

**Laos 1959-1961 -
correspondence, official
documents, press clippings,
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Laos - 1959

30 July

- Statement by British Foreign Office spokesman
- Night lead fighting by J. Doudman
(Reuters, from London)

REUTERS - 30 July 1959 from London:

Britain today announced it had received reports that fighting had broken out between the Government and Communist forces in Laos.

A British Foreign Office spokesman says Britain is "deeply concerned" about the situation in the Indo-Chinese State. He said he could give no estimates on the extent of the fighting.

The spokesman said the fighting had erupted in the SAM NEUA province in Northern Laos close to the frontier of Communist North Vietnam.

Pro-communist forces were re-grouped in this area under terms of the 1954 Geneva Truce, which ended the eight-year old war in Indo-China.

Asked how long the fighting had been going on, the British spokesman said: "We have quite a number of reports. But it is not for the British Government to say what is happening there."

NIGHT LEAD FIGHTING (SCHEDULED)

BY JOHN DUDMAN

LONDON, JULY 30-(REUTERS)-FIGHTING BETWEEN GOVERNMENT TROOPS AND COMMUNIST FORCES, ALLEGEDLY ARMED BY NORTH VIETNAM, HAS BROKEN OUT IN NORTHERN LAOS, ACCORDING TO REPORTS RECEIVED HERE TODAY.

A BRITISH FOREIGN OFFICE SPOKESMAN, WHO QUOTED THE REPORTS, SAID BRITAIN IS "DEEPLY CONCERNED" ABOUT THE SITUATION IN THE INDOCHINESE STATE.

HANOI RADIO, VOICE OF THE COMMUNIST REGIME IN NORTH VIETNAM, REFUTED GOVERNMENTED REPORTS IN LAOS THAT THE COMMUNIST FIGHTERS REPRESENTED "NEW ELEMENTS" ARMED BY THE HANOI GOVERNMENT.

IT SAID "AMERICAN IMPERIALISTS" WERE BEHIND THE NEW FIGHTING IN AN ATTEMPT TO FOMENT WAR THROUGH SOUTHEAST ASIA.

THE REPORTS RECEIVED HERE SAID THE HOSTILITIES BROKE OUT IN THE PROVINCE OF SAN NEUA IN NORTHEAST LAOS, BORDERING ON NORTH VIETNAM. PRO-COMMUNIST FORCES WERE REGROUPED IN THIS PROVINCE UNDER THE 1954 GENEVA TRUCE WHICH ENDED THE EIGHT-YEAR WAR IN INDOCHINA.

COMMUNIST CHINA REPEATEDLY HAS CALLED FOR A REVIVAL OF A THREE-NATION TRUCE SUPERVISORY COMMISSION ON GROUNDS RECURRENT FIGHTING IN THE MOUNTAINOUS PROVINCE IS A THREAT TO PEACE.

ONLY TWO DAYS AGO, SOVIET AND BRITISH OFFICIALS DISCUSSED POSSIBLE REVIVAL OF THE COMMISSION WHICH SUSPENDED ITS WORK A YEAR AGO. ITS MEMBERS ARE CANADA, POLAND AND INDIA.

RUSSIA AND BRITAIN DEAL WITH THE ISSUE BECAUSE THEY SERVED AS CO-CHAIRMEN OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE WHICH ARRANGED THE SERIES OF TRUCES IN LAOS, VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA.

THE ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF LAOS SO FAR HAS OPPOSED REVIVAL OF THE COMMISSION. BRITAIN ARGUES THAT THE LAOTIAN GOVERNMENT'S WISHES SHOULD BE RESPECTED.

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FIRST ADD LONDON FIGHTING X X X RESPECTED.

THE BRITISH SPOKESMAN SAID TODAY: "AS CO-CHAIRMAN OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE OF 1954, WE ARE DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE MAINTENANCE OF PEACE IN LAOS. THE SITUATION IS UNDER CONSIDERATION."

RELIABLE SOURCES HERE EXPRESSED FEARS NORTH VIETNAM IS TRYING TO CREATE A CIVIL WAR IN LAOS.

LAST MAY, ONE OF THE TWO FORMER PRO-COMMUNIST PATHET LAO BATTALIONS IGNORED GOVERNMENT ORDERS TO INTOXRATE IN THE LAOTIAN ARMY.

IMMEDIATELY AFTERWARDS, THE COMMUNISTS ACCUSED LAOS OF VIOLATING THE 1954 TRUCE AND DEMANDED THE RETURN OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION.

ALTHOUGH THE COMMUNISTS CLAIMED FIGHTING WAS GOING ON AGAIN, THERE DID NOT APPEAR TO BE ANY MILITARY ENGAGEMENTS UNTIL TODAY'S REPORTS.

EARLY LAST MONTH, THE LAOTIAN GOVERNMENT GAVE UP ITS ATTEMPTS TO INTEGRATE THE REBEL BATTALION AND DECLARED ITS MEMBERS TO BE ARMY "DESERTERS."

THE BATTALION WITHDREW TO THE NORTH VIETNAM FRONTIER WHERE IT ESTABLISHED A CAMP AND PRODUCED A NEWSPAGE OFTEN QUOTED BY HANOI RADIO.

ON WEDNESDAY, THE LAOTIAN GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED IT WAS RUSHING TROOPS TO THE SAM NEUA SECTOR BECAUSE OF A NEW OFFENSIVE THREATENING THE COUNTRY'S SECURITY.

IT SAID THE OFFENSIVE WAS BEING STAGED--NOT BY THE REBEL BATTALION--BUT BY OTHER FORCES "ARMED, EQUIPPED AND STIFFENED" BY NORTH VIETNAM.

HANOI RADIO SAID THIS WAS A "GROUNDLESS FABRICATION" AIMED AT CONCEALING LAOTIAN MILITARY ACTION ON THE NORTH VIETNAMESE FRONTIER.

"IT IS PRECISELY THE U.S. IMPERIALISTS AND THEIR REACTIONARY HENCHMEN IN LAOS WHO HAVE KINDLED THE CIVIL WAR WHICH IS GOING ON MORE AND MORE SERIOUSLY IN LAOS," IT SAID.

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