

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT
EVENTS CONCERNING THE LAOTIAN CRISIS,
FOURTH INSTALLMENT: 1 JUNE TO 31 DECEMBER 1961

HISTORICAL DIVISION
JOINT SECRETARIAT
JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
25 JUNE 1962

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1 Jun 61 The US Ambassador at Saigon warned the Secretary of State that assignment to France of the responsibility for training and supplying the FAL "would not be conducive to good relations between Viet Nam and Laos and would further weaken GVN confidence in Free World resolution and ability to preserve Laos from Communism." No matter who was Prime Minister of the Lao coalition government, the Ambassador continued, the GVN would remain convinced that France intended, eventually to use its role to bring Souvanna to power and that under Souvanna the kingdom would become a Communist state. Ambassador Nolting, who shared the opinions of the GVN regarding the French and Souvanna, recommended that the US, another SEATO member other than France or a "reasonably firm neutral such as Malaya" be made responsible for the future training of the Lao Army (see item 3 June 1961).

(S) Msg, Saigon to SecState, 1826, 1 Jun 61.

2 Jun 61 In a memorandum to the Secretary of Defense, the JCS expressed their "grave concern" about the "serious deficiencies" in military intelligence in Southeast Asia. The Trapnell Report (see item 31 March 1961) had already emphasized the effect that lack of intelligence had upon the operations of the FAL in Laos. And, the JCS believed, the steady deterioration of the situation in Southeast Asia, the possibility of Chinese Communist intervention and the consequently increased likelihood of US contingency operation made it imperative that the "full national intelligence collection potential in the area be brought to bear."

In an attachment to their memorandum, the JCS listed numerous intelligence requirements on Communist China, North Viet Nam, and Laos. In the case of Laos, the Chiefs listed as "priority" needs the following:

1. Specific

1. Specific information on the strength, location, organization, composition, and equipment of Communist forces in the Plaine des Jarres and central Laos.

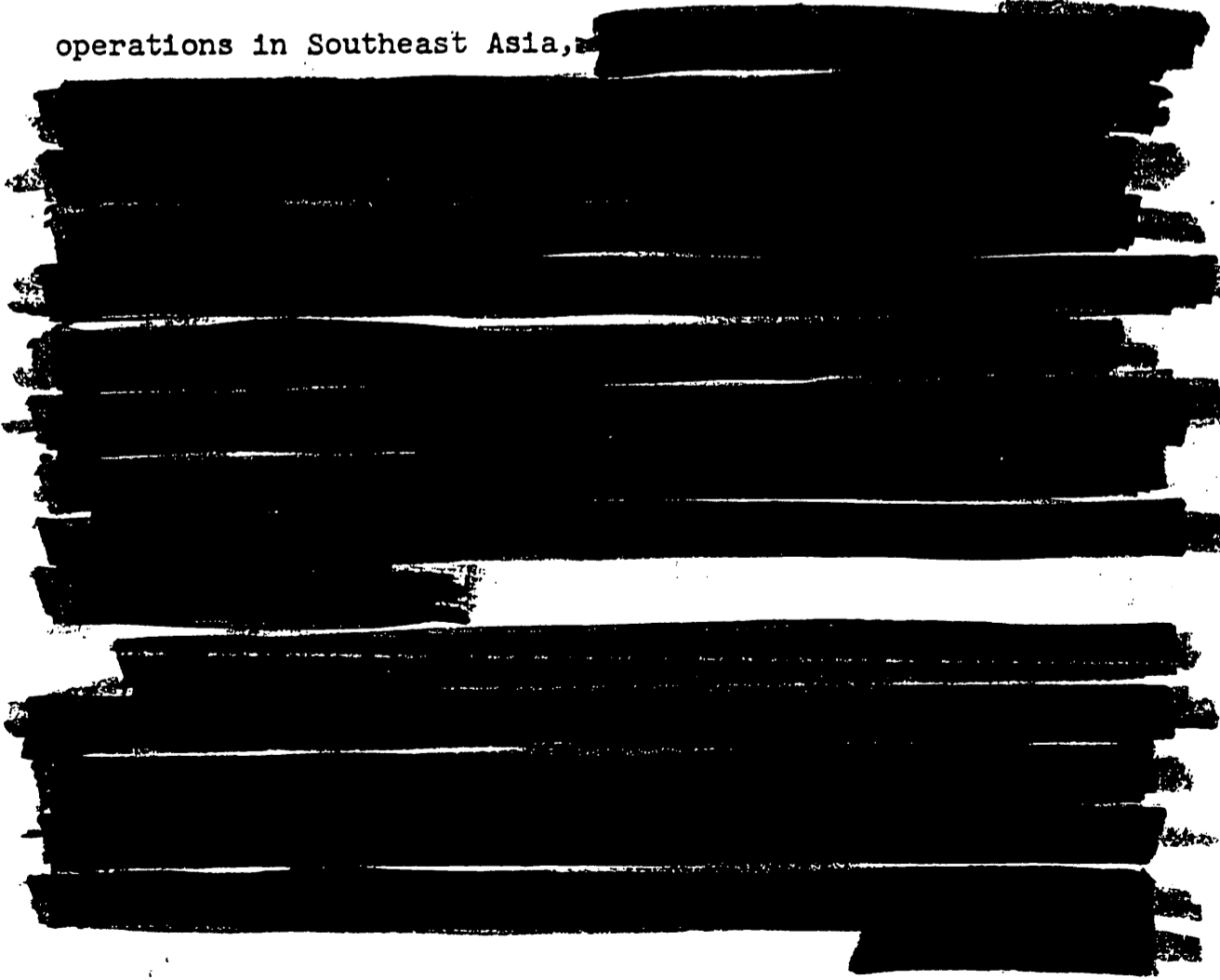
2. Similar information on DRV units in Laos and Laos-Viet Nam border areas.

3. Troop deployments and other basic tactical preparations of Communist forces in the Plaine des Jarres and central Laos - information sufficiently detailed to enable the development of assessments of Communist capabilities for conventional, unconventional, and psychological warfare.

4. Information on logistical factors affecting Communist forces in Laos.

5. Tactical and strategic weaknesses and vulnerabilities of these forces.

The military services had already increased their collection operations in Southeast Asia, ~~_____~~



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Consequently, on 19 June, the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense (Special Operations), General Graves B. Erskine, informed the Chairman, USIB, Mr. Allen Dulles, of the "grave concern" felt in the Department of Defense about these deficiencies. General Erskine stated that the seriousness of the problem clearly required "most careful attention" in USIB, (see items 3 and 15 August 1961).

(TS) JCSM-373-61 to SecDef, 2 June 61, derived from JCS 1992/996, 23 May 61; (TS) 1st N/H of JCS 1992/996, 21 June 61; (TS) 2nd N/H of JCS 1992/996, 27 June 61; all in JMF 9150/2010 (27 Apr 61).

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In response to a question from CINCPAC (see item 30-31 May 1961) CHMAAG Laos stated that he had "little or no control" over T-6 missions flown by the Lao Air Force. CHMAAG controlled only the use of bombs; he would, however, continue to urge the FAL at least to consult the MAAG before dispatching missions.

On 7 June, CHMAAG reported further to CINCPAC that he had on several occasions discussed the use of T-6s with Phoumi. CHMAAG had at these times pointed out that such missions gave considerable propaganda advantage to the enemy while returning only minor military advantage to the RLG. However, CHMAAG continued, Phoumi regarded the T-6s an effective weapon and had in fact relaxed his personal control over their operations. CHMAAG had ordered all MAAG elements to report immediately to him any indication that a T-6 strike was imminent. (See item 24 August 1961.)

(S) Msgs, CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC, DA IN 118377, 2 Jun 61, DA IN 119790, 7 Jun 61.

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2 Jun 61 The JCS forwarded to CINCPAC revised terms of reference for his upcoming conversation with UK military officials regarding intervention in Laos (see items 9 and 29 May 1961). The terms had been revised, by agreement between UK Embassy officials and the Department of State, principally as follows:

1. To the circumstances for intervention was added the proviso that the two governments would have agreed that "clear failure to reach an effectively controlled cease-fire" existed or that "a breaking of the cease-fire by the Communists, accompanied by a resumption of offensive action" had occurred.

2. The political objectives of the intervention became to: a) prevent Laos being completely overrun by the Communists and to keep a RLG in being on Laotian soil; b) protect Thailand while building up a position of strength in that country; and c) establish an effectively controlled cease-fire in order to permit "the achievement by negotiation of a unified, independent and neutral Laos." (See items 17 and 22 June 1961)

(TS) Msg, JCS to CINCPAC, JCS 996974, 2 Jun 61.

3 Jun 61 Ambassador Brown, reporting from Vientiane, informed the Secretary of State that, although the US was not in a "position of superiority," there nevertheless were "forces" operating in its favor. The Ambassador therefore concluded that there might be no "serious disadvantage" in "waiting it out" at Geneva.

Among the "forces" mentioned by Ambassador Brown were:

- 1) food shortages among Pathet Lao units;
- 2) friction between Kong Le and PL contingents;
- 3) the opposition of the King, who enjoyed a certain popular respect, to undue concessions to the Communists;
- 4) an increasing firmness on the part of the RLG;
- 5) the probable inability of the Viet Minh to assist the Pathet Lao if the ICC were sufficiently strengthened; and
- 6) the

renewed

renewed unity of the Western Allies, together with the rallying of world opinion behind the US position.

The Ambassador, however, added that the enemy now enjoyed a "fundamental military advantage" and warned of "formidable difficulties" which the US would face now and in the future.

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 2159, 3 Jun 61.

3 Jun 61 The US Ambassador at Bangkok, in a message for the Secretary of State, recommended against "seizing on the maintenance and enhancement of the French presence in Laos as a way of salvaging the Western position in Laos." The Thai Government, the Ambassador reported, blamed the French Military Mission for the inability of the FAL to use the equipment provided it by the US. Thailand also objected to France's refusal to recognize the Boun Oum government; moreover, the Thai Government suspected that French intelligence agents had supported the Kong Le revolt. The US Ambassador then warned that US support of the continued French military presence in Laos would not improve the Western position in Laos and would be interpreted by the Thai Government as "a very thin veil for the process of US disengagement in Laos."

(See item 8-10 June 1961.)

(C) Msg, Bangkok to SecState, 2184, 3 Jun 61.

3 Jun 61 The JCS, acting at the request of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA), provided the Secretary of Defense with their estimate of the feasibility of a "Mekong River Patrol." The JCS supported the concept that such a patrol along the Laos-Thailand border should be considered as an offset to the increased Communist threat to Thailand and South Viet Nam that

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divided or leftist oriented or controlled Laos would present. But, they went on to say, even a "significant commitment" of personnel and equipment could not be expected to provide a "completely effective barrier" against Communist infiltration; however, a patrol could limit Communist infiltration and insurgency operations in Thailand.

Thailand already possessed ample resources for counter-infiltration purposes including, the JCS said, the resources necessary for a "routine type of border patrol along the Mekong River which could attain remunerative results without commitment of a disproportionate degree of resources." Small mobile, highly-trained Thai units, placed at strategic locations along the river, provided with helicopters, and light aircraft support, and supplemented by an "austere" sampan/junk river patrol, should be created as part of the routine military activities of the RTA. No "substantial additional resources" would be necessary, except perhaps some US aid in obtaining the proper river craft.

