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Title:

Handwritten radio script regarding 'USA is on the brink of invading Laos' and trying to 'involve the other SEATO powers'.

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brother evening.

I shall again interrupt the planned course of these talks tonight and I do so without apology.

There is a situation now facing us which is so desperate that it is time someone spoke up. It now appears that despite previous warnings by her allies, and that despite the fact that there is no more evidence of a foreign Communist invasion of the Kingdom of Laos than there was at the time President Eisenhower was doing his sobor-salting over that trouble spot, the U.S.A. is on the verge of invading Laos with U.S. troops and is endeavoring to involve the other S.E.A.T.O. powers in the same disastrous course of action.

Let us be clear on this. After the Paris treaties were made the agreed neutralization of Laos did not meet with U.S. approval. The U.S. plainly did not want a Govt. in Laos that was other than committed to the U.S. and its foreign policy. The U.S. poured money into Laos. That money has not been used radically to alter the social ~~and~~ status of the Laotian people - why remain backward peasants in an underdeveloped country with poor communications, a low standard of living, little education. The U.S. money appears to have gone to the rich and to sections of the army upon which the U.S. felt it could rely.

The "Royal Laotian Government" to which our news papers refer has no clear sanction or support from the people of Laos. That Government was established by a coup d'etat by force of arms in which the previous neutralist Govt. of Prince Souvanna Phouma

was ejected from the city of Vientiane by American
promised and assisted troops. Open fighting
has fitfully gone on for some time now between
those troops and the troops of Pathet Lao -
the Laotian communist-backed forces.

It is clear that Russia & other Communist
powers have been giving to Pathet Lao at
least as much military aid and assistance
as the U.S. has given to the so-called
Government forces.

There is no evidence of invasion of Laos
by Chinese or Russian ^{soviet foreign} Communist forces -
there is only evidence of some intervention
by supply & technical assistance to Laotian
forces sympathetic to the Communists - and
intervention & supply & political intervention
to disrupt Laotian government is what the
U.S. has been doing for years.

In these circumstances, it is shocking
and misleading that our newspapers say
this sort of thing -

"The Americans, the newspaper says, are
pressing for stern & resolute action in the
face of Russian build-up in Laos." That
was in the Advertiser this morning. What
Russian build-up in Laos? There is
no evidence of greater Russian assistance
to Pathet Lao than the U.S. assistance to
Gen. Naravan, and to talk of a Russian
build-up in Laos is untrue & misleading.
It is reported in the newspaper that Mr.
Dean Rusk, the U.S. Secretary of State, has
told the Russians that they must stop
meddling in Laos by giving military aid
to Pathet Lao. What about an end to
the blatant American intervention which

7.
put the present forces in control of Vientiane and
created a so-called Govt. of doubtful policy
and whose claim to general support in Laos
of even more doubtful validity?

It is small wonder that the previous
Premier, Prince Souvanna Phouma, has sought
to have action taken which would guarantee
Laotian neutrality, & has obtained backing
for his demands. But Prince Souvanna
Phouma, not being committed to U.S. policy,
is apparently unacceptable to the U.S., and
so the U.S., not content with a neutral
Laos, seeks to force that country to her
side. When she finds that her aid is
squandered inefficiently by the Laotian groups
she has backed, & that Pathet Laos is making
military gains, she seeks to solve the
situation by invading Laos herself.

Let us first look at the morality
of such a situation. The U.S.A., by
invading Laos, is warring to force
political views on that backward country which
are not necessarily those of a majority of the
liberal or informed Laotians by the force of
foreign arms. Morally that is wrong.
There can be no doubt about that.

Let us look at the practicalities.
The attempt would face greater difficulties
than the French attempt to retain control
of Indo-China, & with even less hope of
ultimate success. There is the distinct
possibility that it could involve a
major war, in which the U.S.A. & her
allies must inevitably appear, & would
undoubtedly be, the aggressors.

This would not help our cause against

the Communists. It would do it great harm. For it would drive into the Communist camp uncommitted Lascars & indeed uncommitted neutralist nations who would find the action of the U.S. reprehensible and a provision to gun boat diplomacy.

But it might be that it would not be only the U.S.A. which would be involved. Strong hints have been given of the likelihood of Australian involvement in military action to support the U.S. policy. Any such action would be completely opposed to morals, to good sense, and to the practicalities.

The Labor Party has made it clear that it is opposed to the kind of policy now voted for Laos, and it is the responsibility of every thinking Australian to speak out against the ~~the~~ projected invasion of Laos by our troops. It is not just a matter of "our country right or wrong." The only responsible attitude is to ensure that our country is right and not wrong.

Goodbye lot.