

interpretation but said that in the hypothetical case in question he could assure Harriman that not repeat not only would the two commissioners submit a report but if necessary the Indian Chairman would do so. It would not repeat not however be an "agreed report" as required in the relevant article.

10. I have given a fairly full and frank description of the state of play on the main outstanding issues and of the general atmosphere because I thought this may be helpful when you consider the final decisions on the items of particular interest to Canada. If in doing so, I have given prominence to Harriman's role and have perhaps also given the impression that he is the cause of many of our current difficulties, I hasten to say that in my opinion Harriman has made very important contributions to the work of the conference. He is often temperamentally difficult and is inclined to react emotionally whenever he feels that he is being frustrated or let down, either by his opponents or by his friends and the State Department. He has been under considerable strain because he has sometimes not repeat not only had to fight the Communists in front but also a rear guard action against his critics at home and in Laos.

11. USA started out with a protocol which in many respects went beyond the requirements considered by Canada to be essential and which the Communists could not repeat not possibly accept. Suddenly, in the negotiations, these demands were whittled down, including some of the features which we felt were desirable. Harriman did however attach importance to our opinions and the agreement which is emerging is fairly satisfactory in the light of the difficulties which have been faced. Such provisions as that prohibiting Laos from being used as a corridor for infiltration by another country, which we had not repeat not expected to get at the outset, have been secured. If USA accepts the agreement which is now possible, it will be largely due to Harriman's work. In a moment of frustration he told Lall that "there are only two men in Washington who really want a settlement creating a neutral Laos – the President and me." It would seem that even the President has to reflect on the criticism which almost any Laotian settlement is bound to create in certain circles in Congress and in the country.

12. It is my hope that within a few days we may obtain articles on voting, investigations and access that preserve our position. The other outstanding issues on SEATO, French presence, time limit for withdrawal of troops and private armies will be the special concern, as far as the West is concerned, of USA, UK and France.

[C.A.] RONNING

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*Le chef de la délégation à la Conférence sur le Laos à Genève  
au secrétaire d'État aux Affaires extérieures*

*Chairman, Delegation to Conference on Laos, Geneva,  
to Secretary of State for External Affairs*

TELEGRAM 2035

Geneva, December 1, 1961

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