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May 12, 1975

LAOSFYI ONLY:

The U.S. Embassy in Laos has reported its judgment that though volatile, the situation in Vientiane does not require implementation of emergency evacuation measures. Nor are such measures deemed necessary elsewhere in Laos (except in Pakse where civil unrest has prompted the departure of a small number of U.S. dependents and non-essential personnel).

The Post today quotes a "senior American official" as stating that the U.S. is prepared to remain in Laos or to pull its personnel out depending on the attitude of the forces in power.

Q. What are U.S. plans for evacuation, if any, from Laos? Will we be thinning out our non-essential Americans? How many Americans are there in Laos at present? What is the nature of the U.S. commitment to Laos?

A: The U.S. has no plans to evacuate Americans from Laos at this time. ~~Should the occasion warrant an evacuation, we are prepared to do so.~~ As to your question on the number of American citizens in Laos, there are approximately 1000, of whom roughly 150 are private American citizens and their dependents. The remainder are officials and their dependents.

[Only if asked: We have no formal treaty with Laos though] we have supported the coalition government as the best means of maintaining peace in Laos.

In sum, we are reviewing the situation in Laos and the magnitude of our mission there. Instructions to that effect have gone out and we see no need now to take immediate action.

May 14, 1975

LAOS

Q. What are U.S. plans for evacuation, if any, from Laos? Will we be thinning out our non-essential Americans? How many Americans are there in Laos at present? What is the nature of the U.S. commitment to Laos?

A. We are reviewing the situation in Laos and the magnitude of our mission there. Instructions to that effect have gone out and we see no need now to take immediate action.

The U.S. has no plans to evacuate Americans from Laos at this time. Should the occasion warrant an evacuation, we are prepared to do so. As to your question on the number of American citizens in Laos, there are approximately 1,000, of whom roughly 150 are private American citizens and their dependents. The remainder are officials and their dependents.

[ONLY IF ASKED: We have no formal treaty with Laos, though we have supported the coalition government as the best means of maintaining peace in Laos.]

FYI ONLY: The U.S. Embassy in Laos has reported its judgment that though volatile, the situation in Vientiane does not require implementation of emergency evacuation measures. Nor are such measures deemed necessary elsewhere in Laos (except in Pakse where civil unrest has prompted the departure of a small number of U.S. dependents and non-essential personnel).

May 15, 1975

LAOS

1. Background: Student agitators in Savannakhet have occupied the AID compound, and they are still holding hostage three of its American employees and the area's rightist provincial governor. We have reports that representatives of the Joint Commission to Implement the Agreement has been sent to Savannakhet to negotiate the release of the hostages, who are unharmed according to reports.

No Americans have been seized during the demonstrations in Luang Prabang, but the AID compound there has been thoroughly vandalized and a number of local business establishments looted.

The U.S. Charge has registered a strong protest with both Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma and his Pathet Lao deputy, Phoumi, over the incidents in Savannakhet and Luang Prabang, and has demanded the immediate release of the three American hostages.

2. In response to questions on an American evacuation from Laos, the State Department spokesman said yesterday:

Obviously, we are watching the situation closely; and we are concerned about the safety of Americans, particularly those in areas outside of Vientiane. In fact, I understand that most, if not all, Americans have been withdrawn from the outlying areas, except for the three AID officials being detained in Savannakhet.

As part of this process, the Embassy in Vientiane is reviewing the number of its staff members needed in the light of the current situation; and during the next several weeks the size of the staff will be reduced.

It is important to reemphasize that no evacuation is planned at this time. (Refer to guidance of 5/14/75.)

\* \* \* \* \*

- Q. What are we doing to secure the release of the American citizens in Savannakhet?
- A. We have been in very close touch with the Laotian Government officials, including the Prime Minister, and they have sent officials to Savannakhet to help obtain the release of the hostages.
- Q. How much assistance have we provided Laos this year ?
- A. For FY 1975 there is \$28 million appropriated for military aid and \$33 million appropriated for economic aid.
- Q. Is aid continuing? Will our aid program be cut significantly?
- A. As is normal in a changing situation, such as this one, all our programs are under review. At present our military and economic programs are under review and are continuing on a restricted basis

FYI: (We don't have detailed breakdown on restrictions, though much of our aid is in the form of food and clothing. Refer specific questions to A. I. D.)

