

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

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Dag Hammarskjöld's sand.

Laos - 1959

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9 June

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

- 1 letter to D.H.

The Honorable  
Dag Hammarskjöld,  
Secretary General of the United Nations,  
New York, New York.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

June 9, 1959

SECRET

Dear Dag:

I have your letter of May 29 describing Mr. Nehru's concern about the situation in Laos and in Southeast Asia in general. The Communist propaganda campaign against the little Kingdom of Laos has recently become greatly intensified and this campaign may be intended to lay the groundwork for some sort of Communist Bloc diversion in Southeast Asia. Mr. Nehru's concern is quite understandable when viewed against this background.

The United States has been giving military and economic aid to Laos for a number of years. It is clear that this small country could not hope to survive without such aid, which is not of sufficient scope to present any threat to Laos's much more powerful neighbors. We sincerely hope there will be a reduction of tension between Laos and North Viet-Nam, and the calm and dignified attitude of the Royal Lao Government in the face of the storm of propaganda to which it is being subjected should contribute to such a reduction of tension. On the other hand, a too ready response to Communist intimidation efforts would serve only to weaken the position of Laos without enabling it to defend itself against the very real threat to its internal security. The Lao Government's actions to date in handling the problem of the former Pathet Lao battalions show that it is endeavoring to maintain its internal security in the least provocative manner possible.

We have had ample opportunity to learn that the Communists readily create provocations to justify actions which they plan to take in the international field. However, while fully appreciating this fact, we do not intend to take, or encourage others to take, any measures that could legitimately be construed as provocation of the Communist Bloc.

The Royal

The Honorable  
Dag Hammarskjold,  
Secretary General of the United Nations,  
New York, New York.

SECRET

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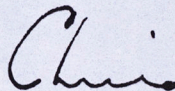
The Royal Lao Government has taken the position that it has fully discharged all the obligations assumed by it or for it at the Geneva Conference of 1954. The Royal Government reached an agreement with the Pathet Lao in November 1957 providing among other things that 1,500 former Pathet Lao troops be integrated into the National Army in appropriate ranks and positions. The Pathet Lao which had violated the accords of 1954 by continuing armed resistance for almost three years after the Conference finally complied with its original undertaking to be integrated into the national community only after extorting additional concessions concerning coalition government. Then later it insisted on higher ranks and positions for its military personnel. The Royal Government granted even this concession and then at the last minute on May 11, 1959, the Pathet Lao provoked the current crisis by fabricating a charge of discrimination against one of its leaders and Prince Souphannouvong used this as a pretext for ordering a boycott of the ceremony arranged to commission the former Pathet Lao officers.

Meanwhile the International Commission for Control and Supervision of the Armistice in Laos had adjourned sine die and departed from Laos. Since the Royal Government has made it clear that it does not desire the return of that body, I share your feeling that the International Commission cannot be of any use in Laos at the present time.

I know the Lao value very highly their membership in the United Nations. I am sure their warm feelings towards the United Nations are due, in considerable measure, to the personal interest which you have shown in their problems. I think we should continue to follow this situation closely and I look forward to the opportunity of talking with you about it.

With warm personal regards,

Most sincerely,



Christian A. Herter

SECRET