

**February 8, 1961**

**Transcript of Vice Premier Cheny Yi and Soviet  
Ambassador S.V. Chervonenko discussing the Laos  
Issue**

**Citation:**

"Transcript of Vice Premier Cheny Yi and Soviet Ambassador S.V. Chervonenko discussing the Laos Issue", February 8, 1961, Wilson Center Digital Archive, PRC FMA 109-03754-03, 72-82. Obtained by Yiming Feng and translated by Marian Rosenberg. <https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/120874>

**Credits:**

This document was made possible with support from MacArthur Foundation

**Original Language:**

Chinese

**Contents:**

Translation - English

Transcript of Vice Premier CHEN Yi and Soviet Ambassador [S.V.] CHERVONENKO discussing the Laos Issue

Time: 4:00pm, February 8th, 1961

Location: State Council Foreign Affairs Office Reception Hall

Vice Premier CHEN [Yi]: Comrade Ambassador, today [you were] invited [to] come [and] discuss the Laos Issue. It will not need a great deal of time.

Soviet Ambassador [S.V. CHERVONENKO]: [However] long is necessary to [fully] discuss [the issue is however] long [we shall talk].

Vice Premier CHEN [Yi]: The spirit [behind] today's topic [of discussion] is essentially the same as [the content of] the two memos which Comrade Ambassador gave me last time [we met]. On the sixth [of this month] Comrade ZHANG Hanfu already gave our response to Comrade [N.G.] SUDARIKOV. [With regards to the] Laos Problem, our two countries' governments [hold] a completely identical opinion. Today, the topic of our discussion is again those things which we have [previously discussed] together. There are no new things. Not that long ago, [the] Vietnamese Workers [Party] Central [Committee] Chairman HỒ Chí Minh brought up some issues concerning Laos [and] solicited our Central [Committee for their] viewpoint. The day before yesterday, I conferred our Central Committee's opinions to Vietnamese Worker's Central Politburo member Comrade HOÀNG Văn Hoan [who is currently in] China recuperating [from an illness]. Now we will tell you the contents of the reply [which we gave them]. [The] first topic [we] discussed [with] Comrade HOÀNG Văn Hoan was regarding [our] estimate of the situation in Laos [and the] development of [that] situation. It has been decided [that the best course of action will be] a victory on the front line. Should [all of our] hopes [be] entrusted to the Laos International Control Commission? Or, should [they be] entrusted to the [possibility of] victory on the Front Line? We believe [that they] should entrust [their] hopes [of] victory [to action on the] Front Line. If [they can] consolidate [their] bases, [if they can] win a few battles on the Front Line, [if they can] strike at [the] troops of Phoumi's Reactionary Party, then our position will be conducive to [achieving a favorable result by] attending an international conference. The international conference is sure to take place. We [do not have the ability] to refuse convening the meeting in Geneva, [we cannot refuse] expanding the scope [of the] Geneva meeting, [we cannot keep] India, Poland, and Canada [away from] participating in the International Control Commission. The co-chairs of the Geneva Conference Organizing Committee are the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom. Both parties [fighting] in the Laotian [Civil] War along with other related countries want to reject finally convening the International Conference. [However, stopping the meeting] or the International Control Commission is impossible [and no one] can stop it. The problem is that before these meetings are held [we should] consolidate [ourselves] and get some victories [on the battlefield]. Our meaning is [that we] want [the] Vietnamese Worker's Party Central Committee to persuade the Laotians. Although we can not refuse to convene an international conference, we also do not want [them] to entrust their hope [in an] international conference, [instead we feel that they] should develop and consolidate [their power]. Convening [of] an international conference absolutely means [that a] cease fire [will happen]. As soon as a cease fire happens, many problems [related] to occupied land will be born. Therefore, [the] Laotians should make good use of current opportunities to develop and consolidate [their] own strength. [It is] only [in] this way that the Lao problem can reach a resolution beneficial [to the] Lao people. [What I've just said] is the answer we gave to the Vietnamese Workers Party Central Committee. [It is also what we have asked] them to convey to the Lao Party and Souphanouvong [as our] basic [answer to the] first question.

Soviet Ambassador [S.V. CHERVONENKO]: [It seems to] me that discussing the "first issue" with you brings up three issues. First, can I understand correctly that what you were just now talking [about] is not a correction [to] the documents given to us by

Comrade ZHANG Hanfu on February 6th?

