated March 7, 1962

WASHINGTON PLEASE PASS DEPARTMENT; SAIGON [REDACTED]

EO 12958
3.4(b)(1)>25Yrs
(C)

[REDACTED] PASS ASSISTANT SECRETARY

HARRIMAN

REFERENCE: [REDACTED]

EO 12958
3.4(b)(1)>25Yrs
(C)

1. AS PHOUMI WAS AN HOUR LATE ARRIVING MORNING 7 MARCH FROM BANGKOK, [REDACTED] HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO TALK PRIVATELY WITH PRINCE BOUN OUM AT THE AIRPORT. [REDACTED] EXPLAINED THAT HE HAD TRIED IN VAIN TO SEE BOUN OUM EVENING 6 MARCH WHEN HE AND [REDACTED] HAD RETURNED FROM BANGKOK WHERE THEY HAD SEEN PHOUMI, AS THEY WANTED TO BRIEF BOUN OUM ON THEIR TALKS.

EO 12958
3.4(b)(1)>25Yrs
(S)

2. BOUN OUM WAS TOLD THAT WE HAD HEARD THROUGH RADIO BROADCAST THAT SOUVANNA PHOUMA AND SOUPHANOUVONG HAD REJECTED THE IDEA OF GOVERNMENT BY KING'S COUNCIL AND THEREFORE IT SEEMED THAT THE ONLY POSSIBLE SOLUTION WAS A COALITION GOVERNMENT HEADED BY SOUVANNA PHOUMA WITH THE MINISTRIES OF DEFENSE AND INTERIOR IN THE CENTER. WE HAD STRONGLY URGED PHOUMI TO ENTER THIS GOVERNMENT IN AS STRONG A POSITION AS HE COULD SO THAT HE COULD CONTINUE TO LEAD ANTI-COMMUNIST

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ELEMENTS AND TO PROTECT HIS SUPPORTERS. [REDACTED] WENT ON TO EXPLAIN THAT HE REALIZED THAT THIS WAS A VERY DIFFICULT DECISION FOR BOTH BOUN OUM AND PHOUMI TO TAKE; BUT IT APPEARS CLEAR THAT THE U. S. POSITION AS WELL AS WORLD OPINION DEMANDED A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO THE LAO CRISIS IN AS SHORT A TIME AS POSSIBLE. IN THIS CASE BOTH BOUN OUM AND PHOUMI COULD PLAY MAJOR ROLES IN BRINGING ABOUT A PEACEFUL SOLUTION.

3. BOUN OUM WAS TOLD THAT THE U. S. POLICY IS VERY CLEAR. PHOUMI HAD BEEN TOLD IN THE PAST THAT THE U. S. WOULD NOT SUPPORT HIM IN ANY MILITARY OFFENSIVE. NOW THE U. S. WILL NOT SUPPORT THE FAR IF THE SOVIETS ARE UNABLE TO CONTROL THE PL AND VM AND THE LATTER IN FACT ATTACK THE FAR.

4. BOUN OUM WAS TOLD THAT HE, AS THE LEADING PERSONALITY IN LAOS, HAD A LEADING ROLE TO PLAY AND WE WANTED HIM TO CONTINUE. NOW HIS ASSISTANCE WAS REQUIRED TO HELP PHOUMI CONVINCED OTHER CABINET MEMBERS THAT THE RIGHT COURSE OF ACTION WAS A COMPROMISE AND A DELEGATION HEADED BY PHOUMI ENTER THE COALITION GOVERNMENT OF SOUVANNA PHOUMA. BOUN OUM WAS ALSO TOLD THAT WE FELT SO STRONGLY ABOUT THIS, AND OF HIS CAPABILITY OF FULFILLING THIS MISSION THAT WE WERE PREPARED TO CONTINUE SUPPORTING HIM IN HIS WORK THROUGHOUT

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

EO 12958 3.4(b)(1)-25Yrs
(C)

LAOS IN ANTI-COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES. [REDACTED]

5. BOUN OUM LISTENED VERY INTENTLY THROUGHOUT. HE SAID HE WANTED TO THINK IT OVER AND ASKED [REDACTED] TO CALL AT HIS RESIDENCE AFTERNOON 7 MARCH. BOUN OUM WAS TOLD THAT THIS WAS A PRIVATE MATTER FOR THE TIME BEING AND SHOULD ONLY BE DISCUSSED BETWEEN US. IF HE WISHED WE COULD GO INTO MORE DETAILS LATER ON THIS AFTERNOON. BOUN OUM AGREED AND SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO TALK MORE ABOUT IT.

6. AT 1630 HOURS [REDACTED] CALLED ON PRINCE BOUN OUM AT HIS RESIDENCE. BOUN OUM SAID THAT HE HAD TALKED BRIEFLY WITH PHOUMI WHO HAD ONLY REPORTED ON HIS CONVERSATION WITH THAI OFFICIALS. BOUN OUM DID NOT ELABORATE ON PHOUMI'S REPORT. HE ADDED THAT PHOUMI DID NOT MENTION THE CONVERSATION HE HAD HAD IN BANGKOK WITH [REDACTED]

7. AT THIS POINT [REDACTED] AGAIN EXPLAINED TO BOUN OUM THE U. S. POSITION AS DESCRIBED IN PARAGRAPHS 2 AND 3 ABOVE. BOUN OUM WAS TOLD AGAIN THAT HE AS A LEADING PERSONALITY COULD PLAY A LEADING ROLE IN BRINGING ABOUT A PEACEFUL SOLUTION

EO 12958
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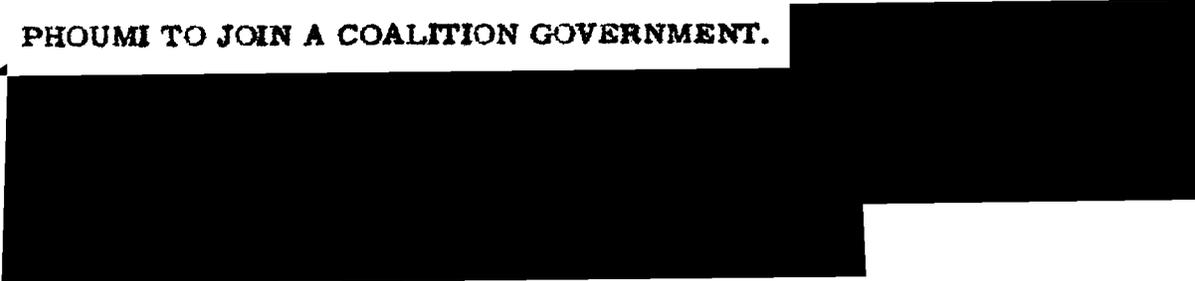
- 3 -

~~SECRET~~

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AND ALSO HELP TO MAINTAIN STRONG ANTI-COMMUNIST ELEMENTS. BOUN OUM SAID THAT SOUVANNA PHOUMA WAS AN EXTREMELY WEAK PERSON WHO WAS EASILY INFLUENCED. FOR EXACTLY THIS REASON, BOUN OUM WAS TOLD, PHOUMI AND LEUAM INSISIENGMAY, BOUN OUM'S BROTHER-IN-LAW, SHOULD BE IN A COALITION GOVERNMENT.

8. BOUN OUM WAS AGAIN TOLD THAT WE KNEW HE WAS CARRYING ON CERTAIN ANTI-COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES, LIKE BUILDING PRIVATE HOSPITAL IN PAKSE AND HIS ANTI-COMMUNIST INFLUENCE THROUGHOUT LAOS SHOULD BE MAINTAINED. BOUN OUM WAS URGED TO PERSUADE PHOUMI TO JOIN A COALITION GOVERNMENT.



9. BOUN OUM SAID HE HAD GIVEN CONSIDERABLE THOUGHT TO WHAT HE HAD HEARD THIS MORNING AT THE AIRPORT AND THAT HE REALIZED A SOLUTION MUST BE FOUND IN THE SHORTEST POSSIBLE TIME. AT THIS POINT BOUN OUM WAS TOLD THAT THE ALTERNATIVE TO A COALITION GOVERNMENT WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE RENEWAL OF HOSTILITIES AND AS THE FAR WAS WEAKER THAN THE ENEMY ONLY DISASTROUS RESULTS COULD BE ANTICIPATED. BOUN OUM SAID THAT THE MAJOR STUMBLING BLOCK FOR PHOUMI WOULD BE THE MILITARY

- 4 -

~~SECRET~~

EO 12958
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WHO WERE GENUINELY FEARFUL NOT ONLY FOR THEIR POSITIONS BUT ALSO FOR THEIR SAFETY UNDER SOUVANNA WHO COULD APPOINT WHOMEVER HE WANTED AS COMMANDER IN CHIEF AND LOCAL COMMANDERS. BOUN OUM WAS TOLD THAT LOGICALLY THE FAR COMMAND STRUCTURE SHOULD REMAIN INTACT UNTIL INTEGRATION TOOK PLACE; HOWEVER, THIS HAD TO BE MADE CLEAR TO SOUVANNA.

10. BOUN OUM ASKED [REDACTED] WHAT HE HONESTLY THOUGHT.

[REDACTED] REPLIED THAT HE THOUGHT IT WAS THE ONLY POSSIBLE PEACEFUL SOLUTION AND THEREFORE HONESTLY URGED THAT BOUN OUM SHOULD ENCOURAGE PHOUMI TO ENTER A SOUVANNA GOVERNMENT.

11. BOUN OUM SAID THAT HE APPRECIATED THE OFFER OF PERSONAL SUPPORT AND THAT HE WOULD TRY TO PERSUADE PHOUMI. BOUN OUM WAS ASKED TO USE HIS INFLUENCE WITH OTHER CABINET MEMBERS BECAUSE THIS WAS A VERY DIFFICULT DECISION FOR PHOUMI AND IT WOULD NEED ALL OF THE SUPPORT THAT BOUN OUM COULD MUSTER.

12. ON LEAVING [REDACTED] AGAIN ASKED BOUN OUM IF HE WOULD JOIN WITH [REDACTED] IN EFFORT PERSUADE PHOUMI TO MAKE THIS DECISION. BOUN OUM AGAIN REPLIED [REDACTED] COULD COUNT ON HIS ENTIRE COLLABORATION.

13. AMBASSADOR BROWN HAS SEEN THIS MESSAGE.

END OF MESSAGE