

# Laos 1959-1961 - correspondence, official documents, press clippings, chrono...

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Laos - 1959

26 May

The Permanent Mission of Canada  
to the U.N.

- Note Verbale -



NOTE VERBALE

The Secretary-General of the United Nations is aware that the Canadian authorities, sharing his concern about the situation in Southeast Asia, regard sympathetically his efforts to mediate the border dispute between Laos and North Vietnam and that they wish to encourage his interest in Indo-China. To this end they hope that some suitable formula might be found which could permit those powers which are members of the International commissions for Indo-China to assist the mediation proposals. So far as the Laos Commission (now adjourned sine die) is concerned, there is the necessity of reconciling the apparently divergent views of the Indian and Laotian governments regarding the role of the Commission.

The Secretary-General enquired whether, "in view of the positive position taken by Laos", the Canadian Government would be prepared to appoint a representative to the Commission for the purpose of assisting mediation, if certain conditions were met, i.e. that (a) the Indians were willing to allow Desai to exercise the functions suggested; (b) the Poles were willing to agree to the proposed procedure; (c) there was a common understanding as to the proposal he had outlined. The Canadian Government would favourably consider a meeting of the Commission for the specific purpose of assisting the mediation proposal under the conditions mentioned by the Secretary-General and if the attitude of the Laotian government were such as to suggest that a commission meeting would have the desired effect. It has reason to believe, however, that since the Secretary-General's discussion on April 28 with the Canadian Permanent Representative to the United Nations, the attitude of the Laotian Government has changed and that Laos may now be opposed to any involvement of the Commission in the proposed mediation. Moreover, it is understood that the Commonwealth Secretary of the Indian Department of External Affairs has now let it be known that he would not himself, be available for mediating the Laos-North Vietnam dispute.

In the meantime another factor has arisen which further complicates the situation so far as the question of reconvening the Laos Commission for the specific purpose of assisting the mediation proposal is concerned. The Secretary-General is doubtless aware

of the difficulties resulting from the refusal of the two battalions of former Pathet-Lao forces to accept integration into the national army under the terms decreed by the Laotian Government. This dispute and the consequent placing of former Pathet-Lao leaders under police surveillance in Vientiane has a direct bearing upon the political and military settlements made between the Laotian Government and the Pathet-Lao in November 1957 in accordance with the Geneva agreements. These circumstances, while increasing the pressure for the reconvening of the international commission, make it most unlikely that, if the commission were to meet at the present time, it would restrict its discussion to mediation of the dispute with North Vietnam and would not become involved in matters concerned with the internal affairs of Laos.

Any reconvening of the international commission for Laos at the present time is therefore likely to have much broader implications than would be entailed in a meeting solely to explore mediation between Laos and North Vietnam. These would, of course, have to be taken into account in any final decision regarding Canadian participation in a meeting of the commission to facilitate mediation of the Laos-North Vietnam border dispute.

New York, May 26, 1959