Vice Premier CHEN [Yi]: It is not a correction. This is [what] we talked about with our Vietnamese comrades. It is not published. [That which] we discussed before is still valid.

Soviet Ambassador [S.V. CHERVONENKO]: Secondly, [does] Comrade HOÀNG Văn Hoan have any comments on these issues?

Vice Premier CHEN [Yi]: He expressed agreement. I [will] repeat [myself] again, with regards to [whether or not they] should pin their hopes on the international conference, or place [their faith] in developing and consolidating [the] issues behind [their] own strengths, [when looking at the] ideology [of the] Laotians and Kong Le's troops, even though some Vietnamese comrades thinking isn't clear [to us], we advocate that they should place their hopes in development and consolidation.

Soviet Ambassador [S.V. CHERVONENKO]: Your meaning is [that you] want them to keep their fighting spirit, rather than collapse.

Vice Premier CHEN [Yi]: Exactly. We said to Comrade HOÀNG Văn Hoan, [you] shouldn't take the Soviet Government's draft letter to the Indian government on behalf of the co-chairs of the Geneva Conference suggesting [in the letter] that the convening of the international conference [take place as something that] will bind you hand and foot. Instead [you should] want them to take action. This point wasn't covered thoroughly [enough] during my last conversation with you [or] in the files [which] Comrade ZHANG Hanfu delivered to [your government] on February 6th. Therefore, [in] today's [conversation] it is necessary [for] us to tell you the views [held by] the Vietnamese Worker's Party Central Committee.

Soviet Ambassador [S.V. CHERVONENKO]: Is your meaning that although the Soviet Union is exerting public pressure on [our] Laotian comrades and [is] also calling for convening international conference that the Laotians should not limit their military operations?

Vice Premier CHEN [Yi]: Exactly. We want them to correctly understand that the Sino-Soviet propaganda campaigns are for the purpose of assisting them.

Soviet Ambassador [S.V. CHERVONENKO]: In summary, [you] want to make the two sides to [reach the same point on their own]. One is to have the Laotians not relax their vigilance at armed struggle for liberation. The other is to apply pressure via public opinion.

Vice Premier CHEN [Yi]: Political struggle and armed struggle are bound together. As armed struggle [is] better developed, [the conditions for] political struggle [are] more favorable. If your own strength is weak, then [your] bargaining position is greatly reduced. To put it another way, putting [all of] their hopes on international negotiations is a dangerous [type of] thinking. It is [also] detrimental to the Lao people.

Soviet Ambassador [S.V. CHERVONENKO]: [I] have another question [for you: in] discussing with [our] Vietnamese comrades [the] need for Laos to strengthen [their] armed struggle, [and] according to the present domestic Laotian balance of classes and Laos condition, [what] assistance [are you planning on giving and what] specific measures [are] you preparing to enact [so as to ensure] that hope is not just hope but [will be] followed by real action?

Vice Premier CHEN [Yi]: That is exactly the second question I want to talk about. With regard to the first question, [one can] say succinctly [that] convening [of the] international conference is inevitable. The recommendations as put forward by the co-chairs of the Geneva meeting, we cannot refuse.

Soviet Ambassador [S.V. CHERVONENKO]: In convening [the conference] there is no bad aspect.

Vice Premier CHEN [Yi]: Developing one's own strength is the center of the issue. [We] cannot wait for the international conference to be held. The second issue is how to develop one's own strength. According to material I have [at my] disposal, [and material which was] provided by [our] Vietnamese comrades, the Lao Patriotic Front currently has 6,000 troops. Kong Le's brigade [numbers] 1,100 people. [There are] also local guerrilla forces of about 3000 to 4000 people. [This is a] total of 11,100 people. [Of the] 6000 troops in Laos, the effective fighting force is [only made up of] 3000 people. They are battalions. Kong Le's troop has two battalions. The Lao Patriotic Front have [another] 5 battalions. They have not formed a fist. [They] do not have power. The reactionaries Phoumi and Boun Oum's group has about 48,000 troops compiled into 31 battalions. [On the] front line offensive at the Plain of Jars, they have 5,000 [in] 13 battalions divided into three corps. One corp has three battalions moving south from Luang Praband. One corp has five battalions north from Vientiane. One corp has five battalions in Da-dang [sic]. At present both sides [feel] Xieng Khouang and the Plain of Jars are very important. We are not completely clear [regarding the current] situation on the front line.

