

RECEIVED AUG 11 1975

Aug. 2, 1975.

To: Young Chang Lai

From: Peter Boyle

Dear Lai,

Larry, I guess, is keeping you up-to-date on all the goings on here, so I won't go into any of it -- partly because I really haven't been keeping up on it, as I have been away "at the farm" for the last couple of weeks or so and don't really know many of the details. Suffice it to say that we are all well and optimistic about the future of Laos (although not so certain as to the IVS role in it, if any) and also to say that we appreciate everything that you people have been doing for us in the way of support. Also might I add that, although at present we aren't working, it is mostly because various people have gone off to the RELC seminar in Singapore, and it gives us a chance to get a breather before getting into another year of work in a week or so -- even though school won't be opening until the middle of September, all three of us -- Ian, Dr. Porter and I -- have lots of preparation to do. I myself, am really looking forward to next year, for if things continue to go along the path they are going along now, many of the things that many of us hoped for -- education really related to development at the level development should be taking place here -- may really get started next year. Perhaps before the school year starts, the Dong Dok teachers will have to attend a seminar similar to the seminars being held in all other government ministries, to study the new aims of the government, the policies and the ways that we might help to implement them; and I hope that we also would be able to attend those seminars. I am sure that you people are not being led astray by any news stories that you may read in the Western, especially American, press about "brain-washing" or "re-education" or any such thing; as these seminars, if from anything that I have heard about them from participants in various ministries or other government branches, are really seminars, ~~ix~~ where really discussion and real exchange of ideas is taking place. On the whole, almost the whole population accepts the main aims and main policies of the government -- at least as far as they have understood them or heard them explained -- and from that point on, real co-operative planning (and hopefully implementation) takes place. It is ironic that many of the ideas that so many Americans used to claim as their hopes for the future here -- such things as depending as little as possible on foreign aid, development at the grass-roots level, a full use of human and natural resources, co-operative endeavour, education suitable for real development and a full use of the educational training that people have received for the benefit of the people of Laos, etc. etc. now becomes really possible (after) the Americans have gone, and many of the other types of "expert" aid are politely informed that their services aren't really required at this stage -- and that all this is being brought about by those people that the Americans told us for years were the "enemy". Incidentally, you may be interested to know, if Larry hasn't told you already, that the two British VSO volunteers who were arrested for flying stunts in an airplane over Vang Vieng, were released last week and flew the airplane back to Vientiane, and a few days later left home, hopefully a little wiser than they were a couple of weeks before. One of them, before this incident, was really down on Laos, despondent about the future and generally very happy that he was leaving. After spending three weeks in the custody of the Neo Lao in Vang Vieng, his attitude had changed completely and he was very impressed indeed

\* change to  
read  
"because"

\* VSA is particularly bad -- if not misleading they are often just not true; the Thai newspapers are hysterical with fear, and Newsweek, when it condescends at all is just that -- condescending.

to Young Chang Lai

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with them. As yet, I myself haven't actually seen very much, as Vientiane still hasn't been liberated, but the farm is in a liberated area. I have seen a few encouraging things though -- police check points that have been dismantled, a complete army camp that has been left to the grass and flowers; and a few days ago I saw a bridge being repaired -- a bridge that has been a dangerous one ever since I came here three years ago. But the work wasn't being done by a few disinterested employees of the Public Works Department, but was a community development project. People of all ages were helping, and people from all levels in the community -- voluntarily as well, not forced labour. The commander of the area was under the bridge doing the dirtiest work of all -- I am sure that something like that has never been seen there since the French first came. As I picked my way through the crowd of people working -- shopkeepers, soldiers and officers, teachers, farmers, students, civil servants, etc., carrying the tyre that I was taking to be repaired, I was treated with all the courtesy and friendliness ~~that~~ and jovial banter that has always been one of the joys of living and working with Lao people.

Enough of that. We will be very sad if Chris Atkinson cannot come back. He would be sorely missed at Dong Lok.

However, what I am really writing to you about is this. You may have noticed that at the end of each set of IVS quarterly reports and other documents, there is always a section entitled "How is your Lao?" Usually there is one page with translations to be done, and after that there is a Lao story. Unfortunately, none of those of us here have any copies of those Lao stories, and now that everything has been cleaned up and thrown away, there are none around. Larry says that he thinks he sent a set of them home, but probably not a complete set, and anyway they probably won't reach home for several months yet. So we wondered if you guys might have them somewhere in your files there, probably at the end of each set of Quarterly Reports. Do you think that it would be possible to check, and if you have some, or all, to send us as complete a set as you can find? What I would like to do is put together a little booklet of them (just the stories with their vocabulary lists, not the Lao/English translation pages, as they are just review lessons based on the KhamNhou 100 orientation lessons (which we have already), as a bit of a supplementary to the work that Larry was doing in putting together a comprehensive Lao language course. Also, of course, both Ian and I would very much like to study them, especially as we now have to depend almost entirely on our own resources for Lao to English translation work, as the old mother-usaid translation branch is no longer at work doing such things for us. If you could do something to help us to get our hands on such a set, we would be very grateful indeed.

Please give my greetings and best wishes to Minh.

And to close, I would like to let you know how very happy we were to have Walt Haney around when he was here. He was really invaluable, stepping in to help in all kinds of situations of unexpected kinds -- helping during the final frantic rush at Dong Lok when all the birds had flown the coop, helping here and there with the convoluted and complex Mike Starratt situation (which now seems to be mostly sorted out now), doing all kinds of IVS jobs, etc. etc. You couldn't have chosen to send a better man even if you had known what he would wind up doing...he certainly performed above and beyond the call of duty!

Thanks for all you are doing, and keep up the good work.



Please see p 3 for P.S.