

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

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Laos - 1959

30 Nov.

Tuomioja, Sakari (U.N., Vientiane, Laos)

- 1 letter from D.H.

30 November 1959

PERSONAL

Dear Sakari,

I have to thank you for two interesting letters, the last of which I only just received.

Matters here have developed as I hoped, and our approach is being given "a break". There is no intention to act on the basis of the Subcommittee report or to take any initiative for a meeting of the Security Council if things remain quiet. The relations with the Soviets are satisfactory, and I do not believe that they will give us any trouble in substance.

This means that I am able to get on with my plans, and I am, therefore, now in a position to tell you how I would like to manoeuvre, especially as regards your own role and time-table.

If possible we should not have your report here in New York later than Monday, 14 December. We would then take it up for immediate study. Two days later, the 16th, Heurtematte would go to Vientiane with calculated arrival on the 18th or 19th so as to give you a chance to discuss with him and inform him about the situation then prevailing. In accordance with your own wishes you could thereafter go to Geneva the 20th or 21st, while Heurtematte stays on with the stated task of clarifying the administrative problems which will arise at the implementation of your various recommendations for studies, etc.

I would have to ask you to return to Vientiane the first days of January in order to relieve Heurtematte and to continue your own discussions and studies. However, your assignment to Vientiane would remain transitional, giving us the necessary time to make definite arrangements on the basis of your proposals. I guess that you will be able to leave for good and return to Geneva, let us say, mid-February, as by that time I must have the longer-term arrangement established, with a "coordinator" for the various U.N. activities in Laos (I refer you to the letter to the Specialised Agencies of which I have already sent you a copy).

In the meanwhile Heurtematte would have to carry the ball on from Vientiane to the Specialised Agencies with a view to an agreement on the various projects around the 1st of February to be implemented on my return from Africa.

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Mr. Sakari Tuomioja,  
United Nations,  
Vientiane,  
Laos.

I hope that this is not too inconvenient for you. It is, in my view, definitely the best way to manoeuvre, and I have learned by now a bit about how we can proceed towards the essential goals without getting either one of the two sides in open opposition. Your continuance as suggested is essential for that purpose. On the other hand, you can go to Geneva for Christmas with a very good conscience as Heurtematte would sooner or later have to go to Vientiane, at all events, and in no way minds spending Christmas there. I would appreciate your reaction to this plan by cable.

As regards your report, I have given some thought to the question of publicity. We shall undoubtedly be under pressure to publish it, but my conclusion is that that would put you in a somewhat awkward position without serving any sound purpose. Therefore, I have in mind to cover the report by a fairly extensive press release, while maintaining the full text secret as an internal Secretariat document under study. You may wish to give some thought to this question and also to the drafting of such a press summary.

I still have no clear idea whom I might get as coordinator from February onwards. I shall make a second try with the Swede I mentioned to you, but I scarcely believe that he can be forced to accept. Another alternative is a good, but somewhat untested Swiss man. Do you happen to know any senior Finn who might suit the job description (good political and diplomatic experience, ambassadorial rank, good knowledge of French, rather above than below 60 years, sufficient economic background to be plausible as coordinator, cool judgment in evaluations of hot political situations).

I hope that you find some time to get the feeling of this extraordinary country. You should, for example, definitely see to it that you come to Luang Prabang. If you can avoid it being sensationalised or, preferably, even publicised, I would not mind you going even to the border provinces (on the initiative of the Cabinet), but before you do, I would, all the same, suggest that you consult us.

In due time and before making anything you say final, I guess you would wish to use your right to see the King again.

With all good wishes and kindest regards,

Dag Hammarskjöld

P.S.

I enclose a copy of a letter to Nehru, the latter parts of which you may find it useful to know about.