Soviet Ambassador [S.V. CHERVONENKO]: How is the situation with the most recent fighting? How long has it been going on?

Vice Premier CHEN [Yi]: The enemy has divided into three corps attacking the soldiers of the Lao Patriotic Front. If the Laotians also take their seven battalions [including their] 6000 and Kong Le's 1000 [and] divide into three corps to block the enemy, it will not have any kind of a result. Because [with] seven battalions divided [across] three corps, each corp will only have a little more than two battalions. Each corp will be overpowered by the enemy's greater strength. Our strength is little. [In this] kind of war, it is impossible to bring out tricks [and] impossible to destroy the enemy. There is a risk that the Plain of Jars will be lost [to the enemy]. If, [however, you] can focus all [of our] forces on one of the enemy's corps, the situation will change. To say it in another way, if we [put] five [or] six battalions [together] in one corp [and] attack the enemy's three [or] four battalions, [or at] most a maximum of five battalions, the battle's [results] could be much better. We [have] persuaded them not to [adopt the] strategy of dividing our forces, but [instead] should concentrate one part of a superior force [and] destroy the enemy's effective strength--if not annihilating the majority of the enemy, then [at least] annihilating one or two parts is also okay. Now, to give an example, [there are] presently two sides competing Vang Vieng, Kong Le's troops already have withdrawn to Vang Vieng. The enemy is occupying that place. Attacking for one week, 38 people [are already] dead. The Lao Patriotic Front forces are [mostly] shelling the other side. [They] don't really know how to attack. We tell [our] Vietnamese comrades, if the the Laotians can form an army of 5000 people, [it will be] enough to destroy the enemy. [We] will be able to stop the enemy's attack. Even [if we only] destroy some of the enemy--one or two or a few battalions, the situation in Laos will be fundamentally changed. The Patriotic Front and Kong Le overemphasize [the need to] divide forces [and] protect the Plain of Jars [while] not focusing enough on annihilating the enemy's effective strength. Only [by] destroying the enemy's effective strength [will it be] possible to stop the enemy's attack. There are many places [which] aren't important [and can be allowed to] temporarily change hands. The main problem is whether or not [we can] form a large [body of] strength [so as to] destroy the enemy's effective strength. Our comrade HOÀNG Văn Hoan cited a very dramatic example, after we convinced Kong Le to withdraw from Vientiane, [they had] just liberated Xiengkhouang, the Plain of Jars and Phongsali. If

[they had] not withdrawn from Vientiane, Kong Le's troops likely would [have been] eliminated near Vientiane. Comrade HOÀNG Văn Hoan strongly agrees [with] the view that forming a main [body of] strength [and using it to] destroy the enemy's strength.

Now, to talk about the third question. [With] this question, we and our Vietnamese comrades have somewhat differing opinions. More than a week ago, [our] Vietnamese comrades suggested [to us that] they prepare some troops [to] go to the Plain of Jars to [participate] in the fighting. The day before yesterday [when] I was talking with Comrade HOÀNG Văn Hoan, their troops [had] already left [for the Plain of Jars]. They [are] prepared for these forces replace the Laotians at Xiengkhouang. The Vietnamese also prepare to send two companies to Sam Neua [so as to] strengthen the Laotian forces. They also informed us [that] Hanoi is currently preparing a battalion [which can] go to Laos at any time. We do not agree with this approach. The Vietnamese Workers Party Central Committee Politburo originally informed us [that] they did not agree with sending troops to Laos. But, now they have gone [to Laos].

Soviet Ambassador [S.V. CHERVONENKO]: In that case, who arranged [for the troops] to be sent? The Politburo ought to be able to control everything, doesn't the army listen to their instructions?

