

June 15, 1964

Telegram number 306/10 from Lucien Paye

Citation:

"Telegram number 306/10 from Lucien Paye", June 15, 1964, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France. Obtained by Enrico Fardella and translated by Garret Martin.

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Summary:

Lucien Paye summarizes the views of the Yugoslavian chargé d'affaires in Beijing on China's policies toward Laos and other countries in Southeast Asia and Africa.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from MacArthur Foundation

Original Language:

French

Contents:

Translation - English

Beijing, 15th June 1964, 18h20

Received.....at 13h40

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During a meeting this morning, the Yugoslavian chargé d'affaires shared the position of his government on the Laotian question and the fears of his government insofar as China's general policies.

Yugoslavia, he told me, supports convening a meeting as soon as possible of the 14 powers in Geneva. It also supports the Polish proposal, considering that its adoption would open a path for the conference of the 14. Besides, the chargé d'affaires believes that any opportunity that forces China to reveal its policies, and to deal with opposition, is good.

Indeed, he fears that the Beijing government is interested in spreading its influence not only in Laos, but in the whole of Southeast Asia. During Prince Souvanna Phouma's trip to Beijing, he had noted that M. Chou En-lai had mostly spoken about Indochina in public, while his guest had only focused on Laos. In his view, Laos' difficulties are to a large extent caused by China's secret backing for Hanoi to support the Pathet-Lao; in the same manner, according to him, the Communist action in Burma is directed from Beijing, where the real leaders of the Burmese opposition reside.

He is convinced that North Vietnam is under China's profound influence in the Sino-Soviet ideological conflict, and he did not hide his resentment at not being invited, like his predecessor, by President Ho Chi Minh to visit Hanoi, where he is also accredited.

Mentioning the next Geneva meeting, he added that the most important factor would be the implementation of the decisions made. He did not dismiss the idea of a territorial division of Laos in two zones, like was the case for Korea, Vietnam and Germany.

According to him, China's policies seem to follow different aims in Africa and Southeast Asia. Because of the latter's proximity, Beijing views it as a sphere of influence that should be tightly controlled, whereas in Africa China can only pursue ideological and economic goals. The aid it provides is not very substantial, and he sees in the development of Chinese trade with African countries an opportunity for Beijing to operate a fruitful triangular commerce, whereby it could obtain via these African states British and French currency that could be very useful for its purchases in Europe.

M. Soic expanded on the falling off, in the last few years, of the contacts between the Yugoslav embassy and the Chinese government. That could certainly help explain his interpretation of Chinese policy.

Signed Lucien Paye