

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

HS L 179:86



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Laos - 1959

22 Oct.

- a.) Memorandum by David Blickestaff.
- b.) 4 cables from Engers, Vientiane, Laos to U.N. H.Q.

22 October 1959

Question of Helicopters

Your text concerning the helicopters disposes of paragraph 1 and I would add my comment merely on the point of alleged delay in discussing with the RLG the question of the specific trips which it wished the Sub-Committee to make. When the question of an itinerary was first raised by the Laotian Liaison Committee, it was discussed by the Sub-Committee and I was asked to take the matter up informally with the Chairman of the Liaison Committee with a view to getting from him as much detailed information as possible concerning the places proposed for a visit and the specific matters which the Laotian Authorities proposed to bring to the attention of the Sub-Committee at each place. There was no delay on my part in carrying out the request of the Sub-Committee; that afternoon I immediately made an appointment with the Chairman of the Liaison Committee and, at his suggestion, called upon him the following morning at 9 o'clock. As requested by the Sub-Committee, I explained to him the need for having detailed suggestions from the Laotian Authorities in order that the Sub-Committee could adequately prepare for the trip, so that the trip should be as useful as possible. The Chairman of the Liaison Committee was unable to reply to any of my questions and he stated that he would take these matters up immediately with the Laotian Military Authorities. I reported the results of my visit to the Sub-Committee within the hour, and it is as a result of my conversation with the Liaison Committee's Chairman that the written detailed schedule of visits was later provided to the Sub-Committee.

I should add that all members of the Sub-Committee had serious doubts about the question of using helicopters, doubts based upon questions of principle and on practical difficulties. It was only after receiving from New York the message from the four Delegations there that the Sub-Committee's opinion on this matter was finally determined.

Question of the Sub-Committee's Initiative

The Sub-Committee's position on this matter was firmly established before their departure from New York. I had nothing to do with this; the matter was decided by the Sub-Committee before I arrived in New York from Paris.

Interrogation of Witnesses

When it appeared that the Committee would be requested by the Laotian Authorities to interrogate witnesses I took the initiative to place before the Chairman a brief note setting out some of the points

on which the Sub-Committee would no doubt want to make up its own mind before discussing the matter with the Laotian Liaison Committee. My note referred to the question of prisoners, in as much as this is the manner in which the question first arose. A copy of my note is attached.

Question of Interpreters

It is true that I made no attempt to obtain local interpreters. UN Headquarters had already requested ECAFE to provide us with an interpreter who would be able to handle the main local languages. At the airport in Bangkok on the way out I discussed with ECAFE's Executive Secretary, U Nyun, the qualifications and reliability of the staff member assigned to this duty and I was given full assurance that he was a loyal and reliable person. In Vientiane I interviewed him at considerable length regarding his ability to deal with the dialects that might be encountered during the interrogation of witnesses. I reported on this to the Sub-Committee and assured them of his ability to undertake the interpretation required, and I pointed out that in any case it would be necessary for the interrogation to be conducted in simple terms so as to avoid misunderstandings and this, I felt sure, would present no difficulties for the interpreter.

The specific incident mentioned where I apparently "became very angry" is a distortion of a perfectly friendly exchange which took place when, at the request of Chairman Shibuzawa, I spoke on the question of the interpreter during a meeting with the Laotian Liaison Committee. Comments had been made calling into question his integrity and these were linked with suggestions of his incompetence as an interpreter. My reply was merely to point out that I had reason to believe in his competence and that if experience proved that his services were unsatisfactory, other arrangements would be made by the Secretariat. I added, with firmness, that the integrity of an international civil servant could not be called into question in the general and imprecise terms used during the discussion. I stated that I would certainly receive any specific information which anybody might have which was relevant to the question, and that whatever the outcome of the consideration given to that information, the Secretariat would in any case fulfil its responsibility to provide the Sub-Committee with the necessary interpretation services. After the meeting, the Laotian officials assured me that they had no derogatory information of any kind concerning the person in question.

The only comment made by me about the interrogation of "only French-speaking witnesses" was in connection with the suggestion that while the working party was in Sam Neua, Ambassador Shibuzawa could interrogate witnesses in Vientiane. At this point I merely pointed out that under these circumstances the Chairman would have to limit his interrogations to French-speaking witnesses, inasmuch as the interpreter would be absent in Sam Neua with the working group.

Misuse of Prerogatives

Immediately upon the conclusion of the first meeting at which witnesses were heard, the Sub-Committee discussed the experience and considered methods of improving their procedures for the interrogation of witnesses. It had been obvious to me that it would be impossible to keep an accurate stenographic record unless a little more formality were observed by the Sub-Committee in the matter of avoiding interruptions during the course of the interpretation. I appealed to the Chairman in this sense and all members of the Committee expressed their agreement.

