

MEMORANDUM

**SANITIZED**

THE WHITE HOUSE

INFORMATION

WASHINGTON

[K/149/01/12]

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE/EYES ONLY~~

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT  
FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER *HK*  
SUBJECT: Ambassador Godley's Report on Visit by  
Congressmen McCloskey and Waldie to  
Vientiane

We have received the attached backchannels from Godley on the McCloskey/Waldie visit to Vientiane April 13-15. It was a somewhat unusual Congressional mission and it ended on a rather tense note. The following are the main points which you should be aware of.

April 13

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Per Sec. 3.3(b)(1)(6); P.L. 86-36

-- Godley received them well and gave them a straightforward briefing on our activities there, including acknowledgment that about 200 [REDACTED]

-- In a 45-minute meeting with Souvanna Phouma the Prime Minister emphasized the necessity of continued and increased American military assistance, but made clear he was not seeking personnel. He also stated that the Lao could continue the war without the CIA, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] In response to a question he said that Laos could not continue to exist if the Vietnamese got together and he referred McCloskey to Ho Chi Minh's ambition to control all of former French Indochina. He emphasized Hanoi's control of the Pathet Lao and described his half-brother as a frontman.

-- At a dinner in their honor and attended by senior embassy personnel, the Congressmen pressed their argument that American bombing was the principal reason for Laotian refugees. This was denied in varying degrees by those present and Godley emphasized that the hardships caused by the Pathet Lao and the imposition of a Communist regime were equally important reasons. In response to questions, Godley did not deny the B-52 raids up north [REDACTED]. He made clear, however, that this information was classified Top Secret, and both Congressmen agreed to respect this classification.

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE/EYES ONLY~~

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 12958, as amended, Sect 3.5

NLN 06-67/12 per Sec. 3.3(b)(1)(6); P.L. 86-36 per 149 3/9/2010

By JMR NARA, Date 6/4/2010

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April 14

-- On a number of occasions throughout the visit, McCloskey became rather emotional and upset about the refugee-bombing question. He demanded to see the raw material and interviews with refugees used to make a report he had seen in Washington. (This was promised and eventually produced but not as promptly as he had demanded.) He charged that Embassy personnel were misleading him and that he should have been given the material immediately upon his arrival. In a rather agitated state McCloskey canceled his scheduled trip to visit refugees on the Vientiane Plain, moved out of the Embassy and said he was going to study the report material and would visit the villages covered in the report the next day.

-- Godley explained that the material had no official status and represented interviews with only 300 out of 260,000 refugees, that bombing was only one of the factors and that he didn't accept the reports as conclusive. He emphasized a number of times that it was not our policy to bomb villages.

-- Waldie said he regretted McCloskey's making an issue of the report materials and said his own views of our policy there had changed for the better. McCloskey said his eyes had been opened and he was not convinced that our policy was bad.

-- Both Congressmen met with the press, ostensibly to elicit their views on refugees, but it is likely that some of the above will come out.

April 15

-- On the 15th, both Congressmen visited a refugee village on the Vientiane Plain for three and one-half hours and interviewed 8 refugees each. They claimed that each of the refugees interviewed had said that the bombing of his village had been the factor in his becoming a refugee. The refugees admitted, however, that enemy installations in most cases were within two to eleven kilometers of their homes. The Congressmen also said that they were impressed with the fact that casualties were extremely light. Both had strong praise for the AID refugee program.

-- At an informal news conference McCloskey said that through '68 and into '69 it was a conscious policy of the USG to bomb villages and that the U. S. Ambassador had deliberately ordered or sanctioned such bombings. He claimed that all the refugees came out because of the bombing and he criticized the Embassy for not giving him its bombing surveys, etc., alleging that he had been lied to about the existence of such materials. He also claimed that you had withheld similar information in your May 1970 speech and he contended that Congress had been deliberately misled.

-- Godley later asked the Congressmen if they thought he was authorizing the bombing of villages inhabited by civilians. McCloskey said he assumed that such actions had been authorized by Godley, but he denied that he was accusing Godley of being a liar. In the end, McCloskey agreed to accept the fact that it was not U.S. Government policy to bomb inhabited villages.

-- McCloskey closed with a personal attack on Godley's DCM, accusing him of willfully misleading the Congressmen and withholding information. Godley replied with a strong statement of his complete confidence in his DCM's integrity.

I have just received an additional backchannel from Godley giving a post-visit assessment. In brief, his conclusion is that the Congressmen came simply to re-enforce their preconceptions and were bent on a confrontation, which in spite of his best efforts he was unable to avoid.

Attachments

April 14, 1971

**SANITIZED**

TO: General Haig, The White House  
FROM: Ambassador Godley, Vientiane 200  
SUBJECT: McCloskey/Waldie CODEL

1. McCloskey/Waldie arrived Vientiane approximately 1545 yesterday. En route here they had several hours at Udorn where Major General Evans, Deputy Commander 7/13th and his staff briefed the Congressmen (the rest of the suite arrived Vientiane only 1100 this morning) on air support in northern Laos. General Evans report is being forwarded separately through military channels.