Vice Premier CHEN [Yi]: This we do not know. We do not support this approach. Vietnamese troops participation will [only] make the war in Laos expand. This is politically unfavorable for us. [We will] receive blame [from] people all around the world. Meanwhile, in the long run, it is detrimental for Laos [and] detrimental for the development of the Lao people's power. [Our role as outsiders] should mainly [be to assist] the Laotian troops in self-actuation. [We should not be] replacing them [as this will ultimately] be ineffective. I am absolutely against [taking the actions which] Comrade HOÀNG Văn Hoan told [me] at that time [that they were doing. I] do not think that [by] sending two battalions to hold Xiengkhouang, [it will now be possible] to defeat the enemy. [If] Vietnamese troops participate [in Laos's civil war then it will] cause the United States and the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization countries [to have an] excuse to directly send troops [of their own. If] Vietnam sends two battalions and others send three battalions, the effect is canceled out, [and it] has no positive [result] for the Laotians. We advised them, whatever happens do not send the troops to the front line to participate in the war. [Instead, they] can [stay] at a location on the border and secretly maintain lines of transport. Invite the Laotians to send people out to the front line to fight. Now that the [troops] have already been sent out, immediately withdrawing them [would] also be bad. This could make the Laotians discouraged. Today's [war in] Laos should be constrained within Laos. [It should stay only a] civil war. This is [best for] us [and] most beneficial for the Laotians. We Chinese, Soviets, [and] Vietnamese can give [them] some material assistance. Expanding the war is disadvantageous [for all of] us. From viewing the current situation, the Lao Patriotic Front and Kong Le want--within the next few months--to go through multiple battles against Phoumi's reactionary forces [and] wipe them all out. This is impossible. Of course, the enemy's desire to annihilate the Patriotic Front is also impossible. Currently it is best [if] the next six months to one year [are spent by] the Laotians [in] properly organizing their troops. We have asked [our] Vietnamese comrades [if the Laotians] expand the war into North Vietnam, have preparations been made or not. We advised them [the] best [course of action is if] the war [in Laos] is constrained within Laos. Do not send troops to Laos. In this way, we have the right to accuse the United States and Thailand of interfering and criticize the Jiang [Jieshi] bandits for taking part in war. [If] Vietnamese forces enter the war, Phouma and Sihanouk will be shaken up. Myanmar also does not [have our] support. If Phouma's legitimate government requests Vietnam to send troops, whether Vietnam sends or doesn't send troops, this is a big problem that must be considered [carefully]. [Our] Vietnamese comrades might think [that if they] send [only] two battalions others will not know. This is wrong. Comrade HOÀNG Văn Hoan agrees with our point of view. He will go back to Chairman HỒ [Chí Minh] and the Vietnamese Workers Party Central Committee and discuss this issue.

Soviet Ambassador [S.V. CHERVONENKO]: Has he already gone back?

Vice Premier CHEN [Yi]: He left yesterday. [He has] already reached Hanoi. Now [let's] talk about the fourth question. Us Chinese have already shipped enough weapons for 10,000 people, ammunition, clothing, and medical supplies to Hanoi. We have [already] said to Comrade HOÀNG Văn Hoan, with the exception of the large amount of material the Soviet Union [has] given [you], China [has] also given you enough weapons for 10,000 people, ammunition, clothing, medical supplies, and more. Currently, there is no problem with equipping troops for war. But, how shall these things be moved to the front line [in] Laos. The question of moving military equipment, more practical work should be done. Wanting to move so many things from Hanoi to Sam Neua and again from Sam Neua to Xiengkhouang, the distance is very long and the logistics also are not convenient. This is the biggest project [and the one which] the work of must be] most meticulously [organized]. We advised Comrade HOÀNG Văn Hoan [that] after [he] goes back [they should] let their military authorities take on this job. This will help the Laotians the most. Now turning to the question of the international conference, choosing which countries will attend the meeting in Geneva is not easy. Convening an even larger meeting in Geneva means that it will be even harder to come to an agreement. The Soviet government proposes New Dehli as a better location for the conference of the international control commission. We are also in favor of this proposal by the Soviet government. If this meeting is convened, used properly, [it will be of] great benefit for the people of Laos. This meeting can only be for Phouma's legitimate government and his opponents.

If the international conference can be convened, [I] estimate that there will be a great deal of arguing. We want to prepare to attend this meeting. If the International Control Commission does not [regard] Phouma's legitimate government as an opponent. If the international conference can be convened, [I] estimate that there will be a great deal of arguing. We want to prepare to attend this meeting. If the International Control Commission does not [regard] Phouma's legitimate government as an opponent. Even if this meeting opens, it won't have any influence [on the Laos issues]. Finally I want to discuss [the issue of] cooperation between Phouma, Khamsouk Keola, Quinim [PHOLSENA] and Kong Le [for the purpose of] consolidating the people's front line. This issue is very important. We also want to prepare for some of their people to be untrustworthy. If these people are untrustworthy, then the Laotians [will be forced to] act on their own. Us Chinese [along with] the Soviet Union [and] Vietnam can give them some help but the most important [thing] is still for them to help themselves. If the front line is not [properly] defended, it is possible that Laos will [be divided into] Southern and Northern [territories]. This also isn't too bad of a situation. We should do our best to make sure the forces in northern Laos are stronger than those in the South. We've told Comrade HOÀNG Văn Hoan [to] estimate [what] the worst case scenario [will be, and what the] best case scenario will be. From the aspect of diplomatic and political struggle, we are in full accordance with the] point of view [which our] Soviet comrades [already] discussed [with] Comrade HOÀNG Văn Hoan. [It is] only [necessary] to talk more about these matters such as how to [best] develop their own strength, how to achieve greater unity, how to achieve greater development, how to constrain the war in Laos, and how to consolidate the united front.

