

# Intelligence Information Cable

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DIST 11 FEBRUARY 1975

COUNTRY LAOS

DOI FEBRUARY 1975

SUBJECT DISCUSSION BY JCIA SUB-COMMITTEE OF MISSING-IN-ACTION AND THE WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN TROOPS FROM LAOS

SUMMARY:

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END OF SUMMARY.

1. LAO PATRIOTIC FRONT (LPF) DELEGATE TO THE JOINT COMMISSION TO IMPLEMENT THE AGREEMENT (JCIA) COLONEL P H A O BOUNNAPHOL MET AS PLANNED WITH VIENTIANE SIDE JCIA DELEGATE COLONEL A R Y A PHIMMASONE

TO DISCUSS ISSUES CONCERNING SOLDIERS WHO ARE MISSING-IN-ACTION (MIA) AND THE WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN TROOPS FROM LAOS.

2. ON THE MIA QUESTION COLONEL PHAO PRODUCED TWO LPF LISTS: ONE CONTAINING THE NAMES OF 46 VIENTIANE SIDE SOLDIERS KILLED IN ACTION OR WHO DIED OF SICKNESS IN PRISON; THE OTHER A LIST OF 16 VIENTIANE SIDE SOLDIERS WHO DIED OF SICKNESS IN PRISON CAMP. PHAO CONCEDED THAT THERE WAS SOME DUPLICATION WITH REGARD TO THOSE WHO DIED OF SICKNESS IN PRISON. COMMENT: THESE LISTS ARE BEING CHECKED CAREFULLY BY THE VIENTIANE SIDE JCIA

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SECRETARIAT AGAINST NAMES OF LAO ARMED FORCES (FAR) AND LAO IRREGULAR FORCES (LIF) PRISONERS-OF-WAR (POWS) AND MIAS. BEYOND THESE LISTS WHICH WERE SENT FROM SAM NEUA, PHAO SAID THAT HE HAD NOTHING FURTHER TO SAY ON THE SUBJECT.

3. COLONEL ARYA THANKED PHAO FOR THE TWO LISTS AND PROPOSED THAT THEY DISCUSS THREE CATEGORIES OF MIAS:

A. THOSE CAPTURED BY THE LPF WHO ARE STILL ALIVE. THESE HE CATEGORIZED AS BEING OF TWO TYPES: THOSE STILL IN PRISON AND FORCED TO WORK AGAINST THEIR WILLS AND THOSE WHO HAVE OPTED OF THEIR OWN FREE WILL TO REMAIN IN THE LPF ZONE. PHAO REFUSED CATEGORICALLY TO DISCUSS POWS STATING THAT ALL PRISONERS HAVE BEEN RETURNED TO THE VIENTIANE SIDE. HE SAID THAT THOSE WHO REMAIN DO SO BY CHOICE AND ARE EMPLOYED AS GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONARIES, SOLDIERS, WORKERS, ENGINEERS, OR AS PART OF THE GENERAL POPULATION. ARYA SAID THE VIENTIANE DELEGATION, HOWEVER, HAD INFORMATION, SOME OF WHICH HAD ALREADY BEEN MADE AVAILABLE TO THE LPF, THAT VIENTIANE POWS WERE IMPRISONED IN SPECIFIC LOCATIONS. PHAO AGREED TO ACCEPT THE INFORMATION AND TO DISCUSS THE SUBJECT AREA BY AREA, BUT AGAIN REFUSED TO ADMIT

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THAT THE LPF WAS HOLDING VIENTIANE SIDE POWS.

B. THOSE WHO HAVE DIED. THESE ARYA DESCRIBED AS BEING OF TWO TYPES: THOSE WHO DIED IN PRISON OR WHILE ATTEMPTING TO ESCAPE AND THOSE WHO WERE KILLED IN ACTION. AMONG THE LATTER ARE THOSE WHO WERE BURIED AND WHOSE BODIES CAN BE LOCATED. ARYA SAID THERE WAS A NEED FOR EXPERTS TO STUDY THE REMAINS, BONES, AND TEETH. PHAO AGREED TO STUDY THIS QUESTION FURTHER BUT DID NOT AGREE AT THIS POINT TO ACCEPT FORMATION OF JOINT TEAMS.