**SANITIZED**  
Per Sec. 3-3(b)(1)(c), P.L. 86-36  
Per Ltr. 3/4/2010

2. I received the Congressmen upon their arrival in my office and with AID Director briefed them on recent Lao history and the current military situation. I acknowledged that

I spoke

of my admiration for the way the CIA was conducting itself and indicated my preference for CIA operating here rather than US ground forces. I mentioned that CIA personnel involved in this work During this conversation Congressmen were most affable, even nearly unctuous. They were, however, extremely upset over what they alleged to have been the treatment accorded them in Vietnam where they allege an FSO-1 had lied to them about CIA personnel. They inquired into the Mission guard service and asked if this was a CIA operation. AID Director Mann, who was with me during the conversation, explained in considerable detail the Mission guard

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service. Their suspicion evidently by the fact that a former marine associate of Congressman McCloskey's, who had been a marine intelligence officer, now heads the Mission guard service.

3. At five o'clock we were received by the Prime Minister for forty-five minutes. The conversation was extremely pleasant and when asked if there were any Thai forces in Laos, the Prime Minister said that there might be some Thai of Lao ethnic origin currently serving in the irregular forces here. This led him to discuss at length the ethnic Lao living in Thailand, whom he said number twenty repeat twenty million. The Congressmen asked whom the Prime Minister thought they should see in this country and he suggested the North Vietnamese POW's, Lao officials and any little Lao they could speak with. The Prime Minister described for the Congressmen American assistance from 1952 on and spoke of the necessity for our continued and increased military assistance but emphasized that he was not seeking American personnel. Congressman McCloskey asked if CIA were to be withdrawn could the Lao continue the war. The Prime Minister without hesitation said "Yes, [REDACTED]

**SANITIZE**  
Per Sec. 3.3(b)(1)(6)  
R 86-36 Per 14

[REDACTED] Congressman McCloskey

asked the Prime Minister if all American troops were withdrawn from South Vietnam and the Vietnamese got together whether Laos could continue to exist. The Prime Minister with considerable emphasis said it could not and referred the Congressmen to Ho Chi Minh's ambition to control all of former French Indochina. There was considerable discussion of the Pathet Lao. The Prime Minister described his half brother as a front and Kaysorne as the real hardline communist who controls Sam Neua. The Prime Minister emphasized Hanoi's

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domination of the Pathet Lao. In tracing the history of American aid to Laos, the Prime Minister reviewed the Lao Irrara activities and the break between the Lao Irrara and the Lao Communist in, I believe he said, 1945. On leaving the Prime Minister's office Congressman Waldie said "That was one of the finest conversations I have ever had."

4. The Congressmen then proceeded directly to my residence to change clothes and prepare for a 7:30 dinner. At this dinner 8 included the DCM, the USAID Director and Deputy Director, the Chief of the Political Section, former Marine Colonel Loren Haffner, Assistant USAID Director for Field Operations, Dr. Charles L. Weldon, Chief of USAID Public Health Division, Edgar (Pop) Buell, Area Coordinator Xieng Khouangville Province, Blaine Jensen, Deputy Area Coordinator Xieng Khouangville, Frank Albert, USIS Officer responsible for MR II, Howard Mushett, Mission Guard Service and former marine associate of Congressman McCloskey, and FSO Morton Dworken, Embassy political/military officer. The guest list was designed to present to the Congressmen the men in this Mission most thoroughly familiar with refugees and the officer responsible for applying the rules of engagement in Laos.

5. Conversation during and after dinner was lively. The Congressmen were bent on having the other guests admit that American bombing was the principal reason for Laotians becoming refugees. To various and sundry degrees the Government officials denied this charge. My own position, which I made clear to the Congressmen, was that bombing may well be a factor in making people refugees but that I believe there were at least two other factors which were of equal importance, i. e., the hardship of living under Pathet Lao rule and the imposition of a Communist regime on a Laotian society. After the guests left,

I spoke briefly with the Congressmen who raised the question of B-52 raids up north and Thai troops. I did not deny the existence of both of these elements but told them that this fact was considered top secret by our Government and I expected them to respect this classification. They both solemnly told me that they would accept this classification.

6. At breakfast this morning the Congressmen were most complimentary regarding the manner in which they had been treated but were perturbed that some of my guests last evening had denied that bombings was a factor in creating refugees. I told them we all had our personal views but that I did not believe that any of the guests last night were willfully misleading them.

7. Directly from the residence we proceeded to Lao National Defense where the Congressmen interviewed five North Vietnamese POW's. As of the moment I do not have a detailed report on what transpired but I understand they were satisfied with this interview. Congressman Waldie then went out sightseeing and Congressman McCloskey proceeded to the office. There he conferred with the DCM and intermittently with me. The Congressman became quite emotional over some of my guests last evening who expressed the view that bombing did not create refugees. During this conversation the Congressman raised the question of a report he had been shown in Washington concerning refugees and the poll taken of certain refugees as to the reason why they left their homes. He demanded a copy of the raw material from which this report was made. The DCM and I promised to give him one and we said we would endeavor to have it in his hands before he departed at one p.m. with a group of AID and RLG officials to visit refugees on the Vientiane Plain. The Congressman was in a highly

agitated state and on several occasions said he did not want to go to Luang Prabang as scheduled but wished to remain in Vientiane, himself conducting a poll of the refugees. I offered to endeavor to obtain services of a local Missionary as interpreter. However, I finally convinced the Congressman that he would gain much more by going to Luang Prabang, visiting refugees settlements en route and in Luang Prabang, seeing firsthand what we are doing for the newly arrived refugees.

8. At twelve o'clock Congressman McCloskey, now joined by Congressman Waldie, met with Max Coiffait, AFP, Carl Strock, AP Stringer, Tammy Arbuckle, Washington Star and Ton That Ky, Reuters, in the USIS offices. The Congressmen said they wished to meet with these journalists to obtain the journalists' views on the Lao situation and not repeat not to give a press conference. I told the USIS people not repeat not to be present at this meeting. AID Director, Lao authorities and AID personnel dealing with refugees were at the party of six who had arrived in Vientiane this morning, arrived at the airport at 1330. They were also accompanied by Washington Star reporter "Tammy" Arbuckle, AP Stringer, Carl Strock, and AFP reporter Max Coiffait. Upon arrival at the airport, after having been introduced to the RLG officials, Congressman McCloskey asked where was the refugee report that the DCM promised him. Upon being informed by USAID Director that he had no knowledge of a report to be furnished the Congressman, McCloskey in a highly emotional and loud voice stated that planned trip should be cancelled, that here in Vientiane as in Saigon he has been lied to by an FSO-1 and that he would return to the Lane Xang Hotel to board with the other party and would move out of the Ambassador's residence. AID Director and Mission guard service



offered to immediately call the DCM and send a vehicle to town to obtain subject report. We were told by Congressman McCloskey that he was no longer interested in taking the trip and wanted his baggage taken from the airport and returned to the Lane Xang Hotel. Mission Guard Service officer Mushett prevailed upon Congressman to return to his quarters for lunch. Party then went from airport to Embassy and Mushett telephoned me at my home at 1400 hours. I offered to proceed directly to the Embassy to confer with the Congressman but Mushett said the Congressman was in such an emotional state that he recommended the Congressman proceed to his quarters. The reason we did not have the report at the airport was that we encountered difficulty in find it. It was only at 1245 that a copy could be found and it then had to be copied. We will endeavor to ascertain how press happened to accompany Congressman to the airport. When they arrived they were accompanied by Strock and Coiffait who wanted to know whether they would receive what they asked for.

9. At 1500 Congressmen returned to the Embassy. They were given material submitted to Laos Country Officer Mark Pratt under cover of letter from DCM dated Jan. 5, 1971, this includes briefing reports and sample interviews with refugees in Vientiane Plain and Ban Xon (Site 272). Classification and headings of documents were removed and Congressmen were informed that these were only "studies" embassy had undertaken and that they were intended for internal Mission use. Congressmen and I then met for some thirty minutes. Congressman Waldie was extremely relaxed and before McCloskey joined us expressed his personal regret at this incident. McCloskey then charged that members of my staff had misled him last evening and bore in hard on why

he had not repeat not been furnished with these reports immediately upon his arrival. I reiterated that these reports had no official status in that there were less than 300 persons interviewed and the vast majority of these people came from one area in Laos. I pointed out that there are over 260,000 refugees in Laos and that I did not believe that a small number of refugees from one area could be considered as expressing overall refugee opinion. Congressman pointed out that 97 percent of the refugees indicated that bombing had been a factor in their becoming refugees. I said that it was my considered opinion that bombing was only one of three factors involved and that I did not accept these reports. The Congressman then attacked the honor of members of my staff and the lack of ethics shown by us all in not bringing these reports immediately to his attention. I repeatedly pointed out to the Congressman that I and my staff were doing everything possible in conjunction with the USAF not repeat not to bomb inhabited villages. He appeared to accept this statement and both Congressmen said they accept today that it is our policy not repeat not to bomb villages. I added I knew this was the policy of my predecessor. I repeatedly pointed out we were not responsible for RLAFF T-28's. But then McCloskey reverted to the fact that he was not furnished the reports.

10. The Congressmen and their entourage left the Embassy at 1600. I told the Congressmen I hoped they would spend the night at the residence and they refused courteously as well as offer to have a drink this evening. McCloskey alleged he would be going through reports with great care and demanded to be permitted to visit with his staff tomorrow the same villages where we had queried the refugees before. He alleges that his mission is to ascertain firsthand whether the reports are accurate or whether the views expressed to

him last evening prevail.

11. Congressman Waldie told me that his views on our Government's policy in Laos have changed for the better as a result of his visit here.

Congressman McCloskey alleged that his "eyes had been opened and he is not repeat not convinced that our policy is bad."

12. I apologize for the length of this report but believe you should have full flavor of what transpired for it may be carried in the press. Will report tomorrow.

13. As CODEL leaving tomorrow for Saigon request this message be repeated to Amb. Bunker, and that Assistant SecState Marshall Green be informed.

~~SECRET~~ 15 1243Z April 1971 VIA CAS CHANNELS

FROM: AMBASSADOR GODLEY, VIENTIANE 205  
TO: THE WHITE HOUSE, GENERAL HAIG

1. CODEL McCloskey departed Vientiane airport at 0715 this morning to visit the refugee village at Ban Na Ngha (Vientiane Plain) some twenty kilometers north of Vientiane. They selected this site themselves from a dozen or so sites that we had listed they could visit. The site was selected as they got into the chopper. They were accompanied by Father Menger, Reverend Roffe, plus Vientiane resident journalists. The group spent some three and a half hours at the site and returned at 1215. They subsequently had lunch with Director, US AID Mann and all that emerged was their praise of the US AID refugee program.

2. Congressmen Waldie and McCloskey called on me this afternoon at 1430. Waldie asked to make three points: the first was that the refugee resettlement site they visited was the finest refugee site he had ever seen; the next was to express his admiration for the professional competence, integrity and industry of AID's Director of Field Operations, Loren Haffner; and the third was to indicate that of the eight people he interviewed, all said that bombing of their homes had been the factor of their becoming refugees.