May 16, 1975 J C .

LAOS

BACKGROUND UPDATE:

The situation in Savannakhet, has stabilized, at least temporarily, following several days of anti-rightist and anti-American demonstrations. The coalition government has formally apologized to the U. S. for the protesters' occupation of the USAID compound in Savannakhet and for the detention of three of its American officials. The three hostages were released late yesterday and allowed to return to their private residences in the city. The coalition government has dispatched a joint peace-keeping delegation to Savannakhet to negotiate the protesters' grievances.

In response to questions on the safety of the three men detained in Savannakhet, you may refer to the State Department's answer of yesterday:

A. "With regard to Laos -- the report of the three American AID officials who were detained in Savannakhet -- I understand the last official report we've had is they are confined to their homes. They are safe. And we understand the Lao Government is sending a special representative to that city to seek their immediate release."

Q. Have we begun to reduce the size of our mission in Laos?

A. We do not have any figures, but understand that a thinning out has begun and is proceeding.

AMERICANS IN LAOS

Q. What is the fate of the (12) Americans detained in Savannakhet, Laos?

A. The Americans are safe and unharmed, but are confined to their homes. We are in frequent touch with the Laotian government on this matter, and they have assured us they are sending high level officials to Savannakhet to discuss the release of the Americans quickly. For further details, I would refer you to the State Department.



May 21, 1975

LAOS

Q. What is the current situation in Laos? What is the fate of Americans detained in Savannakhet; and what can you tell us about the USAID compound sealed off by agitators?

A. We are informed that the Americans detained in Savannakhet are safe though their freedom of activity has been restricted. We understand that the Americans and Lao employees in the USAID compound are unharmed but are confined there. We have protested to the Lao government about the lack of adequate security of our property and have expressed our concern for the safety of our people. We are in continuous contact with Lao officials who have assured us they will be taking measures to secure the release of the Americans. For more details on this I would refer you to the State Department.

May 22, 1975

LAOS

BACKGROUND:

Coalition ministers are in Savannakhet negotiating the release of the Americans there. Expectations are that an agreement will be reached soon and the Americans will be able to depart over the weekend.

In Vientiane there has been no significant change in the situation. 200-300 demonstrators continued their occupation of principal USAID facilities. Several members of the Lao Cabinet expressed anger at the occupation, saying it would jeopardize requests for U.S. aid. The demonstrators have called for an end of the U.S. AID presence, but a continuation of U.S. assistance. (This is a very sensitive issue, and language based on State guidance should be followed carefully. Refer to State for details on specifics of the operation.

State guidance from yesterday on our assessment of the situation is as follows:

FUNSETH: I might just provide a few thoughts on our own assessment of, I think, obvious developments in Laos.

In the first place, the flight of many of the prominent political and military leaders of the Vientiane side of the coalition has caused this coalition to become more dominated by its Pathet Lao side. Pathet Lao military units that have entered the towns in the south in the last few days did so apparently without any resistance from the remaining Vientiane side military leaders. So it appears apparent that with a weakened Vientiane side the Pathet Lao are exercising more and more control over the direction the Lao Government takes.

Q. Does this change the American Government's attitude toward the coalition as a whole? Do we still accept this as a coalition government?

A. In the context of what I've just said, yes, a coalition government of sorts still exists.

And, on the continuing thinning out process:

FUNSETH: Given the continuing situation in Savannakhet and this most recent incident in Vientiane, we are reducing the number of U.S. government employees and their families in Laos. At the time of this briefing when I came in, I checked, (May 21) and we had received no report from the Embassy as to the actual number of people who have left.

And on American assistance to Laos, the following was stated and is reflected in our guidance of several days ago:

Q. At what point do American prohibitions on providing aid to a communist government come into play?

FUNSETH: I think it's premature to make that kind of an assessment. But you will recall, that I mentioned last week that our entire economic and military assistance programs to Laos were under review and that while under review, they are being conducted at a restricted level.

