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OCI No. 1541/63

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Office of Current Intelligence  
2 May 1963

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Resupply Efforts for Kong Le and Meo Forces  
in Plaine des Jarres Area

1. Complaints by Kong Le and Meo commander Vang Pao that they are receiving insufficient support from Vientiane--as cited in our morning report of 1 May--would seem to reflect the typical impatience of field commanders with those supporting them rather than an actual case of inadequate supply in the present situation. Problems of supply and coordination in the fluid political and military situation in Laos can be expected to cause fluctuations of morale on the part of both Kong Le and Vang Pao, and to give rise to complaints that they cannot do all they feel is expected of them. Nonetheless, the over-all attitude of both Kong Le and Vang Pao is good. Kong Le's confidence is mirrored in his perhaps overly sanguine current plans to retake positions recently lost to the Pathet Lao. Reports from Meo units in the Plaine des Jarres area indicate that Vang Pao and the Meo units under his command are also in high spirits.

2. At the outset in early April of the current crisis in the Plaine des Jarres area, the Kong Le forces were in a desperate position as regards ammunition, POL, food, and other supplies. This situation has since been largely ameliorated. Most of the resupply to Kong Le's forces is being handled by the

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Lao Army, largely by airlift to Muong Phanh in Royal Lao Air Force aircraft under General Phoumi's control. Some supplies are also in the process of delivery overland from the Lao Army's 2nd Military Region headquarters at Paksane.

3. To overcome the problem of ammunition shortages for Kong Le's heterogeneous collection of bloc weapons, General Phoumi has undertaken an exchange for US equipment from Lao Army stocks. This exchange, however, is not yet far along. // ✓

4. Aside from supplies, Phoumi has airlifted to the Plaine des Jarres area in Royal Lao Air Force planes two regular Lao Army infantry battalions (the 9th BI and the 24 BI) as well as a number of armor, communications, and other specialists. Most of these Lao Army troops have remained in rear areas, although some elements have been committed to forward positions in support of efforts by Kong Le forces to reoccupy various posts.

5. While Phoumi--with the tacit approval of Souvanna--is thus backstopping the Kong Le neutralists with both men and materiel, he is not in a position to send in as much as both Kong Le and Vang Pao would probably like. Phoumi has been encouraged by Ambassador Unger to make the Lao Army's assistance as unobtrusive as possible. Moreover, the distribution of supplies to Kong Le's far-flung forces is a major logistics problem--and this largely explains why individual units under Kong Le are experiencing shortages of both food and ammunition on a fluctuating basis. Phoumi, however, expresses the view that Kong Le's position is solid, and the two men apparently are now working in close accord.

6. Vang Pao's Meo forces, whose supply situation has never been so critical as was that of the Kong Le forces, have also had additional weapons and ammunition airdropped to them recently.

7. During initial planning on 12 April between Vang Pao and Kong Le, it was agreed that Meo guerrilla



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forces would be used to strengthen Kong Le's defense position in the Plaine des Jarres and Xieng Khouang areas. Since 12 April some 4,500 Meos have been involved in movement and limited operations designed to strengthen Kong Le's military posture.

8. Following the 12 April agreement, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the Meos pass needed arms and ammunition to Kong Le units. This method of resupplying Kong Le forces through Meo [REDACTED] channels insures that arms and ammunition reach Kong Le front-line units. These [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and have supplemented support provided Kong Le by Phoumi from Lao Army stocks.

9. On 27 April it was necessary [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] to suspend [REDACTED] ammunition resupply flights scheduled between 27 and 30 April because Souvanna Phouma and the International Control Commission were to be visiting the Plaine Des Jarres area. However, it was agreed [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] that if major Pathet Lao action took place during this temporary suspension against either Meo or Kong Le units, resupply flights on an urgent basis would be considered. Ammunition and weapons resupply flights are scheduled to resume on 2 May.

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[REDACTED]