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When McCloskey then took the floor, he too had interviewed persons, evidently from the general Khang Khay Region (all lived in Khang Khay itself). All of these persons had been driven from their homes. Most, if not all, however, there were enemy installations within two to eleven miles of their homes. One said that the distance was a ten-mile distance and there were four enemy guards on the installation. I asked the person when these people left their homes and he said that the date indicated 1968 or early 1969. I asked the Congressman if the persons interviewed could identify the aircraft involved. All seemed to be familiar with aircraft nomenclature, i. e., F-4's, etc., but that in his interviews either he did not or the persons interviewed did not describe the aircraft specifically. That the interrogatees complained principally of "cluster bombs" and some spoke of white phosphorus. None of the persons interviewed mentioned napalm. Both Congressmen said that they could repeat no mention of defoliants and that they therefore assumed that had never been used in Laos. I said that to my knowledge defoliants had been used on a specific, known enemy-held area. I received a formal request in writing from the Prime Minister. I had interviewed persons on three of the seven targets he had requested.

The Congressmen said they were impressed with the fact that the casualties they were informed of by the villagers were extremely light. McCloskey said as an example that in one village of forty inhabitants only two or three had been killed. They also acknowledged that in one of the reports it is indicated that 95 percent of the people said that even if peace were achieved they would not repeat not return to a Pathet Lao-dominated area. McCloskey said that he had inquired why the people moved from the southern PDJ last year and one person told him he was ordered by the Royal Lao Government. I said this was quite possible but that no repeat no Americans ever initiated such an order or transmitted such an order. McCloskey concurred and also volunteered that one person had told him that if people did not wish to seek sanctuary they could have easily stayed behind.

4. Just prior to meeting with the Congressmen I received two hastily prepared memoranda from AID officers who were present at an informal press conference Congressman McCloskey gave upon returning from the refugee site this morning. They read as follows: (1) "From Win McKeithen on McCloskey's press conference of 4/15/71 upon returning from refugee sites: McCloskey stated: It is a conscious policy of the USG to bomb civilian villages for a twenty-two month period extending through 1968 into 1969. All the refugees we talked to came out because

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of U. S. bombing. We were purposely denied USG surveys of bombing in refugee areas that had been prepared by the U. S. Embassy in Vientiane and that clearly demonstrated that the majority of the refugees came out because of U. S. bombing. From the moment we arrived we were denied the existence of such a report and lied to by every American in the Embassy until yesterday morning when this non-existent document was finally made available to us but even then the copy provided us was not the same as the original which we had seen previously.

"Win said that invariably all the refugees they interviewed stated that they had come down because of the bombing and they took pictures of men, women and children who had burn scars from WP, amputations, etc. (actually they saw one case). Win said McCloskey stressed the following:

"Of the villages bombed, in no instance was there any PL or NVN troop closer than 2 KLM from the village.

"2. Large numbers of livestock were killed by aircraft.

"3. When questioned whether they were ordered off the PDJ by the RLG, all stated that they had been ordered off.

"4. USG and U. S. Embassy in Vientiane has consistently lied. . . (continued next cable)

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~~SECRET~~ 15 1243Z April 1971 VIA CAS CHANNELS

FROM: AMBASSADOR GODLEY, VIENTIANE 205

TO: THE WHITE HOUSE, GENERAL HAIG

to the Press Corps and withheld data, particularly regarding civilian war casualties. That Nixon also withheld similar information that was vital to the war situation in his speech of May 1970.

"5. Congress of the U. S. has been deliberately misled. Will submit a report to be entered into the record of Congress."

(2) "The following is from Earl J. Young:

"When making his total summary to the press, McCloskey stated:

Amb. Godley assured me that with the exception of eight villages which had been bombed through pilot error or otherwise, no villages in Laos had been deliberately destroyed by American air. My conversations with the sampling of the residents of 13 villages on the PDJ has convinced me beyond any doubt that all of them were bombed deliberately without presence of enemy troops (closer than 2 KLM radius). Therefore, I can draw no other conclusion than the fact that the U. S. Ambassador has deliberately ordered or sanctioned the destruction of these villages in the PDJ area."

5. I did not reveal to the Congressmen my knowledge of the foregoing but I asked them point blank if they thought I was authorizing the bombing of villages inhabited by civilians. McCloskey said that the

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information he had collected this morning convinced him that villages had been bombed and that he assumed I had authorized such action. I asked if he was accusing me of being a liar. He said definitely he was not and then I asked him if he would accept the fact that it was not U. S. Government policy to bomb inhabited villages and he said he would accept this statement. He repeated this a second time. McCloskey then went on to criticize and attack Father Menger, an American missionary who has been in Laos for about twenty years and who acted as his interpreter today. He told me that Father Menger had told him "thank God for the bombing." Fortunately another officer who had overheard the Father's remark was able to correct the Congressman by saying that the Father had added "without the bombing Laos would be taken over by the Communists."

6. The final subject was the Congressman's personal attack against the honor of my DCM for, according to the Congressman, willfully withholding the survey report yesterday. I told the Congressman that I was responsible for whatever my subordinates did and that I could solemnly assure him that the DCM was not willfully misleading the U. S. Congressmen and that the problem attendant to delivery of this report was an administrative snafu. I have known the DCM for many years and had complete confidence in his integrity. We ended with a confused argument regarding the importance of the Congressman's having

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the report before he left for Luang Prabang yesterday and my pointing out that the report had nothing to do with the Luang Prabang refugees who had come from a totally different part of Laos than those covered in the reports.