Powers of the Liaison Group Remaining in Vientiane

Written instructions were given to the group remaining in Vientiane in the form of a memorandum addressed to the two remaining alternates from the Chairman, Ambassador Shibuzawa. The subject of the character to be given to the remaining group had been thoroughly discussed by the Sub-Committee during the preceding days. It was Ambassador Shibuzawa who took the initiative in having the mandate of the remaining group given to them in writing, and he asked me to prepare a draft for his approval. After he had approved the text he asked me to show it to the other three members of the Sub-Committee and they agreed to it without any changes. At Ambassador Shibuzawa's request I then returned to each member of the Sub-Committee and obtained the initials of each on the memorandum.

In general, I would like to state that I was not made aware at any time that there was any feeling on the part of the Sub-Committee members that the Secretariat was attempting to limit the freedom of the Sub-Committee in the decisions which it made, and I do not believe that such feelings exist in the minds of the Sub-Committee members. For my part I always felt that our working relations were maintained in a spirit of cooperation and friendliness. The Chairman, as well as the other members, adopted the practice from the outset of inviting me to express my views on the matters under discussion during the meetings. Where it seemed appropriate, I expressed my opinion. It was my constant practice also to frequently point out that it was the Sub-Committee which bore the responsibility for the decisions on matters within the competence of the Sub-Committee, and that if I spoke on these matters it was for the purpose of pointing out some of the issues which the Committee should take into account in reaching its decisions.

David Blechsenhoff
23 Oct. 1959

INFO COPY

OCT 22 1959

FILE NO.

ACTION

TO

Cordier

S.G.

10 FFF VIENTIANE 97 22 0354Z

UNATIONS NY

129 CORDIER FIELDSERV FROM ENGEERS STOP AT PRESENT AND WITHINCREA-
SING FREQUENCY MISSION IS AVAILING ITSELF OF SERVICES US EMBASSY
DOCTOR CMA COURTESY AMERICAN AMBASSADOR STOP THIS IS PRACTICALLY
ONLY RELIABLE MEDICAL SERVICE AT HAND HERE CMA BUT SINCE NO REPAY-
MENT ARRANGEMENTS ARE IN FORCE CMA SITUATION IS

P2/48

TENDING TO BECOME EMBARRASSING FOR EITHER SIDE STOP STAFF MEMBERS
TEND TO DEFER RECEIVING MEDICAL ATTENTION IN TIME BECAUSE THEY
DOUBT THAT THEY HAVE LIBERAL ACCESS TO US MEDICAL FACILITIES
STOP EYE WONDER WHETHER HEADQUARTERS COULF CONSIDER SOME ARRANGMENT
WITH US GOVERNMENT THAT MIGHT REGULARIZE AD HOC SITUATION

CFM 129

UNITED NATIONS
OCT 22 1959
RECEIVED
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

INFO COPY

OCT 22 1959

FILE NO.

ACTION

TO

Blickenstaff
S.G.

38 VIENTIANE 288 23 0805

UNATIONS NY

137

BLICKENSTAFF FROM ENGERS STOP THOUGH EYE HAVE NOT HEARD
FROM YOU ON PER DIEM AND COST OF LIVING QUESTION CMA EYE THINK
IT USEFUL TO INFORM YOU ABOUT PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS STOP PRIMO
CMA LAO GOVERNMENT IS NOW COMPLETELY OUT OF THE PICTURE STOP
WE ARE BEING BILLED

P2

BY THE HOTEL FOR FOOD CMA DRINKS AND LAUNDRY STOP WE RENT THE
CARS DIRECTLY STOP SECUNDO CMA KHAZOOM SIGNS CHITS FOR ALL
THE MEALS CONSUMED INCLUDING WINES AND MINERAL WATER USED AT
THE TABLE STOP TERTIO CMA FOR ALL OTHER CONSUMPTIONS DELEGATES
AND STAFF MEMBERS HAVE TO SIGN INDIVIDUALLY

P3

STOP DELEGATES AND STAFF MEMBERS HAVE PURCHASED THEIR OWN
DIPLOMATIC WHISKY AND BRANDY STOP QUARTIO CMA EVERYBODY SIGNS
FOR HIS OWN LAUNDRY STOP THE FREE DISTRIBUTION OF CIGARETTES
IS DISCONTINUED STOP PARA STOP MY RECOMMENDATION WOULD
BE TO PAY A FLAT PERDIEM OF EIGHT DOLLARS FOR DELEGATES AND
PRINCIPLE