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SUBJECT: PRESS GUIDANCE ON LAO REFUGEES

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. FOLLOWING PRESS GUIDANCE ON LAO REFUGEES WAS PREPARED FOR DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN ON IF ASKED BASIS, BUT NO QUESTIONS WERE RAISED.

QUESTION: IS IT TRUE THAT LARGE NUMBERS OF LAO WHO HAVE WORKED FOR THE US AND OTHERS WHO HAVE HAD SPECIAL TIES TO THE US ARE BEING DENIED ENTRY INTO THE US?

ANSWER: NO. IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDARD WORLDWIDE PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH PERSONS REQUESTING ASYLUM IN THE US, WE ARE ADVISING THESE PEOPLE FIRST TO TRY TO OBTAIN ASYLUM IN COUNTRIES IN WHICH THEY ARE PRESENTLY LOCATED OR TO SEEK THE AID OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS FOR RESETTLEMENT IN OTHER COUNTRIES. WE ARE INDICATING THAT IF THESE EFFORTS FAIL, WE WILL CONSIDER THEIR REQUESTS FOR ASYLUM IN THE US.

QUESTION: HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE INDICATED THAT THEY WANT TO ENTER THE US?

ANSWER: ABOUT 500 LAO (ROUGHLY 100 HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS) HAVE INDICATED THAT THEY WANT TO ENTER THE US. LESS THAN 10 PERCENT OF THESE ARE FORMER USG EMPLOYEES.

QUESTION: WHO ARE THE OTHER 90 PERCENT?

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VANDERHYE

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PAGE 01

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ANSWER: THE OTHERS ARE MOSTLY FORMER LAO CIVILIAN AND MILITARY OFFICIALS, SOME OF WHOM HAVE BEEN TRAINED IN THE US.

QUESTION: DOES THE USG HAVE LEGAL AUTHORITY TO ADMIT THESE PEOPLE?

ANSWER: YES, THE NORMAL AUTHORITY GOVERNING INDIVIDUAL REQUESTS FOR ASYLUM IS BASED ON THE PROTOCOL ON MIGRATION AND REFUGEES, TO WHICH THE US IS A SIGNATORY, AND THE PROVISIONS OF THE 1962 MIGRATION AND REFUGEE ASSISTANCE ACT AS AMENDED.

QUESTION: DOES THIS MEAN THAT THE USG WILL NOT SEEK TO EXERCISE PAROLE AUTHORITY FOR THE LAO AS WAS DONE FOR THE CAMBODIANS AND VIETNAMESE?

ANSWER: THE SITUATION IN LAOS OF COURSE DIFFERS FROM THAT IN CAMBODIA AND VIETNAM, AND THERE ARE RELATIVELY SMALL NUMBERS INVOLVED SO FAR, BUT THE MATTER OF PAROLE FOR LAO IS UNDER CONTINUING STUDY.

QUESTIONS: DOES THIS MEAN THAT THE DEPARTMENT IS IN TOUCH WITH THE ATTORNEY GENERAL AND THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WILL BE IN TOUCH WITH THE CONGRESS?

ANSWER: AS PART OF OUR CONTINUING STUDY, ALL INTERESTED AGENCIES OF THE GOVERNMENT ARE BEING CONSULTED.  
END UNCLASSIFIED.

2. YOU SHOULD FOLLOW THIS LINE OR INFORM DEPARTMENT IF YOU BELIEVE IT SHOULD CHANGE. BECAUSE OF CONTINUING SENSITIVITIES IN OUR RELATIONS WITH PGNU, YOU SHOULD PROVIDE ABOVE ONLY ON IF ASKED BASIS. ANDELMAN ARTICLE IN NY TIMES JUNE 5 REPORTING THAT CONSULAR OFFICIALS IN VIENTIANE, UDORN, AND BANGKOK SAID THEY HAD TURNED AWAY HUNDREDS OF LAO AND QUOTING ONE AMERICAN CONSULAR OFFICIAL, 'IT'S A SCANDAL,' WILL NOT HELP IN OUR CONSULTATIONS WITH CONGRESS TO EXPEDITE ACCEPTANCE OF THESE REFUGEES.  
KISSINGER  
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July 1, 1975

LAOS

If asked about the situation in Laos, you should refer to the State Department's remarks of yesterday. We should be very careful not to go beyond their response.

