

Laos 1959-1961 -  
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Dag Hammarskjöld's samul.

Laos. 1959

29 May

Herter, Christian A. (Secy of State,  
U.S.A.)

- 1 letter from D.H.

The Honorable Christian A. Herter,  
Secretary of State,  
c/o Delegation of the United States  
to the Geneva Conference,  
Geneva, Switzerland.

29 May 1959

Dear Chris,

I wish to inform you that I received yesterday from Mr. Nehru personally a cabled letter, reflecting great concern about the situation in Laos and in South-East Asia in general. It impresses me, as Mr. Nehru is neither a man of strong words nor very likely to turn to the United Nations on Asian affairs within his direct orbit of interests, unless he considers the situation to be one which calls for an activation of all resources.

His immediate intention with the message is to prompt me to continue my efforts to get Canada to nominate their representative on the Commission which he seems to regard as the only organ which now can take the action necessary for a reduction of tension between Laos and North Vietnam.

Referring to reports about "import into Laos of United States telecommunication equipment, trucks and military personnel, though in civilian clothes", he asks me to "do my best" also in Washington to urgently promote a constructive approach "so that peace may be maintained in Indo-China and a grave conflict averted".

I have told the Ambassador of India that, at an earlier stage, I have given you a full picture of my conclusions regarding the situation and that I feel that we were largely of one mind as to the general policy that is required.

Insufficiently informed about the true situation as I am, I do not consider it possible to do more for the moment than to inform you about this demarche, to consult Ottawa, to request the Ambassador of Laos to give me as full a picture of the situation and of the present stand of his Government as he can, and, finally, to inform Selwyn Lloyd - as one of the co-chairmen of the Geneva Conference - of this new development.

I will keep in touch with you through the Delegation regarding any further developments. I am sure you share my feeling that all

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efforts must be made to keep the situation on the rails. Frankly I despair about the possibility to play the Commission now. The stakes being what they are, I would be quite willing to play the United Nations card for what it is worth - in this case it might mean assuming a personal role in the field - if I saw any opening in that direction.

I was sorry not to find a chance to shake hands with you the other day in Washington, but I had to return, without waiting for the President's luncheon, as I had a reception for the King of Belgium on Thursday.

With kind regards,

Dag Hammarskjöld