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**Cable from the Chinese Foreign Ministry, 'Our
Opinion regarding the Soviet Union's Memorandum
on the Laos Issue'**

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Our [Opinion] Regarding the Soviet Union's Memorandum on the Laos Issue

Ambassador LI Yimeng, PAN Zili, WANG Youping, WANG Bingnan and Charge d' Affaires Huan [Xiang]:

On March 31st, Premier ZHOU [Enlai personally] met with the Soviet Ambassador to the Chinese Government to discuss the content of the March 26th Memorandum on Laos. At present, the main response to [the issues] is as follows:

(1) The situation is beneficial to us. Although the United States and its allies [continue] to play [at] a sort of conspiracy. As long as we remain vigilant, and properly and tactically [make] use of present favorable situation, not only can [we] thwart the American conspiracy but the situation may also be conducive to [guiding] development in our direction.

(2) The Lao people's struggle is [for the] long term. Armed struggle is the main form. However, this does not exclude [the importance of] political struggle. Armed struggle and political struggle should [be] combined. So it has been in the past, so it shall be in the future. It matters not whether armed struggle or political struggle, our highest principle should be [to help] the continued development of the strength of the people of Laos. On the current terms, after all the development and achievements [made by] the patriotic and progressive forces in Laos, if [they] can stop the war without [being] shackled or damaged, it would be quite advantageous.

(3) The western countries [have called for] a ceasefire to [take place] and for the International Control Commission activities to resume. [They have] also agreed to wave the flag of the Geneva Conference. [Their] aim is still to maintain and strengthen Phoumi's rebel groups; to divide the Lao Patriotic Forces strength, [and] to combat [the] Lao progressive forces. [They] specifically make use of the slogan of peace, plot to draw Phouma out, to form a pro-Western neutral regime, [and to] isolate and combat the progressive forces in Laos. [But when it comes to pass that] this plot can not be achieved, they will once again put down their peaceful disguise and resort anew to war. Currently, the ceasefire and the monitoring of the ceasefire is what they strive for. They seek, via the International Control Commission to bind the progressive Laotian forces hand and foot. It does not matter to them whether or not the international conference takes place nor [does it matter to them] if a practical agreement can be reached after the conference convenes. It is possible that they would prefer not to have any international conference take place.

(4) As the Soviet Union is one of the two co-chairs of the Geneva Conference, for [the Western Countries to succeed] in calling for a ceasefire, they must wave the banner of peace as well. However the problem of the ceasefire is after all [a purely] domestic matter and this cannot be ignored. At the same time, there is a practical matter, the ceasefire must be negotiated via the concerned Laotian parties. Therefore, the two co-chairs of the Geneva Conference called for a ceasefire [in Laos] while suggesting to the concerned parties in Laos that they should be advised to hold talks on a ceasefire. In this way both warring sides preserve their sovereignty. It is beneficial for the Lao Patriotic Forces to make use of the ceasefire conditions and timing for their advantage.

(5) [We are] fully in agreement with the Soviet response to the British memorandum on the importance of convening an international conference. In order to make sure that the American conspiracy will not succeed, you should make sure that the question of the ceasefire is organically linked to the convening of an international

conference. It does not matter whether or not the cease fire in Laos becomes a reality, preparation should be made to [fully] discuss when and where to have an international meeting regarding the Laos ceasefire issue. If the concerned parties in Laos cannot reach an agreement on the ceasefire, then it must so happen that an international conference is convened for the purpose of promoting a cease fire in Laos. If, as a result of the ceasefire failing, the United States is not willing to hold the meeting then all responsibility and blame will fall on the Americans.

(6) With regards to the problems of resuming the Laos International Control Commission activities, today India is already a very different place than it was in 1954 when it represented the International Control Commission's moderate forces. But the actions of the current Indian [government] in [places such as] the Congo clearly indicate that [India] has fallen completely under the sway of the imperialist [powers]. Obviously, the United States plots to have India play the same role in Laos as in Congo. While India is happy to act thusly, it is [primarily because it is] in her own interest. On resuming the International Control Commission's activities, the problem is [making sure that there is] adherence to the basic principles of the Chinese-Soviet joint agreement. Namely, agree that the committee resume discussions under the new mandate and terms of reference, present a report to the two co-chairs of the Geneva Conference, get approval and authorization of the two co-chairs before taking any manner of action in Laos. In view of the conspiracy between the United States, her allies, and India, their best use of the International Control Commission's majority will be to try to limit and reduce the activities and positions of the Lao patriotic and progressive forces. Therefore, adherence to our original position and waiting for clear provisions from the International Control Commission on monitoring and oversight is all that much more necessary.

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs
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