"Q: How many people does the Embassy have in Laos?

"Funseth: I believe there are 22 left as of this morning.

And

"Q:/ what's going to happen now? Will those be further reduced?

"Funseth: I think we will just have to wait and see what happens in Laos. We have no immediate plans to reduce further, but I would not exclude it."

July 7, 1975

NATURE OF THE LAOTIAN GOVERNMENT

Henry Kamm in today's New York Times asserts that most Laotians and foreign observers consider the Communist takeover in Laos and Indochina complete. The story is likely to pr ovoke the same questions that have surfaced occasionally at the briefing for the past several months:

Q. How would you characterize the government of Laos? Is it a Communist dominated government now, and if so, what will our future position be with regard to Laos?

A. While it is clear that the Pathet Lao continue to exercise increasing strength in the Laotian government, a coalition still exists. As to our future position and policies with regard to Laos, we are keeping the situation under review and we will make our determination as it evolves.

Q: What is the status of our aid program in Laos now?

A:

As I have said before, our aid is <sup>program continues to</sup> ~~continuing on a~~ <sup>be under review.</sup> ~~restricted basis but I do not have details on the nature of~~ <sup>At the present time</sup> ~~we have rec the program to a halt because~~ <sup>of the practical difficulties</sup> ~~the aid supply.~~ <sup>we have been encountering.</sup>

FYI ONLY. You do not want to get into details on this

issue, for two reasons:

(1) Our aid program for Laos is being reviewed and judgments will be made on the basis of what type of government evolves there.

(2) We do not want to say anything that could trigger a reaction among the demonstrators while Americans still in Laos remain in some jeopardy.

In fact, most of the assistance still going into Laos is in the form of food, clothing, dry goods, etc.

Q: Are we continuing our thinning-out process? How many Americans still remain in Laos?

*The thinning out process is continuing.*

pressed: There are now slightly less than 300 Americans still in Laos and virtually all dependents have departed.)

FYI ONLY. We do not want to pin this down to the exact number (268 official) since private citizens sometimes have



a way of simply "showing up" and are often not listed on any records. We also don't want to get into a day-by-day accounting of U.S. personnel leaving the country.

## U. S. Role In Laos

Q: What is the U. S. role going to be in this new situation in Laos? Will we continue to provide aid? Will we terminate diplomatic relations? Is Ambassador-designate Stone still going to go to Vientiane?

A: We are reviewing the situation in Laos. Until recently we had been providing military and economic aid to the Government on the understanding it was a neutral government in a neutral country.

We now have no plans to sever diplomatic relations in Laos; however, we cannot accept harrassment of personnel. As you know, we will be terminating our AID Mission in Laos by the end of the month. We will then decide how to proceed in the future. We are watching the situation closely and will make our determination as it evolves.

Q: Should we not be evacuating Americans from Laos, especially in view of the recent anti-American demonstration in Vientiane?

A: We are at present thinning out U. S. personnel in Laos. We will have reduced total numbers from about 1100 in April to about 50 by the end of the month. We do not now foresee any need for an evacuation. It depends, obviously, on how the situation evolves.

U. S. ROLE IN LAOS

Q: What do you think our role in Laos should be? Are we continuing our aid program? Are we continuing to scale down the size of our mission in Laos?

A: We are watching the situation in Laos closely and will make our determinations as it evolves. As is normal in a changing situation such as this one, all our programs are under review. At present, our military and economic programs are continuing on a restricted basis.

We are presently thinning out U.S. personnel in Laos. Our Embassy in Vientiane is, of course, assessing the situation there continuously and has thus far not recommended any evacuation.

## American Detained in Laos

### Background

US AID official Michael Rozel was detained in Laos Thursday by Lao officials who claimed, "his work was not finished." Rozel is one of the officials charged with closing out the Laotian payrolls and the Lao Government thought he was trying to leave without completing the paperwork for disbursement. In fact the opposite is true. All the relevant papers to close out the AID Mission had been sent to Washington and Rozel was coming here to finish his disbursement task.

The issue is quite complex and we are advised that all questions on this issue should simply be referred to State.