C. THOSE WHOM NEITHER SIDE CAN CERTIFY ARE ALIVE OR DEAD SUCH AS CREW AND PASSENGERS OF AIRCRAFT WHICH CRASHED IN THE JUNGLE. THE REMAINS MIGHT BE IN OR NEAR THE DOWNED AIRCRAFT. ARYA SAID THERE IS EVEN A POSSIBILITY THAT SURVIVORS MIGHT BE ALIVE AND LIVING IN THE AREA OF THE CRASH. ARYA CITED THE CASE OF FAR COLONEL K H A M P H E N G, WHO WAS LOST ON A HELICOPTER FLIGHT IN MILITARY REGION II IN 1965 OR 1966. HE ALSO MENTIONED PILOTS OF AMERICAN AIRCRAFT LOST OVER LPF TERRITORY WHO WENT DOWN IN THEIR PLANES OR WHO PARACHUTED INTO THE JUNGLE AND WERE NEVER FOUND. ARYA SUGGESTED FORMING AND TRAINING A JOINT TEAM TO SEARCH FOR

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AND ATTEMPT TO IDENTIFY SUCH MIAS. PHAO WAS UNPREPARED FOR THE QUESTION BUT AGREED TO STUDY IT FURTHER.

4. ARYA ASKED FOR THE LATEST LPF INFORMATION ON THE MISSING AMERICAN [REDACTED] AND THE MISSING [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] PHAO SAID LPF AUTHORITIES IN SAM NEUA HAVE BEEN QUERIED BUT SAM NEUA HAS NOT YET REPLIED AND HE UNDERSTANDS SAM NEUA IS QUERYING LOCAL LPF AUTHORITIES IN VARIOUS LOCALITIES. ARYA REMINDED PHAO THAT THE JCIA HAD INFORMATION FROM FAR ESCAPEES FROM KHAMKEUT PRISON CAMP THAT [REDACTED] HAD BEEN SEEN THERE. PHAO, FLUSTERED, REPEATED THAT SAM NEUA HAD TO QUERY LOCAL LPF AUTHORITIES.

5. ARYA THEN RAISED THE SUBJECT OF THE WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN TROOPS. PHAO SAID HE HAD NO INFORMATION ON THE SUBJECT AND SUGGESTED THAT THEY SAVE THIS TOPIC FOR THE NEXT MEETING. ARYA OBJECTED. PHAO SAID THAT THE LPF KNOWS THAT SECRET AMERICAN AND THAI ORGANIZATIONS REMAIN IN LAOS. ARYA COUNTERED THAT IF THE LPF HAS PROOF THAT AMERICAN OR THAI SPECIAL FORCES REMAIN IN LAOS, THE LPF SHOULD PRODUCE THE PROOF SO THAT IT CAN BE CHECKED BY A JOINT TEAM.

6. BEFORE GOING TOO DEEP IN THEIR DISCUSSION OF THE

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WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN TROOPS, PHAO SAID IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THE TWO SIDES NOT GIVE DETAILS OF THEIR CONVERSATIONS TO THE PRESS BUT MERELY STATE THAT THE TWO SIDES HAD DISCUSSED CURRENT QUESTIONS CONCERNING MIAs AND THE WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN TROOPS IN ACCORDANCE WITH JCIA DOCUMENTS SIGNED ON THESE TOPICS. [REDACTED] COMMENT: AT THE [REDACTED] FEBRUARY MEETING OF THE VIENTIANE SIDE DELEGATION TO THE JCIA, ARYA REPORTED ON HIS MEETING WITH PHAO BOUNNAPHOL. ARYA

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RECOMMENDED THAT THE VIENTIANE SIDE HONOR PHAO'S REQUEST AND NOT GIVE DETAILS OF THEIR MEETING TO THE PRESS. AT FIRST CHIEF DELEGATE S O U K A N VILAYSAN WAS OPPOSED TO THIS TACTIC TAKING THE POSITION THAT THE VIENTIANE SIDE SHOULD APPLY MAXIMUM PRESSURE ON THE LPF THROUGH PRESS RELEASES AND THE RESULTANT PRESSURE OF PUBLIC OPINION. AFTER SOME DISCUSSION, SOUKAN AGREED TO WITHHOLDING DETAILS FROM THE PRESS INITIALLY TO SEE IF PHAO WILL CONTINUE TO BE FORTHCOMING.)

7. PHAO DID NOT ADMIT THAT NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY (NVA) TROOPS WERE STILL IN LAOS; HOWEVER, HE DID NOT DENY IT AND WAS WILLING TO DISCUSS THE SUBJECT. [REDACTED] COMMENT: PHAO APPEARED TO BE WELL AWARE THAT NVA TROOPS ARE STILL IN LAOS HE APPEARED TO BE BOTHERED BY THE DILEMMA OF NOT WANTING TO LIE ABOUT IT.) ARYA SAID THAT A MARRIED COUPLE CANNOT ALWAYS LISTEN TO THEIR PARENTS BUT MUST LEARN TO GET ALONG TOGETHER AND SHARE THINGS TOGETHER. IN THE SAME WAY, HE SAID, IT IS IMPORTANT FOR THE LAO TO LEARN TO GET ALONG TOGETHER. HE ADDED IF THE LPF SUSPICIONS ABOUT AMERICAN AND THAI TROOPS ARE CORRECT, THE VIENTIANE SIDE WILL BE GLAD TO GET THEM OUT OF LAOS BUT THAT THE VIENTIANE SIDE

