

September 22, 1994

DRAFT FOR COMMENTS

TO: US NGOs

FROM Roger Rumpff - Tel/F 412488

RE: Contacts & possible legislation on Laos and UXO clearance

1. Regarding US policies toward Laos I suggest continuing to work on Unexploded Ordnance, MFN, repatriation and the new foreign aid legislation. This legislation will come up in early 1995. Contact Sen. John Kerry's staff, and the House Int'l Relations staff. Nancy Stetson on Kerry's staff was more helpful than the House staff. The Senate may rewrite parts of the legislation.

MCC/CWS/Bread for the World/ FCNL among others will be lobbying on the new foreign aid bill but someone must encourage them to put Indochina on the agenda. I sent my March 16, 1993 letter to all the NGOs and Congressional staff I thought would be interested. I wrote a separate memo for Nancy Stetson (attached). I also called the NGOs and some Congressional offices about removing the section of the new bill on restricting aid to communist countries. If this section of the new bill cannot be removed, I recommend that members of Congress and NGOs try to keep Laos and Viet Nam off the list. John McAuliffe will put an article on the legislation in his Indochina newsletter. There is support among NGOs for a campaign on this legislation.

The Lao Embassy in Wash. has put the new legislation on their agenda also. Talk to Ambassador Hiem Phommachanh, Also Mr. Kinthong and Mr. Seng Soukhathivong. 202-332-6416. AT U.N. contact Alunkeo and Phonesavanh Chanthavilay. 212 832 2734.

2. On UXO funding there are several Congressional offices to approach. Sen Leahy, Kennedy and Kerry are key people. Also contact the House Int'l Relations staff who visited Laos in August 94:

-- Mr. Berkowitz, "liberal gone conservative" interested in refugees/repatriation and probably works for Rep. Gilman NY who is a ranking Republican member and close to Hmong conservatives. He may have pushed for the hearing on repatriation last summer.

-- Elena Brotman (sp) and Beth Johnson are both open minded.  
2170 Rayburn HOB 20515  
202 225-5021 F 226 3581

(OVER)

3. Patrick Leahy spearheaded special legislation on banding landmine exports and humanitarian aid. I understand that Sen. Kennedy also spearheaded \$10 million for Defense Department (DOD) for clearing mines. Sen. Kennedy's staff worked a lot on refugee matters. Offices such as Representative Kennedy in the House has tried to stop funding for the School of the Americas in NC. He does not set on key foreign relations committees.

I would ask a Senator/Senators to propose special UXO legislation for Laos, Vietnam and other countries. If passed in 1995 it could be used in 1996. Otherwise we could lobby for existing funds if Laos is taken off the restricted country list. Congresspeople can also lobby AID personally to get funds for an organization/country that is not legally restricted.

4. Congress will no doubt continue the debate on repatriation. The Hmong and Lao resistance lobbies (few old leaders) has taken advantage of this debate. Political and financial support is important. In addition, lobbying for funds for clearing unexploded ordnance from resettlement sites in Laos would be appropriate. The Hmong and Lao communities in the U.S. would be very supportive.

5. The U.S. drug program in Laos could also help with clearing in Houa Phan. A precedent has been set as construction was delayed recently when unexploded ordnance had to be cleared.

6. I believe its important to make strong development arguments for clearing ordnance. For example, some refugee repatriation resettlement sites need clearing. Generally war-destroyed areas of Laos are far behind in development. As companies move into Laos in order to produce textiles and other goods for the U.S. market, especially based on U.S. quotas and MFN, it is critical that the war devastated areas of Laos get an equal opportunity to attract companies to locate in their areas. Some companies would find it necessary to guarantee that unexploded ordnance were cleared. Otherwise parts of Laos could be left out -- creating urban congestion and poverty like in Bangkok.

7. And I would press Members of Congress and the public who are concerned about progress on MIA/POW issues to recognize that Lao equally value the lives of their children. Be careful of some of the groups/individuals who promote this issue for their personal aggrandizement. Sen. Kerry's office can help examine the pitfalls in working with some of these groups/individuals.

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