

TELEGRAM INFORMATION REPORT TELEGRAM

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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~~SECRET~~ (When Filled In) CLASSIFICATION — DISSEMINATION CONTROLS ~~NO FOREIGN DISSEM~~ APPROVED FOR RELEASE DATE: JUN 2001

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

COUNTRY	LAOS	REPORT NO.	[REDACTED]
SUBJECT	SITUATION REPORT AS OF 2 APRIL 1963 - EVENTS FOLLOWING THE ASSASSINATION OF FOREIGN MINISTER QUINIM PHOLSENA	DATE DISTR.	2 APRIL 1963
DATE OF INFO.		PRECEDENCE	P R I O R I T Y
PLACE & DATE ACQ.	LAOS, VIENTIANE (2 APRIL 1963)	REFERENCES	IN 99313
APPRAISAL		FIELD REPORT NO.	FOV 6647

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION. SOURCE GRADINGS ARE DEFINITIVE. APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.

EO 12958
3.4(b)(1)-25Yrs
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1. ALTHOUGH THE SITUATION REMAINS OUTWARDLY CALM IN VIENTIANE ITSELF AS OF 2 APRIL THERE IS CONSIDERABLE SUBSURFACE TENSION FOLLOWING THE ASSASSINATION OF FOREIGN MINISTER QUINIM PHOLSENA. IT IS GENERALLY KNOWN AND ACCEPTED THAT:

- A. QUINIM WAS SHOT BY A MEMBER OF HIS OWN BODYGUARD.
- B. THE ASSASSIN WAS A NEUTRALIST SOLDIER, LOYAL TO KONG LE.
- C. THE ASSASSINATION WAS DIRECTLY CONNECTED WITH THE INCREASINGLY HARD LINE THE NEUTRALIST FORCES HAVE TAKEN RECENTLY AGAINST QUINIM FOR HIS ALLEGED DIVISIVE TACTICS. MOST OF THE TENSION ARISES NOT FROM THE ASSASSINATION ITSELF BUT FROM THE UNCERTAINTY OVER HOW THE PATHET LAO AND THEIR NORTH VIETNAMESE SUPPORTERS WILL REACT TO THIS BLATANT NEUTRALIST DEFIANCE

EO 12958
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TELEGRAM INFORMATION REPORT TELEGRAM

PAGE 1

CLASSIFICATION - DISSEMINATION CONTROLS

~~SECRET~~

~~NO FOREIGN DISSEM~~

PAGE 2

OF ATTEMPTS BY ALLEGED MEMBERS OF THEIR OWN FACTION TO PLAY THE COMMUNIST GAME. FURTHERMORE, THERE IS THE PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTOR THAT IN THE PAST FEW WEEKS THE LAO HAVE DONE WHAT THEY HAVE RARELY BEEN KNOWN TO DO BEFORE, I.E. ENGAGE IN ASSASSINATION AS A FORM OF REPRISAL FOR SETTLING POLITICAL SCORES.

2. THIS ASSASSINATION, WHEN COUPLED WITH THE INCREASINGLY TENSE SITUATION IN THE PLAINE DES JARRES, OBVIOUSLY MAKES FOR A SITUATION IN WHICH ALMOST ANYTHING COULD HAPPEN. THE MOST LIKELY FIRST REACTION, HOWEVER, IS A STRONG COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA BARRAGE ATTEMPTING TO MAKE A CASE AGAINST THE LEGITIMATE NEUTRALISTS "HAVING SOLD OUT TO THE AMERICAN IMPERIALISTS" WHILE ASSESSING THE COUNTRY-WIDE REACTION TO THIS LATEST KILLING. AS A COROLLARY ACTION THE PATHET LAO MIGHT MOVE TO ELIMINATE THE KONG LE POSITION AT BAN BAN, WHICH THEY COULD DO WITH EASE.

3. THE ASSASSIN IS BEING HELD AT SOUVANNA PHOUMA'S RESIDENCE AND IS REPORTEDLY CLAIMING THAT HE ACTED COMPLETELY ON HIS OWN IN RETALIATION FOR QUINIM'S DIVISIVE TACTICS AND THE ASSASSINATION OF COLONEL KETSANA. THERE IS REASON TO BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT THE ASSASSINATION WAS WELL PLANNED IN ADVANCE AND THAT THE ENTIRE KONG LE CONTINGENT GUARDING THE HOUSE ACTED IN CONCERT. THE VERY QUIET UNDISTURBED ATMOSPHERE AROUND QUINIM'S HOUSE IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE SHOOTING INDICATES THAT ALL KONG LE SOLDIERS WERE "WORKING BY THE NUMBERS."

4. IT IS APPARENT THAT THE CIVILIAN NEUTRALIST LEADERSHIP (PHENG PHONGSAVAN, TIAO SISOU MANG SISALEUMSAK, SOUKAN VILAYSARN, KHAMPHENG BOUPHA

~~SECRET~~

~~NO FOREIGN DISSEM~~

CLASSIFICATION - DISSEMINATION CONTROLS

PAGE 2

CLASSIFICATION — DISSEMINATION CONTROLS

~~SECRET~~

~~NO FOREIGN DISSEM~~

PAGE 3

AND KHAMCHAN PRADITH) WHO HAVE BEEN AT LEAST COOPERATING IF NOT ENCOURAGING THE KONG LE OFFICERS IN PLOTTING QUINIM'S ASSASSINATION, WERE CAUGHT BY SURPRISE. GENERAL SOUKAN, WHO IS SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE LAO PEN KANG (NEUTRALITY) PARTY, WAS OBVIOUSLY SURPRISED THAT THE ASSASSINATION HAD TAKEN PLACE BUT NOT ACCORDING TO WHAT HE APPARENTLY UNDERSTOOD WAS "THE PLAN." (FIELD COMMENT. KONG LE OR SOME OF HIS OFFICERS MAY WELL HAVE DECIDED TO PULL OFF THE ASSASSINATION WITHOUT ADVISING THE CIVIL NEUTRALIST LEADERS FOR FEAR THEY MIGHT WAVER AND TRY TO CALL IT OFF, OR SIMPLY BECAUSE WORD MIGHT LEAK OUT TO QUINIM. IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT THE CIVIL LEADERSHIP WOULD HAVE WANTED QUINIM DONE AWAY WITH IN A LESS DIRECTLY ATTRIBUTABLE FASHION, I.E. IN THE PLAINE DES JARRES OR VANG VIENG.)

EO 12958
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5. [REDACTED] DISSEM: STATE, CINCPAC, PACFLT, ARPAC, PACAF

PAGE 3

CLASSIFICATION — DISSEMINATION CONTROLS

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