

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

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Dag Hammarskjöld's saml.

Laos - 1959

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11 Nov.

Karev, N. and Mikhailov, M. (Special Corresp

- contents of Izvestia, USSR in New York)

- article - "A not-too-respectable Junket"

Izvestia, 11 November 1959

A NOT-TOO-RESPECTABLE JUNKET

Today, 10 November, the Secretary-General of the United Nations Dag Hammarskjold, left New York by air for Vientiane, the capital of Laos. The Office of the Secretary-General in announcing his trip, said that it was being made on the invitation of the Government of Laos. The purpose of the Hammarskjold visit, the United Nations Secretariat asserted, was "to provide him with independent and full personal knowledge of the problem of which the United Nations has become seized through the appeal from the Government of Laos."

What has happened in Laos of late, what kind of special "problem" had now come before the United Nations which would force the Secretary-General to undertake such an extraordinary step as to leave the session of the General Assembly at which his presence is mandatory? Hammarskjold refers to his "duties incumbent upon him under the Charter." However, it is at least an arbitrary interpretation of the Charter, according to which the Secretary-General must in such cases act under direct instructions and mandates of the Assembly. However, no such mandates concerning Laos have been received by the Secretary-General from the fourteenth session of the General Assembly.

It is obvious that Hammarskjold's trip is being made, not within the framework of his duties under the Charter but in violation of his obligations and of the Charter itself, which has been grossly trampled upon by the whole to-do around the "Question of Laos" created in the Security Council by those who promote the increase of international tension.

In UN circles rumors have been circulating for quite some time now that the illegally created subcommittee of the Security Council which was assigned the task of "inquiring" into the provocative complaint of Laotian authorities, had returned from Laos with empty hands. When the sub-committee report was released this became obvious. Summarizing information specially

prepared by Laotian authorities, which, of course, spared no effort in making false assertions and falsifications, the members of the sub-committee were forced to admit that as a whole the information given to the sub-committee did not clearly establish whether there had been cases of border crossings by the regular troops of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam.

Thus, the whole edifice called the "Question of Laos" collapsed and nothing remained of the whole question. The Christian Science Monitor wrote that as a result of the release of the report of the Laotian sub-committee, which did not contain any proof of the widely touted Western charges of aggression by North Viet Nam against Laos, the diplomatic position of the Western powers and the United Nations has been dealt a serious blow. What this blow means is explained by the New York Times which wrote that in view of the data contained in the report the United States, England and France could not at present renew the discussion of the question of Laos in the Security Council or at the Assembly session.

As we confirmed in conversations with delegates this opinion has been formed also by many members of the General Assembly who welcomed the liberation of the Assembly from another "dead cat". Because of this, the greater was the surprise and condemnation caused in UN circles by further attempts to involve the United Nations in the disreputable game which certain powers are playing in connection with the events in Laos and by the refusal of these powers to put an end to this game.

The State Department of the United States and the American delegation to the United Nations hurriedly issued a special statement in connection with the report of the sub-committee on Laos. In this statement, which recognizes the absence of proof of interference in the events in Laos by the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, there is contained, contrary to all logic, a reaffirmation of the former position of the United States as well as the absurd assertion of indirect aggression and the demand that the United Nations should undertake further steps. Deciphering this demand the American press gives to understand that the United States

would like to see "a permanent UN presence in Laos", that is, systematic interference on the part of the international organization in the internal affairs of that country. It is necessary also to draw attention to the fact that American newspapers had anticipated the decision of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to visit Laos and had directly linked this trip with the plans of the State Department.

The obvious conclusion is, therefore, that after the report of the sub-committee of the Security Council had knocked the ground from under the authors of the "Question of Laos" they intend once again to retain this shaky ground through the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

The Christian Science Monitor, recognizing that Hammarskjold in this case was proceeding on a dangerous road towards violation of his duties and of exceeding his authority, had stressed that the Secretary-General had taken upon himself an extremely unusual role. What is right, is right! And the matter is not changed by the fact that the Secretary-General of the United Nations in the communique on his trip asserted that it had "no implications as regards the internal situation in Laos, the external relations of that country, or the arrangements agreed upon in Geneva in 1954."

In reality, however, by going to Laos at the invitation of the Government of Laos, he firstly in advance sides with one of the parties in the internal conflict, and secondly, acts to the advantage of those who through the United Nations would like to destroy the whole system of the Geneva Agreement.

Least of all, it is incumbent upon the United Nations and its officials to play such a role. The United Nations is not entitled to interfere in the internal affairs of states. The United Nations should not abet violations of international treaties and agreements and even less participate in such violations. The "Question of Laos", as has by now become obvious to all, is a "dead cat." Those who once again dragged this "dead cat" into the United Nations are doing the United Nations poor service.

(Signed N. Karev,  
M. Mikhailov, Special Correspondents of Izvestia in New York)

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