

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

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Dag Hammarskjöld's samul.

Laos . 1959

30 Aug.

Nehru, Jawaharlal (Prime Minister of  
India)

- 1 letter to D.H.



NEW DELHI

August 30, 1959.

Dear Mr. Hammarskjöld,

Thank you for your letter of 22nd August on Laos. This reached me on the 27th August. Our Ambassador Jha had already telegraphed the essential parts of your letter on 22nd August and he must have conveyed to you our provisional reactions which we telegraphed to him on the 24th August.

I am not quite clear about the implications of your proposals for stage II. For the present, however, I am not dealing with these possible developments as they arise only after Stage I has successfully concluded.

In the First Stage, you suggest that someone should get in touch with both Hanoi and Vientiane in order to explore with them under what kind of formula they might agree on a mediation, and you suggest that India might undertake this work. I am afraid that it has become very difficult for us to make this approach. We might be able to do so at Hanoi, for at least we have access there, though I doubt if, in the circumstances, this would lead to any substantial results. But so far as Vientiane is concerned, the attitude of the Laotian Government has become increasingly opposed to any such approach. More particularly, they appear to dislike the idea of a representative of India undertaking this kind of work. Our representative on the Vietnam Commission, Dr. Ansari, was requested by us to visit Hanoi and Vientiane and to have informal talks there in order to find out what the possibilities were. He visited Hanoi and met the D.R.V.N. authorities. He could not go to Vientiane as he was not given a visa for the purpose by the Laotian authorities. In order to avoid any embarrassment to the Laotian Government, he stated clearly that he would go there in his personal capacity and not as a representative of the Commission. Even so, he did not get a visa, and he has therefore come to Delhi without being able to visit Laos.

The Prime Minister of Laos has recently stated categorically in the course of a press interview that no understanding with the Neo Lao Haksat is possible and that he did not see any solution to the problem other than a military one. If that is the approach of the Laotian Government, then we can do little with them.

So far as the D.R.V.N. is concerned, Dr. Ansari got the impression that in spite of their political differences with Laos, they.....

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Secretary-General, United Nations,  
NEW YORK



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they were anxious to find some way out of this conflict and to avoid any further deterioration in the situation. They laid stress on their anxiety that peaceful conditions in Indo-China should be maintained so that they can devote their energies towards the effective fulfilment of their Three Year Economic Development Programme, which, they said, was vital for their survival. They thus appeared to be agreeable to some kind of mediatory procedure.

When we considered this problem first, the internal problem was confined to political differences between the Laotian Government and the members of the Opposition. During the last few weeks, the situation in Laos has deteriorated. Now fighting has taken place and is likely to spread. To what extent North Vietnam is supporting the Neo Lao Haksat I do not know. But it is clear that the D.R.V.N. authorities are sympathetic to the Neo Lao Haksat and might help them in various ways as the situation develops.

On the other hand, the United States Government have supplied military equipment to the Laotian Government to increase its armed personnel both in the regular Army and the local militia. Prima facie, such armed help to the Laotian Government is specifically prohibited by the Geneva Agreement. If the Commission had been functioning, they would have considered the question of imports of military equipment on the merits and supervised these imports, giving the necessary clearance under the Agreement. As it is, that has become another matter of controversy with the D.R.V.N.

Everything, therefore, points to a continuation of conditions approaching civil war and perhaps progressive intensification with outside help being given to both parties. I really do not know what can be done in these circumstances. So far as India is concerned, we cannot thrust ourselves when we are not wanted.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

Jawaharlal Nehru