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Summary of Talks between Prime Minister Zhou Enlai and Norodom Sihanouk while Driving to Nanjing on December 20th

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Summary:

Zhou Enlai and Sihanouk discuss the situations in Laos and in the Congo, commenting on the Geneva Conference on Laos and the role of the United Nations in resolving the Congo crisis.

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Summary of Talks between Prime Minister ZHOU [Enlai] and [Norodom] SIHANOUK on the special train to Nanjing, December 20th.

(not reviewed, according to interpreter comrade QI Zonghua's recollection, for reference only)

1. The Issue of Laos.

The Premier informed [Norodom] SIHANOUK that yesterday (the 19th) evening the Chinese government issued a statement in support of the suggestion from the Democratic Republic of Vietnam to hold a new Geneva Conference. [Norodom] SIHANOUK stated that their representatives first want to issue a statement that they are willing to attend this type of conference. The Premier also expressed his approval and stated that there are already at least 3 [other] countries in favor [of this]. [Norodom] SIHANOUK also said: [it would be] best for the conference to be bigger [and more inclusive]. Thailand and South Vietnam should also be invited to attend. The Premier [replied] that South Vietnam is member of the Geneva Conference [but] Thailand is not. If [it is desirable] to invite Thailand for balancing, [it would be] best [to also] invite India and Burma. If necessary, to be even more inclusive, Canada and Poland could also be brought in. The Prime Minister stated that [the suggestion of] expanding the Geneva Conference to include certain countries would best be brought up by Cambodia. [Norodom] SIHANOUK expressed his agreement.

[Then] the Premier also said to [Norodom] SIHANOUK: our [formal] statement [which we already sent out] on the 19th has already been distributed to the countries [which shall be] attending the Geneva Conference. However, we have no diplomatic relations with South Vietnam. Thus, it is hoped that the Cambodian Foreign Ministry could deliver it to them for us. [Norodom] SIHANOUK agreed.

When talks concluded the Premier pointed out that:

- Comrade QI Zonghua should translate the essential points of the statement made on the 19th for [Norodom] SIHANOUK (while in Nanjing, a French version of the statement was given to [Norodom] SIHANOUK).

- Concerning the letter to be sent to Souvanna PHOUMA, comrade MA Lie should inform comrade ZHANG Hanfu to get it done ([as per] comrade MA Lie's [instructions]).

- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs should send a copy of the statement to the Cambodian Ambassador in China or deliver it to the Cambodian Foreign Ministry Department from the Chinese Embassy in Cambodia. [Also] have them deliver it to the South Vietnamese authority located there (already done).

2. On the Issue of the United Nations and the Congo

The Premier stated: we approve of and support the United Nations. At the Bandung meeting we also supported the United Nations. We feel that it has its uses. But, it also has negative aspects, namely, the United States majority control over of its voting

machine. Though the United States majority is gradually decreasing, it still is the majority. This is the case on the issue of the Congo. As of now, many countries have already pulled out of the United Nation Command.

[Patrice] LUMUMBA was inexperienced. His inviting the United Nations in resulted in him not being able to invite them to leave. The Congo is a very good example. Considering [assistance from] the United Nations may not be as good as giving no consideration to the United Nations. This is the lesson learned here. We thus propose the issue of Laos be resolved through the Geneva Conference. It's not because we are not part of the United Nations but because the United States still controls the United Nations.

[Norodom] SIHANOUK stated that the issue of Laos should be discussed outside the United Nations. As far as the issue of the Congo, Nikita KHRUSCHEV recommends that neutral nations form a committee of investigation. Varying opinions can be heard in Phnom Penh. The Cambodian government has yet to express an opinion but wishes to take part in a committee of investigation.

The Premier stated that responses like the one from Cambodia are good. Whether or not a committee of investigation will be formed remains to be seen. Even if formed however, the United States will still be in control. The Premier finally stated that LUMUMBA is a good man. The problem is he is inexperienced.