P4

SECRETARY AND FIVE DOLLARS FOR ALL OTHERS CMA WITH THE UN TAKING CARE OF BED AND BOARD INCLUDING ITEMS LISTED UNDER SECUNDO AND THE LAUNDRY STOP ANY OTHER ARRANGEMENT WHEREBY STAFF MEMBERS AND DELEGATES WOULD HAVE TO PAY THEIR OWN BILLS WOULD BE HIGHLY COMPLICATED AND UNFAIR TO SOME SINCE

P5

THE COST OF HOUSING IS MUCH HIGHER THOUGH IN QUALITY RATHER LOWER AT THE SETTHA PALACE HOTEL (WHERE SOME LIVE) THAN AT THE PRESIDENCE DU CONSEIL STOP PARA IT IS OF COURSE UNDERSTOOD THAT THESE ARRANGEMENTS ARE ONLY INTENDED TO COVER THE PERIOD DURING WHICH THE PRESIDENCE DU CONSEIL

P6/38

IS BEING USED AS A HOTEL STOP IF AND WHEN OFFICE WOULD MOVE TO SMALLER QUARTERS AND DELEGATES AND STAFF WOULD BE PERMITTED TO FIND THEIR OWN LIVING QUARTERS CMA THE QUESTION WOULD BE SUBJECT TO REVIEW STOP

CFM 137

TELEGRAMS
1959 OCT 23 10 5 05
UNITED NATIONS

IN
OCT 22 1969
FILE NO.
ACTION
TO *Lawry*

32 SSS VIENTIANE 149 22 0757Z

UNATIONS NY

130 FIELDSEV CONTROLLER LAOS 53 INFO PASQUET FROM ENGERS
AFTER FULL CONSIDERATION OF ALL RELEVANT FACTS EYE CAN RECOMMEND
TO YOU FOLLOWING ARRANGEMENTS FOR SUPPLY OF OUR CURRENT FINANCIAL
REQUIREMENTS STOP BANK OF TOKYO CMA VIENTIANE BRANCH CMA IS IN
POSITION TO PROVIDE MISSION WITH DRAWING RIGHTS IN

P2

DOLLARS AND KIPS UP TO AMOUNTS GUARANTEED BY THEIR NEWYORK
OFFICE STOP FOR THAT PURPOSE HQ SHOULD OPEN ACCOUNT WITH LATTER
OFFICE WHICH SHOULD NORMALLY KEEP BALANCE OF ABOVE TEN
THOUSAND DOLLARS TO BE REPLENISHED AND ADDED TO ACCORDING TO
REQUIREMENTS OF SITUATION STOP THIS WAY NO UNUSUABLE KIP BALANCE

P3

WILL ACCRUE STOP FOR YOUR GUIDANCE CMA PRESENT WEEKLY EXPENSE
HERE RUN SLIGHTLY IN EXCESS OF SIXTEEN HUNDRED DOLLARS STOP
WE ARE ALREADY ONE WEEK BEHIND IN PAYMENTS IN ADDITION TO UNAUDITED
DEBIT BALANCE OF ABOUT FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS FOR PERIOD 15
SEPTEMBER TO 12 OCTOBER STOP PLEASE ADVISE

CFM 130 53 15 12

OCT 23 1963

Sausky

56 SSS VIENTIANE 136 23 1055Z

UNATIONS NY

140 FIELDSEV FROM ENGERS STOP THE UNITED STATES EMBASSY
DOCTOR HAS RECOMMENDED THAT ROBERT VERSCHEURE CMA SECURITY GUARD
CMA QUOTE BE SENT TO BANGKOK FOR FURTHER DIAGNOSTIC STUDIES
AND TREATMENT STOP HIS SYMPTOMS SUGGEST A KIDNEY STONE AND
HE FEELS THAT HE IS IN NEED OF MORE

P2

EXTENSIVE CARE THAN THE LIMITED FACILITIES IN VIENTIANE CAN OFFER
UNQUOTE STOP VERSCHEURE HAS BEEN VISIBLY AILING FOR THE LAST
FEW DAYS AND HAS BEEN UNDER DOCTORS TREATMENT WHILE PERFORMING
HIS DUTIES STOP EYE WILL SEND HIM TO BANGKOK TOMORROW WHERE EYE
WILL REQUEST ECAFE TO TAKE FURTHER CHARGE OF

P3/36

HIS CASE STOP PARA STOP AS EYE AM NOW LEFT WITH ONLY ONE GUARD
EYE MUST URGENTLY REQUEST YOU TO SEND ME AN IMMEDIATE REPLACEMENT
PREFERABLY WITHOUT DEPENDENTS AND IF OBTAINABLE WITH KNOWLEDGE
OF FRANCH STOP

CFM 140