7. The entire group departed Vientiane airport at 1510 for Udorn where the two Congressmen are scheduled to confer some more with 7/13th Air Force personnel and Consul Barnes. The rest of the group will go on to Bangkok. Later today the two Congressmen will proceed to Saigon where I understand they hope to meet with Ambassador Bunker, former South Vietnamese Presidential Candidate Dzu, jailed Congressman Chau, Ambassador Colby and be briefed on the Phoenix Program. I have informed Ambassador Berger of their desires. I understand that Congressmen will depart Saigon the evening of April 16 for they must be in Washington morning of April 17 to permit Congressman McCloskey to appear on TV during the afternoon of the same day.

8. After Congressmen's departure, I met with the two interpreters who accompanied the Congressmen this morning and two mission officers who also went along. I have reviewed with them what the Congressmen reported to me re their interviews. The interpreters and the mission officers indicated that there is nothing that they could challenge in what the Congressmen reported to me. The Congressmen, however, omitted

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two interviewees who bitterly attacked the Pathet Lao and communism. Father Menger and Reverend Roffe both attacked the Congressmen's general attitude on the war in Laos and expressed their admiration for our Government's position here. One of the mission officers who speaks perfect Lao and who has been working with refugees for over four years plus the two interpreters indicated that the interviews were on the style of an American Police Court. These three men believe that while the questions were not obviously slanted that any simple Lao would give the answers desired. They also noted that the ages given by the interviewees mainly erroneous due to the lack of education of the interviewees all of whom were extremely simple people. They also pointed out that a refugee rarely will admit the presence of enemy forces in his home village fearing that he will be attacked for having supported or helped these enemy troops.

9. Please pass Assistant SecState Marshall Green and DCI Helms.

Group 1.

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[K/149/01/12]

MEMORANDUM

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FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER *HK*  
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-- In a 45-minute meeting with Souvanna Phouma the Prime Minister emphasized the necessity of continued and increased American military assistance, but made clear he was not seeking personnel. He also stated that the Lao could continue the war without the CIA, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] In response to a question he said that Laos could not continue to exist if the Vietnamese got together and he referred McCloskey to Ho Chi Minh's ambition to control all of former French Indochina. He emphasized Hanoi's control of the Pathet Lao and described his half-brother as a frontman.

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-- Godley later asked the Congressmen if they thought he was authorizing the bombing of villages inhabited by civilians. McCloskey said he assumed that such actions had been authorized by Godley, but he denied that he was accusing Godley of being a liar. In the end, McCloskey agreed to accept the fact that it was not U.S. Government policy to bomb inhabited villages.

-- McCloskey closed with a personal attack on Godley's DCM, accusing him of willfully misleading the Congressmen and withholding information. Godley replied with a strong statement of his complete confidence in his DCM's integrity.

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April 14, 1971

TO: General Haig, The White House  
FROM: Ambassador Godley, Vientiane 200  
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2. I received the Congressmen upon their arrival in my office and with AID Director briefed them on recent Lao history and the current military situation. I acknowledged that [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I spoke of my admiration for the way the CIA was conducting itself and indicated my preference for CIA operating here rather than US ground forces. I mentioned that CIA personnel involved in this work [REDACTED] During this conversation Congressmen were most affable, even nearly unctuous. They were, however, extremely upset over what they alleged to have been the treatment accorded them in Vietnam where they allege an FSO-1 had lied to them about CIA personnel. They inquired into the Mission guard service and asked if this was a CIA operation. AID Director Mann, who was with me during the conversation, explained in considerable detail the Mission guard

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**SANITIZED**

service. Their suspicion evidently by the fact that a former marine associate of Congressman McCloskey's, who had been a marine intelligence officer, now heads the Mission guard service.

3. At five o'clock we were received by the Prime Minister for forty-five minutes. The conversation was extremely pleasant and when asked if there were any Thai forces in Laos, the Prime Minister said that there might be some Thai of Lao ethnic origin currently serving in the irregular forces here. This led him to discuss at length the ethnic Lao living in Thailand, whom he said number twenty repeat twenty million. The Congressmen asked whom the Prime Minister thought they should see in this country and he suggested the North Vietnamese POW's, Lao officials and any little Lao they could speak with. The Prime Minister described for the Congressmen American assistance from 1952 on and spoke of the necessity for our continued and increased military assistance but emphasized that he was not seeking American personnel.

**SANITIZED**

Re E.O. 13526(b)(1)(c); P.L. 86-36  
Per 14r.

Congressman McCloskey asked if CIA were to be withdrawn could the Lao continue the war. The Prime Minister without hesitation said "Yes,



Congressman McCloskey

asked the Prime Minister if all American troops were withdrawn from South Vietnam and the Vietnamese got together whether Laos could continue to exist. The Prime Minister with considerable emphasis said it could not and referred the Congressmen to Ho Chi Minh's ambition to control all of former French Indochina. There was considerable discussion of the Pathet Lao. The Prime Minister described his half brother as a front and Kaysorne as the real hardline communist who controls Sam Neua. The Prime Minister emphasized Hanoi's



domination of the Pathet Lao. In tracing the history of American aid to Laos, the Prime Minister reviewed the Lao Irrara activities and the break between the Lao Irrara and the Lao Communist in, I believe he said, 1945. On leaving the Prime Minister's office Congressman Waldie said "That was one of the finest conversations I have ever had."