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WANT ALSO TO HELP THE LPF TO GET RID OF NVA TROOPS. PHAO SAID THE LPF KNOW THE THAIS AND AMERICANS ARE HERE AND IF THESE GO, "THEIRS" CAN GO TOO. [REDACTED] COMMENT: IT WAS IMPLICIT IN PHAO'S REMARKS AND MANNER THAT HE MEANT THAT THE LPF'S FOREIGNERS CAN GO TOO. (THUS WHILE NOT ADMITTING THAT NVA TROOPS ARE IN LAOS, HE DID NOT DENY IT.) TO SHOW SINCERITY, ARYA SAID, THE VIENTIANE SIDE WAS PREPARED TO SET UP A JOINT TEAM TO INVESTIGATE LPF CHARGES OF FOREIGN TROOPS, BUT ONLY IF THE VIENTIANE SIDE COULD MAKE SIMILAR CHECKS IN THE LPF ZONE. THE VIENTIANE SIDE WOULD BE WILLING TO HAVE THE JOINT TEAM CONDUCT CHECKS WITH THE FAR GENERAL STAFF PROVIDED THE VIENTIANE SIDE COULD CONDUCT CHECKS WITH THE LPF GENERAL STAFF IN SAM NEUA. ARYA SAID THERE WERE SEVERAL VNVA RALLIERS IN FAR CUSTODY WHO HAD PROVIDED DETAILED INFORMATION ON THE PRESENCE OF NVA TROOPS IN LAOS. HE THEN FLASHED A COUPLE OF BIOGRAPHIC REPORTS WITH PHOTOGRAPHS AND SAID THAT THE VIENTIANE SIDE WAS PREPARED TO MAKE THESE DETAILS AVAILABLE TO THE LPF AND EVEN HAVE THE RALLIERS TESTIFY BEFORE THE JCIA IN ORDER THAT THE LPF COULD RECEIVE THE DETAILS DIRECTLY. PHAO SAID THE INFORMATION COULD HAVE

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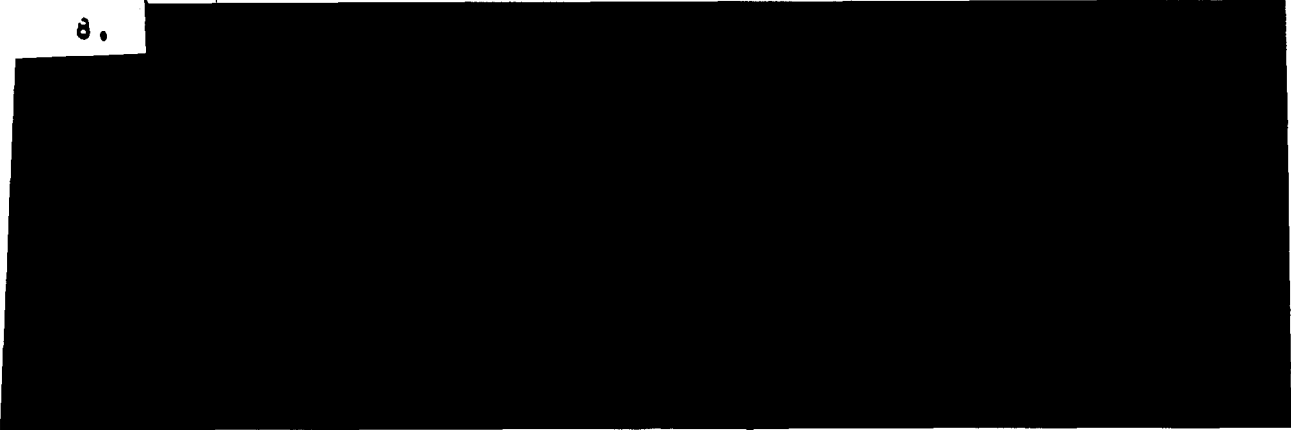
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BEEN FABRICATED; HOWEVER, HE DID NOT REJECT THE PROPOSAL  
OUT OF HAND. [REDACTED] COMMENT: THE NAMES OF THE NVA RALLIERS  
WERE NOT GIVEN PHAO, [REDACTED]



DISCUSSION ENDED ON A CONSERVATIVE NOTE AND IT APPEARS  
THAT PHAO WILL CONTINUE TO BE COOPERATIVE.

8. [REDACTED]



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