

# U.S. MISSION TO LAOS

## INTERNAL INFORMATION BULLETIN

THIS BULLETIN BASED ON PRESS REPORTS  
for circulation to mission staff only

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### NEWS ROUNDUP

PARIS--The American and Chinese Ambassadors to France met for fifty minutes in Paris Monday in the first of a series of periodic contacts between the two envoys. U.S. Ambassador Watson described the discussion as warm and friendly and he said he looks forward to many future meetings with Peking's Ambassador Huang. American officials had no comment on the subject of the discussion, but Chinese sources said they centered on travel exchanges and trade procedures. In Washington, the State Department spokesman said future meetings will be held as the situation warrants and probably will not be announced in advance. One Paris correspondent notes that various Paris sources suggest that the French capital was chosen as the site because of its excellent communications system and General Huang's status as army veteran, a member of the communist party's Central Committee and a close ally of Chairman Mao Tse-tung.

### ACROSS THE NATION:

House GOP leader Gerald Ford accused columnist Jack Anderson of employing hearsay and gimmickry in his allegations of administration chicanery in its alleged antitrust concessions to International Telephone and Telegraph.

"Anderson is to be condemned for dragging the name of the President of the United States before the Senate Judiciary Committee on the basis of evidence which is so unreliable that it would be barred from every court of law in the nation," Ford asserted.

Alabama Governor George Wallace continues to be generally regarded by political observers as the undisputed Democratic front-runner in the Florida primary, with Senators Humphrey and McGovern predicting a fourth-place finish.

Boyd F. Douglas, key prosecution witness in the "Harrisburg Seven" conspiracy case testified that he lied repeatedly to the defendants in order to obtain evidence, but denied that he would lie to convict them. The convict turned FBI informant underwent his fifth day of cross examination.

### PRINCIPAL ASIAN DEVELOPMENTS:

U.S. troop strength in South Vietnam took its biggest drop in six weeks, with 5,100 standing down, bringing the total still in the war zone to 114,500. President Nixon has imposed a ceiling of 69,000 by May 1.

South Vietnamese armor and infantry captured the key communist stronghold of Kampong Trach as the four-prong offensive into eastern Cambodia continued into its fourth day. Some 50,000 South Vietnamese troops, supported by U.S. Air Force and Army planes, are involved in the sanctuaries sweep.

LAOS (USINFO)--Heavy fighting continued this weekend in the Sam Thong area southwest of the Plain of Jars in north central Laos and in the southern part of the country, about 20 kilometers east of Pakse city.

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New North Vietnamese attacks on government positions near Sam Thong started Friday night and continued throughout Saturday and Sunday. By late afternoon Saturday government troops were forced to withdraw from their defense outposts north, east and southeast of this former refugee village. Among the positions abandoned by government units was an artillery support base near Sam Thong.

About 12 kilometers to the southeast, the Lao defense base of Long Tieng reported sporadically heavy mortar and artillery fire throughout Saturday and Sunday. After several weeks of relative calm in this area, North Vietnamese gunners brought back into action their Soviet-built long-range 130-millimeter artillery pieces, forcing the closing of the Long Tieng airstrip.

In southern Laos, North Vietnamese troops kept up their attacks on Lao units near the crossroads' village of Lao Ngam, 21 kilometers east of Pakse. A number of clashes also took place several kilometers north and northeast of Lao Ngam. Government troops there reoccupied the village of Keng Gnao near the western rim of the Bolovens Plateau, about 35 kilometers northeast of Pakse and captured three North Vietnamese trucks loaded with rockets and artillery shells.

Only light sporadic small unit clashes and occasional shellings were reported from other regions of Laos.

Japan's Justice Ministry has approved entry into the country for a 14-member North Vietnamese economic mission, which is scheduled to make a 40-day visit.

Cambodian Marshall Lon Nol declared himself President in a nationwide radio broadcast Monday and outlined plans for a new government. Earlier he told newsmen he was assuming supreme power in the country, because in his words, security was not good enough. In the broadcast the Marshall said he will preside over a council of ministers and run the Cambodian armed forces as commander in chief. Yet to be named in the new government are vice president and the prime minister, who will coordinate the work of the cabinet. There is no word so far on a possible official role for former premier delegate Sirik Matak. Student militants have demanded that Sirik be removed from office.

Nearly 2,000 women marched through the streets of Lahore, Pakistan, in mourning for twelve Pakistani soldiers killed in an Indian prisoner of war camp last Tuesday during an attempted mass breakout.

The People's Republic of China and Great Britain have agreed to Ambassadorial exchange, informed British sources told Reuter. Although Britain recognized the Peking regime in January, 1950, their diplomatic exchange has been at the charge d'affaires level.

#### EUROPEAN HAPPENINGS:

A British navy officer has been sentenced to 21 years in prison for selling secrets to the Soviet Union; mostly to get out of debt. The information he passed on, largely about ship movements and allied maneuvers, "had a value to a potential enemy almost beyond price," the U.K. attorney-general said. Sub-Lieutenant David Bingham, a torpedo expert, was paid some 2,300 pounds sterling over an 18-month period.

Switzerland announced its intention of signing the biological weapons convention approved by the 1971 U.N. General Assembly. The agreement is expected to be signed in Washington, London and Moscow in the near future, and the Swiss ambassadors in those capitals will be authorized to sign.