4. The Congressmen then proceeded directly to my residence to change clothes and prepare for a 7:30 dinner. At this dinner 8 included the DCM, the USAID Director and Deputy Director, the Chief of the Political Section, former Marine Colonel Loren Haffner, Assistant USAID Director for Field Operations, Dr. Charles L. Weldon, Chief of USAID Public Health Division, Edgar (Pop) Buell, Area Coordinator Xieng Khouangville Province, Blaine Jensen, Deputy Area Coordinator Xieng Khouangville, Frank Albert, USIS Officer responsible for MRIL, Howard Mushett, Mission Guard Service and former marine associate of Congressman McCloskey, and FSO Morton Dworken, Embassy political/military officer. The guest list was designed to present to the Congressmen the men in this Mission most thoroughly familiar with refugees and the officer responsible for applying the rules of engagement in Laos.

5. Conversation during and after dinner was lively. The Congressmen were bent on having the other guests admit that American bombing was the principal reason for Laotians becoming refugees. To various and sundry degrees the Government officials denied this charge. My own position, which I made clear to the Congressmen, was that bombing may well be a factor in making people refugees but that I believe there were at least two other factors which were of equal importance, i. e., the hardship of living under Pathet Lao rule and the imposition of a Communist regime on a Laotian society. After the guests left,

I spoke briefly with the Congressmen who raised the question of B-52 raids up north and Thai troops. I did not deny the existence of both of these elements but told them that this fact was considered top secret by our Government and I expected them to respect this classification. They both solemnly told me that they would accept this classification.

6. At breakfast this morning the Congressmen were most complimentary regarding the manner in which they had been treated but were perturbed that some of my guests last evening had denied that bombings was a factor in creating refugees. I told them we all had our personal views but that I did not believe that any of the guests last night were willfully misleading them.

7. Directly from the residence we proceeded to Lao National Defense where the Congressmen interviewed five North Vietnamese POW's. As of the moment I do not have a detailed report on what transpired but I understand they were satisfied with this interview. Congressman Waldie then went out sightseeing and Congressman McCloskey proceeded to the office. There he conferred with the DCM and intermittently with me. The Congressman became quite emotional over some of my guests last evening who expressed the view that bombing did not create refugees. During this conversation the Congressman raised the question of a report he had been shown in Washington concerning refugees and the poll taken of certain refugees as to the reason why they left their homes. He demanded a copy of the raw material from which this report was made. The DCM and I promised to give him one and we said we would endeavor to have it in his hands before he departed at one p.m. with a group of AID and RLG officials to visit refugees on the Vientiane Plain. The Congressman was in a highly

agitated state and on several occasions said he did not want to go to Luang Prabang as scheduled but wished to remain in Vientiane, himself conducting a poll of the refugees. I offered to endeavor to obtain services of a local Missionary as interpreter. However, I finally convinced the Congressman that he would gain much more by going to Luang Prabang, visiting refugee settlements en route and in Luang Prabang, seeing firsthand what we are doing for the newly arrived refugees.

8. At twelve o'clock Congressman McCloskey, now joined by Congressman Waldie, met with Max Coiffait, AFP, Carl Strock, AP Stringer, Tammy Arbuckle, Washington Star and Ton That Ky, Reuters, in the USIS offices. The Congressmen said they wished to meet with these journalists to obtain the journalists' views on the Lao situation and not repeat not to give a press conference. I told the USIS people not repeat not to be present at this meeting. AID Director, Lao authorities and AID personnel dealing with refugees were at the party of six who had arrived in Vientiane this morning, arrived at the airport at 1330. They were also accompanied by Washington Star reporter "Tammy" Arbuckle, AP Stringer, Carl Strock, and AFP reporter Max Coiffait. Upon arrival at the airport, after having been introduced to the RLG officials, Congressman McCloskey asked where was the refugee report that the DCM promised him. Upon being informed by USAID Director that he had no knowledge of a report to be furnished the Congressman, McCloskey in a highly emotional and loud voice stated that planned trip should be cancelled, that here in Vientiane as in Saigon he has been lied to by an FSO-1 and that he would return to the Lane Xang Hotel to board with the other party and would move out of the Ambassador's residence. AID Director and Mission guard service

offered to immediately call the DCM and send a vehicle to town to obtain subject report. We were told by Congressman McCloskey that he was no longer interested in taking the trip and wanted his baggage taken from the airport and returned to the Lane Xang Hotel. Mission Guard Service officer Mushett prevailed upon Congressman to return to his quarters for lunch. Party then went from airport to Embassy and Mushett telephoned me at my home at 1400 hours. I offered to proceed directly to the Embassy to confer with the Congressman but Mushett said the Congressman was in such an emotional state that he recommended the Congressman proceed to his quarters. The reason we did not have the report at the airport was that we encountered difficulty in find it. It was only at 1245 that a copy could be found and it then had to be copied. We will endeavor to ascertain how press happened to accompany Congressman to the airport. When they arrived they were accompanied by Strock and Coiffait who wanted to know whether they would receive what they asked for.

