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*Note du premier ministre en Inde
pour le premier ministre
Message from Prime Minister of India
to Prime Minister*

SECRET

[Received July 11, 1961]

I thank you for your message which has been communicated to me by my High Commissioner in Ottawa.

2. I can assure you that I share your concern about the present state of affairs in Laos. The conference at Geneva has unfortunately made disappointingly slow progress, but it would be futile to find fault with anybody. After the prolonged debates, at the start, on the question of an effective ceasefire, we now seem to be held up on the issue of equipment to be provided for the Commission. While I would readily agree that the Commission must have some transport at its disposal, it is perhaps essential to understand that under its present very limited terms of reference the Commission can do little or nothing without the consent of both parties to the Conference. Therefore, until the functions of the Commission are fully defined by the Conference itself, the question of equipment must be treated as a relatively secondary issue.

3. I would say here that I am concerned at reports reaching me from Laos. After the Zurich meeting of Princes, it seems now essential that all parties in Laos should get together and quickly come to terms on the formation of a coalition government. This is only possible if Souvanna Phouma is encouraged to bring about a fairly strong centre with the others playing a lesser role. Pathet Lao, on the other hand, I feel cannot be expected to play only an unimportant part in the coalition when they have as good as conquered more than half the country. Our reports suggest that there is grave danger of resumption of hostilities if the formation of a national government is delayed very long, for whatever reason.

4. I agree with you substantially that in regard to the functions (not so much "powers") of the Commission we should adhere as far as possible to the 1954 Agreement. The trouble lies in the attempt at deviating too far from the fundamentals of 1954. We are of the view, for instance, that the Commission should neither be bound by the rule of unanimity nor by the rule that all decisions must be arrived at by a simple majority. We feel that the Commission must decide major issues on basis of agreement among its members. In general we would like the Commission to be authorised to assist and advise, and not so much control, the independent Government of Laos of the future, to maintain its sovereignty and territorial integrity, as also its neutrality, which the Conference powers all seem prepared to guarantee.

5. I would add that, despite all limitations, the International Control Commission in Laos by all accounts has fulfilled its tasks admirably and I must thank you for the cooperation and assistance that the Indian Chairman has received in this from your representative.

With kind personal regards,
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU