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### Coup d'etat against Souvanna Phouma - Laos

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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The ~~news~~ <sup>report</sup> that Souvanna Phouma has either been deposed or forced to resign is bad news for Laos, <sup>for U.S.,</sup> & all of S.E. Asia. He was & is the only man who could have been successful in keeping his country from being fragmented just as, in my opinion, the late Ngo Dinh Diem was the best possible man, despite the pressures against him at home & from abroad, to ensure the future of Free Viet Nam.

The result <sup>would have been</sup> will be a further shifting of Cambodia toward Communist China, a possible further weakening of our position in S.E. Asia & the partition of Laos between the Pathet Lao & the Revolutionary Group. All this <sup>would have</sup> meant more trouble for us unless <sup>we played our cards carefully</sup> & did not act impetuously. ~~It~~ <sup>I</sup> ~~must~~ <sup>must</sup>, also, that the Accords which we entered into in re. Laos have ~~not~~ been violated & I fully support the statements made by Rusk & the Administration against the <sup>result</sup> ~~idea~~ of forcing Souvanna Phouma out of Laos. I am waiting with interest the report & recommendations of Howard Angus, our Ambass. to Laos, which should furnish us some guidelines as to what our future course in ~~Laos~~ <sup>that country</sup> should be.

Beaumont



Coup d'etat against Souvanna

April 20, 1964

STATEMENT OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD (D., MONTANA)

Phouma

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Mr. President:

The news this morning indicates that the coup d'etat against Souvanna Phouma has backfired and that Souvanna Phouma has once again resumed his position as Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Laos on the basis of the stipulations laid down by the Geneva Accord of 1962. I hope this is true. Yesterday's report that Souvanna Phouma had been overthrown was bad news for Laos, for the United States, and for all of Southeast Asia. He was and is the only man who could have been successful in keeping his country from being fragmented just as, in my opinion, the late Ngo Dinh Diem was the best possible man, despite the pressures against him at home and from abroad to insure the future of Free Viet Nam.

Had the coup succeeded the result would have been a further shifting of Cambodia toward Communist China, a possible further weakening of our position in Southeast Asia, and the partition of Laos between the Pathet Lao and the Revolutionary Group. All this would have meant more trouble for us unless we played our cards carefully and did not act impetuously. I am waiting with interest the report and recommendations of Leonard Unger, our Ambassador to Laos, which should furnish us some guidelines as to what our future course in that country should be.

I fully support the position of President Johnson and Secretary of State Dean Rusk in their statements against the coup d'etat which sought to force Souvanna Phouma out of office.

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MEMORANDUM - Page 2

April 21, 1964

It would have meant, also, that the Accords which we entered into in regard to Laos have now been violated, and I fully support the statements made by Secretary Rusk and the Administration against the revolt forcing Souvanna Phouma out.



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April 21, 1964

*Submitted  
copy*

MEMORANDUM

Mr. President: The news this morning indicates that the coup d'etat against Souvanna Phouma has backfired and that Souvanna Phouma has once again resumed his position as Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Laos on the basis of the stipulations laid down by the Geneva Accord of 1962. I hope this is true. Yesterday's report that Souvanna Phouma had been overthrown was bad news for Laos, for the United States, and for all of Southeast Asia. He was and is the only man who could have been successful in keeping his Country from being fragmented just as, in my opinion, the late Ngo Dinh Diem was the best possible man, despite and the pressures against him at home, and from abroad, to insure the future of Free Viet Nam.

The result would have been a further shifting of Cambodia toward Communist China, a possible further weakening of our position in Southeast Asia, and the partition of Laos between the Pathet Lao and the Revolutionary Group. All this would have meant more trouble for us unless we played our cards carefully and did not act impetuously. I am waiting with interest the report and recommendations of Leonard Unger, our Ambassador to Laos, which should furnish us some guidelines as to what our future course in that Country should be.