9. At 1500 Congressmen returned to the Embassy. They were given material submitted to Laos Country Officer Mark Pratt under cover of letter from DCM dated Jan. 5, 1971, this includes briefing reports and sample interviews with refugees in Vientiane Plain and Ban Xon (Site 272). Classification and headings of documents were removed and Congressmen were informed that these were only "studies" embassy had undertaken and that they were intended for internal Mission use. Congressmen and I then met for some thirty minutes. Congressman Waldie was extremely relaxed and before McCloskey joined us expressed his personal regret at this incident. McCloskey then charged that members of my staff had misled him last evening and bore in hard on why

he had not repeat not been furnished with these reports immediately upon his arrival. I reiterated that these reports had no official status in that there were less than 300 persons interviewed and the vast majority of these people came from one area in Laos. I pointed out that there are over 260,000 refugees in Laos and that I did not believe that a small number of refugees from one area could be considered as expressing overall refugee opinion. Congressman pointed out that 97 percent of the refugees indicated that bombing had been a factor in their becoming refugees. I said that it was my considered opinion that bombing was only one of three factors involved and that I did not accept these reports. The Congressman then attacked the honor of members of my staff and the lack of ethics shown by us all in not bringing these reports immediately to his attention. I repeatedly pointed out to the Congressman that I and my staff were doing everything possible in conjunction with the USAF not repeat not to bomb inhabited villages. He appeared to accept this statement and both Congressmen said they accept today that it is our policy not repeat not to bomb villages. I added I knew this was the policy of my predecessor. I repeatedly pointed out we were not responsible for RLAFF T-28's. But then McCloskey reverted to the fact that he was not furnished the reports.

10. The Congressmen and their entourage left the Embassy at 1600. I told the Congressmen I hoped they would spend the night at the residence and they refused courteously as well as offer to have a drink this evening. McCloskey alleged he would be going through reports with great care and demanded to be permitted to visit with his staff tomorrow the same villages where we had queried the refugees before. He alleges that his mission is to ascertain firsthand whether the reports are accurate or whether the views expressed to

him last evening prevail.

11. Congressman Waldie told me that his views on our Government's policy in Laos have changed for the better as a result of his visit here.

Congressman McCloskey alleged that his "eyes had been opened and he is not repeat not convinced that our policy is bad."

12. I apologize for the length of this report but believe you should have full flavor of what transpired for it may be carried in the press. Will report tomorrow.

13. As CODEL leaving tomorrow for Saigon request this message be repeated to Amb. Bunker, and that Assistant SecState Marshall Green be informed.

~~SECRET~~ 15 1243Z April 1971 VIA CAS CHANNELS

FROM: AMBASSADOR GODLEY, VIENTIANE 205  
TO: THE WHITE HOUSE, GENERAL HAIG

1. CODEL McCloskey departed Vientiane airport at 0715 this morning to visit the refugee village at Ban Na Ngha (Vientiane Plain) some twenty kilometers north of Vientiane. They selected this site themselves from a dozen or so sites that we had listed they could visit. The site was selected as they got into the chopper. They were accompanied by Father Menger, Reverend Roffe, plus Vientiane resident journalists. The group spent some three and a half hours at the site and returned at 1215. They subsequently had lunch with Director, US AID Mann and all that emerged was their praise of the US AID refugee program.

2. Congressmen Waldie and McCloskey called on me this afternoon at 1430. Waldie asked to make three points: the first was that the refugee resettlement site they visited was the finest refugee site he had ever seen; the next was to express his admiration for the professional competence, integrity and industry of AID's Director of Field Operations, Loren Haffner; and the third was to indicate that of the eight people he interviewed, all said that bombing of their homes had been the factor of their becoming refugees.

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3. Congressman McCloskey then took the floor, he too had interviewed eight persons, evidently from the general Khang Khay Region (none I believe lived in Khang Khay itself). All of these persons had said that bombing drove them from their homes. Most, if not all, however, admitted that there were enemy installations within two to eleven kilometers of their homes. One said that the distance was a ten-minute walk and there were four enemy guards on the installation. I asked the Congressman when these people left their homes and he said that those he interviewed indicated 1968 or early 1969. I asked the Congressman if the persons interviewed could identify the aircraft involved. He said that all seemed to be familiar with aircraft nomenclature, i. e., T-28's, Skyraiders, F-4's, etc., but that in his interviews either he did not ask or persons interviewed did not describe the aircraft specifically. He said that the interrogatees complained principally of "cluster" bombs (CBU's) and some spoke of white phosphorus. None of the persons interrogated mentioned napalm. Both Congressmen said that they had heard no repeat no mention of defoliants and that they therefore assumed that defoliants had never been used in Laos. I said that to my knowledge once defoliants had been used on a specific, known enemy-held area. Following a formal request in writing from the Prime Minister I had approved defoliants on three of the seven targets he had requested.



The Congressmen said they were impressed with the fact that the casualties they were informed of by the villagers were extremely light. McCloskey said as an example that in one village of forty inhabitants only two or three had been killed. They also acknowledged that in one of the reports it is indicated that 95 percent of the people said that even if peace were achieved they would not repeat not return to a Pathet Lao-dominated area. McCloskey said that he had inquired why the people moved from the southern PDJ last year and one person told him he was ordered by the Royal Lao Government. I said this was quite possible but that no repeat no Americans ever initiated such an order or transmitted such an order. McCloskey concurred and also volunteered that one person had told him that if people did not wish to seek sanctuary they could have easily stayed behind.