Soviet Ambassador [S.V. CHERVONENKO]: All of the things you have added on are also the most important things.

Vice Premier CHEN [Yi]: It is no good to take measures to expand the war. [An] approach [like this] is unfavorable for Vietnam, the Laotians, and all socialist [countries].

Soviet Ambassador [S.V. CHERVONENKO]: This is a very important point. [There is] another point [which I] would like to ask [you about]. According to what you have already said, if I understand correctly, [according to China's] policy [you are] in no

hurry to convene the meeting in Geneva, to attend the international conference, or to expand the [scope of] the Geneva meetings, or the International Control Commission meeting, but [instead] want to win more time, [allow the Laotians to] strengthen themselves and consolidate [their] power.

Vice Premier CHEN [Yi]: [You could say] that's what [I] meant, but that's not entirely [my] meaning. The Soviet Union is one of the two chairmen of the Geneva meeting. China is an attendee of the meeting. [It would be] bad [for China] to refuse to participate in the international conference. Our meaning is not that [we] want to delay or fail to convene the international conference. Political struggle is also very important.

Soviet Ambassador [S.V. CHERVONENKO]: This meaning, I understand. However, the question is should we hurry the conference or delay it. On the one hand we can put forward our political advocacy for convening of the international conference. On the other hand we can actively expand our own strength.

Vice Premier CHEN [Yi]: Yes.

Soviet Ambassador [S.V. CHERVONENKO]: Even [if] the International Control Commission decides to meet in Delhi, then the first [issue to be] encountered will be acknowledging who is the legitimate government of Laos and who should be dealt with and cooperated with. This is a problem that needs extra special attention and discussion at the meeting.

Vice Premier CHEN [Yi]: Also [there are issues] such as [the one which] the Soviet Union proposed [as to whether] the International Control Commission should make a report to the two chairmen of the Geneva meeting. We believe [that the] proposal by the Soviet Union to the International Control Commission [at the meeting which was] convened in New Delhi showed [that the] Soviets, China, and [other] Socialist [nations] do not want to expand the war. The Soviet Union's proposal is a very good proposal. We can use it to check the next moves by the United States military. We want to prepare for their agreeing to convene the meeting. Whether or not the meeting happens, [we] should be serious [about] having a meeting with them. As soon as the meeting opens, the political struggle will start. What Comrade Ambassador said last time is correct, at the meetings India and Canada may stand to one side with Poland standing to the other side. This will be a struggle. Meanwhile, it is entirely possible that the suggestion of a dual party ceasefire will be put forth at the meeting. However, they need to report to the Soviet and British co-chairs [of the meeting]. Thus, the Soviet Union as one of the two co-chairs can, according to the situation at that time [either] reject the proposed ceasefire or accept the proposal. Just as the Soviet Union [has previously] said [in writing], [the Soviets will] only take actions that are favorable to the Lao people. We can take part in that proposal. Currently, it is very important for the Laotians to gain time, gain a firm foothold, [and] consolidate themselves. Only waiting for the international conference to convene, that is very poorly [thought out]. If they are thinking, now with Soviet aid [and] Vietnam sending troops [that now they can be] carefree about waiting for the meeting, that is very dangerous. Moscow's statement was very clear. We support the struggle for liberation [by all] nationalities. [We support all countries] in resisting imperialist countries' interference in domestic policy. We, ourselves, also do not interfere in other countries' domestic policy. Laos's issues should be solved by the Lao people themselves. In that way, the enemy cannot point a blaming finger at us. The Soviet Union proposes the development of a social movement to support Laos. This is a very good idea. We are also currently doing this.

Soviet Ambassador [S.V. CHERVONENKO]: Have [our] Vietnamese comrades already talked with you about the development of rear action guerrilla warfare to support the situation at the front?

