Letter to Aust. F.M. 24.3.61

"Koala" 3.6.60 - (Mr. Dennis Warner) - "Until a few months ago, painless Communist acquisition of Laos seemed a near certainty. The Lao Bok Baat Party, the political front for the Pathet Lao participating in the coalition Government, threatened to overwhelm all opposition at the General Election."

"Koala" 26.8.60 - (Richard Hughes) - "The Pathet Lao won sweeping democratic successes at the ballot box and that response was angry and effective ... if hardly in accordance with the high principles of democracy. Chief of Staff Pathikorn made it clear that any democratic Communist expansion would be "fought with a military comp.""

"Age" 19.12.60 - "There is only one grass-roots political movement in Laos, and that is the left wing Pathet Lao."

THEN THE DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT WAS DISMISSED. Pathet Lao representatives of the people in Parliament including Prince Souvannapha were placed under house arrest. A new government was formed under Phoumi Sansomkone.

The first job of the Government of Phoumi Sansomkone was to renounce the Geneva Agreement and its obligations and to restrict the work of the International Supervisory Commission, and finally to dismiss the Commission.

"Age" 19.11.60 - "The U.S. has pumped 300,000,000 dollars into Laos since 1954 to keep the strategic Buddhist Kingdom in the anti-communist camp."

"Age" 26.4.60 - "The U.S. strategy in Laos, as in other Asian countries such as Thailand, Sth. Vietnam and Sth. Korea, is to secure in power an anti-communist Government ... The U.S. intervention is to aid development as a safeguard against democratically elected communist or left wing governments. This looks good on paper, but there are two snags. One is that the safest anti-communist government is not necessarily the one dedicated to an awakening of the nations human and national resources. Mildly radical elements are sacrificed to the anti-communist cause and democracy is forgotten in the corrupt scramble for power, and so much U.S. support is given to military security that the name of America and the West is associated with force rather than with the humanitarian values the military power is supposed to secure."

The added difficulty is that America in a country means a hardening of tension.

These conditions caused Captain Kong Lao to carry through a coup-d’etat and invite Prince Souvannapha to assume the reins of Govt. with the object of ending all foreign intervention, corruption and pursue a policy of strict neutrality.

"Age" 17.8.60 - "On Aug. 8, Captain Kong Lao staged a coup and obtained a quorum in the National Assembly."

The Laoian coup d'etat committee stated: "U.S. intervention against Laos has been increasingly intensified. Americans are stationed everywhere ... This is keeping our country in a state of decline ... wantonly and brutally killing the people, arrest and imprisonment of Laoian patriots ... and Laoian troops ordered to suppress and prosecute peace loving co-operatives, burn their houses and granaries."

The Committee's new policy is: "Eliminate the evils of bribery ... respect the democratic system and human rights ... immediately REMOVE MILITARY Bases; oppose foreign intervention ... drive foreign troops out of Laos, pursue a policy of neutrality and establish friendly and good neighbourly relations with all countries."
This policy was supported by a mass meeting of 15,000 at
Melbourne. After this statement the New York Herald Tribune Aug. 11,
reported: ... "If King Lee consolidates his revolution, a nationalist wedge will
have been driven right through the S.R.A.T.O. area ... America is hardly
likely to allow themselves to be GOBBLED by a new rival." Captain
King Lee called on Prime Governor Pham to become Prime
Minister; Prime Governor Pham proclaimed neutrality for Laos and set up a
"Peace and neutrality committee."

The Government's policy supported by the majority of Eastians was
overthrown by overseas who is supported by the U.S. In the last remaining war
placed in power. Prince Non Non who has been established in power by the
Austrian backed General Pham Gia Khan - "The 20-11-62."

AUSTRALIA須 Troops WHE OUTPAT

We note with concern (Aug. 23, 1962) - "Australia troops outlook. If
the necessary political decisions are taken, by S.R.A.T.O., begins moving
into Laos within a matter of days. Vice Admiral Sir Eivy Denby said today,"
SIR E. I.餘 hearing gone so to say, "as far as military people are concerned, the
Laos situation is serious and we are crossing our fingers - and hoping a
solution will be found."

It is precisely this solution that we are concerned about.

The Governments of both Laos and Cambodia have called for a
fourteen nation conference like conference to solve the problem of Laos.
This conference is looked by Paris, U.S., U.S.S.R., and other countries.

The Australian Peace Council supports the idea of calling 14
nations together in conference to preserve peace in Laos. Indeed the peace
of the whole world.

We urge you, Mr. Prime Minister, that your deliberations in
Washington will be guided by the principle of a just and peaceful solution
in no intervention by S.R.A.T.O. in the internal affairs of South East Asia
which would certainly involve Australia.

Yours faithfully,

AUSTRALIAN PEACE COUNCIL
(Signed) Rev. P.J. Hartley
Joint Rep. Sec.