4. Just prior to meeting with the Congressmen I received two hastily prepared memoranda from AID officers who were present at an informal press conference Congressman McCloskey gave upon returning from the refugee site this morning. They read as follows: (1) "From Win McKeithen on McCloskey's press conference of 4/15/71 upon returning from refugee sites: McCloskey stated: It is a conscious policy of the USG to bomb civilian villages for a twenty-two month period extending through 1968 into 1969. All the refugees we talked to came out because

of U. S. bombing. We were purposely denied USG surveys of bombing in refugee areas that had been prepared by the U. S. Embassy in Vientiane and that clearly demonstrated that the majority of the refugees came out because of U. S. bombing. From the moment we arrived we were denied the existence of such a report and lied to by every American in the Embassy until yesterday morning when this non-existent document was finally made available to us but even then the copy provided us was not the same as the original which we had seen previously.

"Win said that invariably all the refugees they interviewed stated that they had come down because of the bombing and they took pictures of men, women and children who had burn scars from WP, amputations, etc. (actually they saw one case). Win said McCloskey stressed the following:

"Of the villages bombed, in no instance was there any PL or NVN troop closer than 2 KLM from the village.

"2. Large numbers of livestock were killed by aircraft.

"3. When questioned whether they were order off the PDJ by the RLG, all stated that they had been ordered off.

"4. USG and U. S. Embassy in Vientiane has consistently lied. (continued next cable)

~~SECRET~~ 15 1243Z April 1971 VIA CAS CHANNELS

FROM: AMBASSADOR GODLEY, VIENTIANE 205

TO: THE WHITE HOUSE, GENERAL HAIG

to the Press Corps and withheld data, particularly regarding civilian war casualties. That Nixon also withheld similar information that was vital to the war situation in his speech of May 1970.

"5. Congress of the U. S. has been deliberately misled. Will submit a report to be entered into the record of Congress."

(2) "The following is from Earl J. Young:

"When making his total summary to the press, McCloskey stated:

Amb. Godley assured me that with the exception of eight villages which had been bombed through pilot error or otherwise, no villages in Laos had been deliberately destroyed by American air. My conversations with the sampling of the residents of 13 villages on the PDJ has convinced me beyond any doubt that all of them were bombed deliberately without presence of enemy troops (closer than 2 KLM radius). Therefore, I can draw no other conclusion than the fact that the U. S. Ambassador has deliberately ordered or sanctioned the destruction of these villages in the PDJ area."

5. I did not reveal to the Congressmen my knowledge of the foregoing but I asked them point blank if they thought I was authorizing the bombing of villages inhabited by civilians. McCloskey said that the

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information he had collected this morning convinced him that villages had been bombed and that he assumed I had authorized such action. I asked if he was accusing me of being a liar. He said definitely he was not and then I asked him if he would accept the fact that it was not U. S. Government policy to bomb inhabited villages and he said he would accept this statement. He repeated this a second time. McCloskey then went on to criticize and attack Father Menger, an American missionary who has been in Laos for about twenty years and who acted as his interpreter today. He told me that Father Menger had told him "thank God for the bombing." Fortunately another officer who had overheard the Father's remark was able to correct the Congressman by saying that the Father had added "without the bombing Laos would be taken over by the Communists."

6. The final subject was the Congressman's personal attack against the honor of my DCM for, according to the Congressman, willfully withholding the survey report yesterday. I told the Congressman that I was responsible for whatever my subordinates did and that I could solemnly assure him that the DCM was not willfully misleading the U. S. Congressmen and that the problem attendant to delivery of this report was an administrative snafu. I have known the DCM for many years and had complete confidence in his integrity. We ended with a confused argument regarding the importance of the Congressman's having

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the report before he left for Luang Prabang yesterday and my pointing out that the report had nothing to do with the Luang Prabang refugees who had come from a totally different part of Laos than those covered in the reports.

7. The entire group departed Vientiane airport at 1510 for Udorn where the two Congressmen are scheduled to confer some more with 7/13th Air Force personnel and Consul Barnes. The rest of the group will go on to Bangkok. Later today the two Congressmen will proceed to Saigon where I understand they hope to meet with Ambassador Bunker, former South Vietnamese Presidential Candidate Dzu, jailed Congressman Chau, Ambassador Colby and be briefed on the Phoenix Program. I have informed Ambassador Berger of their desires. I understand that Congressmen will depart Saigon the evening of April 16 for they must be in Washington morning of April 17 to permit Congressman McCloskey to appear on TV during the afternoon of the same day.

8. After Congressmen's departure, I met with the two interpreters who accompanied the Congressmen this morning and two mission officers who also went along. I have reviewed with them what the Congressmen reported to me re their interviews. The interpreters and the mission officers indicated that there is nothing that they could challenge in what the Congressmen reported to me. The Congressmen, however, omitted

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two interviewees who bitterly attacked the Pathet Lao and communism. Father Menger and Reverend Roffe both attacked the Congressmen's general attitude on the war in Laos and expressed their admiration for our Government's position here. One of the mission officers who speaks perfect Lao and who has been working with refugees for over four years plus the two interpreters indicated that the interviews were on the style of an American Police Court. These three men believe that while the questions were not obviously slanted that any simple Lao would give the answers desired. They also noted that the ages given by the interviewees mainly erroneous due to the lack of education of the interviewees all of whom were extremely simple people. They also pointed out that a refugee rarely will admit the presence of enemy forces in his home village fearing that he will be attacked for having supported or helped these enemy troops.

9. Please pass Assistant SecState Marshall Green and DCI Helms.

Group 1.

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