Vice Premier CHEN [Yi]: The guerrilla war is proceeding well. Almost the entire territory of Laos has [guerrillas]. The Lao Patriotic Front and Kong Le's army have a total of 11,000 troops. In addition to the main body of 7,000 people, there are 4,000 guerrillas scattered throughout the entire territory. According to foreign [news] wire [reports], there are also Laotian forces near Vientiane. Currently the situation in Laos is very good. All the people of Laos are in support of the legitimate government. Although the enemy has 31 battalions, they are weak in combat [skills]. At Vang Vieng, Kong Le's troops only has two companies fighting for one week resulted in only 38 casualties. [You can] imagine what the combat [situation must have] been like. Laos's matters should be dealt [with by the] people of Laos on their own. [They should] strengthen [their] political work, consolidate [their] military forces. [In this way] they can be used better [and we] can reach a better situation. According to the materials provided [to us by our] Vietnamese comrades, Vietnam's Ngô Đình Diệm has three companies already in lower Laos, Thailand has an artillery company in Vientiane. Whether or not this [information] is correct still needs to be checked. If these matters are true, it will be very beneficial [for us] at the upcoming international conference. [This] can be used to fight the enemy. South Vietnam and Thailand sending these forces does not change the balance of power. We do not want to send troops to go [to Laos]. Troops sent by us also cannot affect the balance of power. Comrade HOÀNG Văn Hoan said [after] thinking through the situation [that he was] in agreement with our ideas. Currently England, France, and India are all worried. Kennedy is very cautious about the Laos situation. The British [have] again said [that] as a result of [their] investigations [have] not been able to find proof that Vietnamese soldiers [are] participating [in the war in Laos]. The British have said that there are two possible explanations for this - one explanation is that they honestly did not find evidence of Vietnamese soldiers participating, [the alternative is that they did find evidence] but are afraid that [this will be used as an excuse] for expanding [the scope of] the war. [Furthermore, the British] also hope to constrain the Vietnamese. This is my understanding. If this war becomes bigger, it will immediately affect Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar, and South Vietnam. I have asked [our] Vietnamese comrades whether or not they have prepared [for] the war [to] grow larger. [If] Vietnamese troops go [to Laos] then even if [we] keep Xiengkhouang [and] reach Vientiane [there is the distinct possibility that our side will lose everything] as others [may] attack in return [and push our side all the way back] to North Vietnam. [In that case], what shall we do? Phoumi's reactionaries only have 31 battalions. This is not too horrible. But they have the imperialists standing behind them. The enemy is also very clear that China and Vietnam stand behind the Laotians [and that] the Soviet Union stands behind China and Vietnam. They also have considered this issue. Now both sides are willing to put constraints on the war in Laos. [Therefore] we believe that, after a long struggle, the people of Laos will surely [emerge] victorious.

Soviet Ambassador [S.V. CHERVONENKO]: Thank you very much for telling me of these matters. You [have] studied the Laos issue from all sides. Your experience as a soldier has been especially [important in understanding the] military situation and what the correct military measures to be taken or avoided are. If the right measures are not taken, it will make the situation more complicated. The recommendations you have made will make the practical application of policies easier.

Vice Premier CHEN [Yi]: China, the Soviet Union, [and] Vietnam have a unanimous opinion on the Laos issue. [We are] all internationalists. We [all] want to help the Communist Party of Laos. But, [there is a] limit [which we must] not exceed, [after which] aiding them is no longer correct. In Guangxi [Province] and Yunnan [Province], we have a powerful army. If [we] send troops to [Laos], it will take less than one month to occupy that small kingdom. But this is risky. [We] could lose the people of the world's confidence in us. Moscow [has] clearly declared [that the Soviet Union is] in opposition to sending [people] out [to take part in] counterrevolutionary [action]. Also opposed to sending [people] out [to take part in] revolutions. We cannot use [our] weapons and strength to force the revolution to take place. The Laotian civil war should be allowed to [proceed naturally such that the] Lao people [win on their own terms]. The imperialists are revolutionary groups are interfering in the Laotian civil



war. This is very beneficial for us. We support the Patriotic Front and Kong Le. [We] should offer aid. But, to directly send troops to participate in combat is disadvantageous in the Laos situation.

Soviet Ambassador [S.V. CHERVONENKO]: Correct. This makes the Laos situation even more complicated.