

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

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Laos. 1959

3 Dec.

J. F. Eagers' report from Vientiane, Laos  
to D.H.

J.F. Engers

Radio station in Vientiane

1. Before the Secretary-General left Vientiane on 19 November he intimated that a decision on the future of the radio station in Vientiane should be deferred for a week or so.

2. I have given the question some thought and have discussed it with several persons who are aware of the issues involved.

3. On balance, I would be inclined to advise that the radio station be retained. It would be another matter if one were to decide now whether or not to install one, but although the present needs for it are not overwhelming, it should be realized that it would be most awkward to close down operations now and have to resume them later on when the need would once more arise as seems to be likely.

Commercial cable rates between Vientiane and New York are rather prohibitive (73 cents a word) and the service less than reliable. These costs could, of course, be substantially reduced if Vientiane sent all its traffic commercially to the Bangkok station for relay, but there are only three circuits a day available at the Vientiane Post and Telegraph office which unfortunately do not all tie in with the Bangkok schedules. Thus great delays are unavoidable.

4. In view of the costs, Vientiane will be much discouraged from using telegraph service at all and will tend to avail itself of the pouch which, because of the long time lag, will make it feel more isolated than is necessary. Having radio relations with Headquarters will therefore expedite matters on both sides.

5. If, as recommended, the radio station is to be maintained, I strongly suggest returning the present radio officer, Mr. Kruse, to Jerusalem. He left from there on three-hours' notice, leaving behind his wife and child and although he has performed very well, he has become restless from the uncertainty surrounding himself and his family. At present, he does not have a full-time job with only two circuits a day operative and since he knows very little French his employment in other phases of the work of the Mission has not proven feasible. His replacement, therefore, should be completely bi-lingual in English and French so that he might be used for the many other chores that could be usefully performed in Vientiane in relation to this Mission. In addition, this person should be unmarried and without dependents unless the ban against the introduction of dependents in Laos were relaxed.

6. The above is conditioned on the premise that United Nations operations in Laos will continue indefinitely.