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I) Progress toward resumption of three-Prince negotiations



A) Timing of Meeting

Phoumi has agreed to attend a three-Prince meeting at the Plaine des Jarres if Souvanna sees the King first, which Souvanna says he will do. Souvanna is reported planning to leave Rangoon for Khang Khay on May 25 and presumably will see the King in Luang Prabang within a few days thereafter. Meanwhile Boun Oum and Phoumi are going to Manila from May 28 through May 30. Souphanouvong and Nouhak of the PL are reported as being absent from Khang Khay. Thus the timing of the meeting is uncertain.

B) Conditions for Meeting

Phoumi has agreed to give Souvanna the ministries of Defense and Interior provided that all important decisions to be unanimous among the three factions and that military forces will remain intact pending an agreement on integration. The RLG has also reaffirmed its adherence to the Kurich, Baa Hin Heup and Geneva agreements of the three princes. Phoumi will not make the restoration of Nam Tha a condition for further tripartite discussion. Thus there do not appear to be any obstacles on the RLG side to the next meeting.

II) Broadening of Political Base of the RLG

Brown has pointed out to all the leading Lao political figures that we have completely lost confidence in Phoumi as result of Nam Tha and its aftermath. He has suggested to all concerned that Phoumi should devote his time to military affairs. The Lao have also been told in Washington and Vientiane that Boun Oum should strengthen the government by bringing in the wisest advisors available to assist him on the political side of the negotiations.

Brown has broached the idea of Phoui entering the government to Phoui directly and to others. Phoui expressed interest but did not wish to push the reorganization of the RLG himself or have it initiated prior to next three-prince meeting.

General Tucker is endeavoring to bring about a strengthening of the officer corps of the FAR and is introducing measures

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which if carried through will make the FAR more amenable to MAAG advice and control.

Sarit, when reassured that we were not aiming at the elimination of Phoumi or wholesale revamping of the RLG, undertook personally to urge Phoumi to cooperate fully with General Tucker and Ambassador Brown.

Although no changes in the RLG have thus far occurred, our efforts have caused widespread ferment among Phoumi and his followers and have undoubtedly reduced Phoumi's ability to obstruct further negotiations.

III) United States planning for the period following the formation of a government of national union, including the role expected of the FAR; and the status of planning for other contingencies, such as a breakdown of negotiations or of the cease-fire.

The recent action stationing United States forces in Thailand has given our planning for Laos a new background against which to build. We believe that the presence of these forces and the demonstration of United States ability to move such forces rapidly provide material assistance to the sort of plans which we contemplate. We would expect at least some of these forces to remain in Thailand until satisfactory progress is made in the establishment of a new government, the withdrawal of foreign military forces, and the integration-demobilization process for the Lao forces.

Essentially our post-Treaty planning for Laos involves four stages:

- A) A carefully phased withdrawal of United States military assistance forces from Laos step by step with our satisfaction concerning the departure of Viet Minh forces from Laos.
- B) An interim period (of indeterminate duration) during which there would be a "soft partition" of Laos under the provisional government, with the FAR retaining its integrity and its control over the areas now in friendly hands and the Pathet Lao similarly holding territory now in their control.
- C) Steps toward integration of the armed forces on a pro rata basis and demobilization only when we are satisfied Pathet Lao have similarly demobilized.
- D) Elections should be held only when we feel we have

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assurance that non-Communist elements in Laos have consolidated their political and administrative positions adequately to dominate the Communist minority.

Planning for each of these steps is as follows:

A) Armed forces departure

- 1) Providing maximum equipment and mobility to ICC in order supervise Viet Minh withdrawals.
- 2) Relying, however, primarily on our own intelligence which we would conduct in cooperation with the Thai.



B) "Soft Partition"

- 1) Stimulation of "troika" concept for interim Defense and Interior arrangements.
- 2) Efforts to improve capabilities of FAR (see B-2 under military).
- 3) Effort to obtain high calibre French military trainers.
- 4) Stockpile arrangements in Thailand for FAR which can be transposed into Lao depots.
- 5) Planning re financial assistance which would assure continued FAR payroll.

C) Integration and Demobilization

- 1) Understandings with Souvanna re the steps he will take to end the use of Laos as Viet Cong corridor (particular reference to elimination of Tchepone operation).
- 2) Understandings with Souvanna re steps to be taken to create a military force loyal to him and his government (particular reference to the role envisaged for Kong Le forces).

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D) Non-Communist Political Control

- 1) Diplomatic efforts to assure appropriate distribution of portfolios in provisional cabinet.
- 2) Efforts to introduce more responsible elements into RLG in order provide cooperative non-Communist political basis.
- 3) Assistance, together with British and French, to help Souvanna maintain political independence from Communists.
- 4) Cataloging all competent non-Communist leaders and potential leaders as "talent pool."
- 5) Plans for economic assistance on bilateral basis with the new Souvanna government.
- 6) Encouragement of UN Technical Assistance group to remain quietly on scene and plan for expansion.

In consequence of the recent cease-fire breakdown at Nam Tha and the altered circumstances resulting from the stationing of United States forces in Thailand, an inter-departmental group has been reviewing and revising contingency plans. The first drafts of these revised plans will be completed May 25. Essentially they cover the following contingencies:

- A) A prolonged stalemate resulting from Communist intransigence with increased Communist subversion, but no significant cease-fire violations.
- B) Cumulative cease-fire violations of a nibbling variety patently designed to destroy the territorial basis of the RLG, and
- C) A massive Communist rapture of the cease-fire with the intention of conquering Laos by military means.

Planning against these contingencies consists of a spectrum of integrated political-military acts, including:

- A) Military assistance of the type now rendered Viet-Nam.
- B) United States and SEATO military intervention for the purpose of reinforcing the cease-fire, but continuing the political negotiations. (This would envisage stationing United States forces in Laos but avoiding combat with Communist forces).
- C) United States and SEATO military intervention in Laos with combat forces having a mission of clearing Communist elements from these areas of Laos considered strategically important to our interest and to the interest of our allies in Southeast Asia.

All of these contingent plans will be backed up by a Special National Intelligence Estimate examining the probable Communist reactions to the execution of each U. S. and SEATO action. This SNIE has been through two drafts and has received preliminary consideration by the United States Intelligence Board on May 23. Final action on it is expected May 30.

This document consists of 5 pages
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