

China Firmly Supports Convening of Enlarged Geneva Conference

The Chinese Government warmly welcomes the latest important step taken by the Royal Laotian Government with the support of the Neo Lao Haksat; condemns the U.S. Government for intensifying its intervention and aggression against Laos and obstructing the convening of the enlarged Geneva Conference; expresses the sincere hope that Prince Sihanouk will continue his efforts for the peaceful settlement of the Laotian question and reaffirms China's readiness to work jointly with all other participating countries to settle the Laotian question peacefully.

Following is a translation of the text of the statement issued on May 4 by the Government of the People's Republic of China on the cease-fire in Laos and the convening of the enlarged Geneva Conference. — Ed.

FOLLOWING the repeated refusals of the Phoumi-Boun Oum rebel clique to reply to the proposal of the Royal Government of Laos for the holding of cease-fire negotiations, Prince Souvanna Phouma, Premier of the Royal Government of Laos, issued a statement on May 2, 1961, ordering the Royal Government Forces and the armed forces of the Neo Lao Haksat to cease military action as from May 3, demanding that the forces of the Phoumi-Boun Oum clique cease fire on the spot and stop all attacks, and once again asking the Phoumi-Boun Oum clique to send representatives to a designated place for cease-fire negotiations. Acting on this statement of Premier Souvanna Phouma, Captain Kong Le, Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Laotian Government Forces, and the Supreme Command of the Neo Lao Haksat Fighting Units have already ordered their respective units to cease military action as from 8:00 a.m. (Laotian time), May 3. The Chinese Government warmly welcomes this important step taken by the Royal Laotian Government with the support of the Neo Lao Haksat to help bring about a cease-fire and a peaceful settlement of the Laotian question through negotiation so as to establish a neutral, independent, united and democratic Laos. All people in the world who are concerned about peace in Laos are gladdened by this step. If the Phoumi-Boun Oum rebel clique responds to this important step of the Royal Laotian Government with actual deeds, a good beginning will be made in the peaceful settlement of the Laotian question.

But it should be pointed out that the peaceful settlement of the Laotian question is still subjected to a serious threat from the United States of America. Instead of relaxing its intervention and aggression against Laos, the U.S. Government has recently intensified them. While establishing its Military Advisory Group to exercise direct command over the operations of the rebel troops in Laos, it is air-lifting military equipment to Laos on an even larger scale than before. What is particularly serious is

that the U.S. Government is intensifying its machinations to make the SEATO member states join openly in the war in Laos, and that SEATO is now carrying out military manoeuvres on an unprecedented scale in the South China Sea. It is precisely because the U.S. Government is not reconciled to its defeat in Laos that it is now merely seeking a breathing spell for the rebel troops in Laos which are being routed, and is obstructing by every means the convocation of the enlarged meeting of the Geneva Conference. This cannot but arouse the people's vigilance.

The Chinese Government has consistently held that the internal problems of Laos must be solved by the Laotian people themselves free from outside interference. It was precisely in order to safeguard the peace, neutrality and independence of Laos and create conditions for the Laotian people to solve their own problems that Prince Sihanouk, Head of State of Cambodia, proposed the holding of an enlarged meeting of the Geneva Conference. The grave situation in Laos is caused by U.S. interference in the internal affairs of Laos in violation of the Geneva agreements. How can the parties concerned in Laos solve the internal problems of Laos free from outside interference if the countries concerned do not hold an international conference to stop U.S. interference and jointly guarantee the peace, neutrality and independence of Laos? But at the very time when the enlarged meeting of the Geneva Conference proposed by Prince Sihanouk had gained the support of the overwhelming majority of the countries concerned and was about to be held, the U.S. President's special envoy Harriman rushed to Laos to carry on activities there, while the King of Laos went to the length of denouncing Prince Sihanouk's proposal as interference in the internal affairs of Laos. This is totally unreasonable. How can one describe an international conference aimed at stopping U.S. intervention and ensuring the peace, neutrality and independence of Laos as interference in the internal affairs of Laos? The efforts made by Prince Sihanouk for the peace of Laos and the termination of intervention in Laos are warmly praised by many countries; how can one describe these efforts of Prince Sihanouk as interference in the internal affairs of Laos? The sentiments expressed by Prince Sihanouk at his press

conference held in Vientiane on May 1 are fully understandable. The Chinese Government sincerely hopes that Prince Sihanouk will continue his efforts for the peaceful settlement of the Laotian question; it is deeply convinced that such efforts will yield results as they did before and that all plots to obstruct the peaceful settlement of the Laotian question will eventually fail.

Thanks to the joint efforts of the Royal Government of Laos, the Laotian people and all the peace-loving countries, the path to a peaceful settlement of the Laotian question has been opened. Naturally, there will be various obstacles on the way ahead, and it is necessary to heighten vigilance and make persistent and unremitting efforts before the aim of the peaceful settlement of the Laotian question can be attained. The Chinese Government sincerely hopes that the cease-fire negotiations and political negotiations among the parties concerned in Laos will

quickly begin and reach agreement. The Chinese Government is glad to learn that the International Commission on Laos has submitted a unanimously adopted report to the Co-Chairmen of the Geneva Conference on the question of its tasks following the realization of a cease-fire in Laos. The Chinese Government hopes that the International Commission on Laos will make useful contributions to the cease-fire in Laos. The pretexts for obstructing the holding of the enlarged meeting of the Geneva Conference have now become all the more untenable. All the countries concerned must clearly state their attitude towards the conference. The Chinese Government resolutely opposes any scheme which continues to undermine the conference, resolutely supports the holding of this conference, and is ready to work jointly with all the other participating countries for the peaceful settlement of the Laotian question.