The JCS raised objections to the patrol as a SEATO venture. Action through SEATO would, the JCS considered, give the appearance that the US was making the Mekong the main line of defense in Southeast Asia and was therefore, by implication, willing to give up Laos. Further, SEATO's approval for such an undertaking seemed "remote" in view of its failure to undertake any "positive action" during the present Laotian crisis.

A "Mekong River Patrol," the JCS concluded, should not be considered "in isolation"; rather, it should be viewed as part of, and in conjunction with, "over-all actions in support of Thailand and South Vietnam."

(TS) JCSM-372-61 to SecDef, 3 Jun 61, derived from JCS 1992/998, 25 May 61; (TS) Memo, ASD(ISA) to CJCS, 12 May 61, encl to JCS 1992/992, 16 May 61; both in JMF 9155.2/3100 (12 May 61) (1).

3 Jun 61 In a message to the Department of State, Secretary Rusk reported on the highlights of President Kennedy's 2 June Paris conversation with President de Gaulle.

The French President, in reviewing previous discussions on Laos, reiterated his understanding of US commitments in the area, and agreed with President Kennedy that the situation on the ground was "bad." If, said de Gaulle, the honor of the US would force it to intervene in Laos, the French would not oppose this decision but, on the other hand, the French would not intervene. Referring to the Geneva Conference on Laos, de Gaulle expressed the opinion that the "least bad possibility" would be a return to the 1954 agreements.

(S) Msg, Paris to SecState, SECTO 9, 3 Jun 61.

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Secretary Rusk informed the Department of State that President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev, during their two-day discussions at Vienna of world problems, had mentioned various aspects of the Laotian crisis, among them the need to define "neutral" and "independent," the role of the ICC, and the strategic importance of Laos.

1. The need to define "neutral" and "independent."

During the first day's conversation, the President noted that the US shared SEATO commitments toward Laos, while Communist North Viet Nam was supplying arms and men to the Pathet Lao. The problem was to find a solution to the crisis that would not involve the prestige of either the US, the organizer of SEATO, or the USSR, the champion of world Communism. To find such a solution, as opposed to a settlement imposed by the foreign-sponsored Pathet Lao on the people of Laos, it would first be necessary to define "neutral" and "independent," the adjectives

adjectives used to describe the future government of Laos.

Premier Khrushchev agreed to the need for such definitions, citing Burma and Cambodia as examples of independent, neutral states. He objected, however, to President Kennedy's implication that the Pathet Lao sought to impose its will on the Laotian people, observing that no guerrilla movement could succeed without popular support. Returning to the need for definitions, the Soviet Head of State charged that the US recognized as neutral only those nations that accepted its leadership.

President Kennedy responded by stating that Burma, India, and Yugoslavia fitted the US definitions of "neutral" and "independent." He added that infringements on independence and neutrality occurred in nations, such as Poland, which were of strategic importance to the USSR.

2. The role of the ICC. Regarding this subject, which was discussed on both days, Premier Khrushchev declared that, though he desired to have the Lao Government establish ICC control over the kingdom, he would not agree to the Commission's becoming a "supra-government." The existing ICC, which could act upon the agreement of two member nations, did not, according to the Soviets, infringe upon Laotian sovereignty.

President Kennedy replied that the ICC would not be a government, but rather an agency to investigate alleged violations of the cease-fire. The President then proposed that the US and Soviet Union should use their influence to induce the Laotian factions to support the ICC and to grant it access to the entire kingdom. Although the Soviet Premier expressed agreement, he indicated that the first task facing the US and USSR was to obtain support from all three factions for a neutral government. This, in Mr. Khrushchev's opinion, was

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the basic question, one that should be solved before turning to the problem of the ICC.

3. The strategic importance of Laos. On the second day, the two Heads of State elaborated on their previous statements that Laos was of "no strategic importance." Mr. Khrushchev assured the President that the Soviet Union had no vested interest in this remote kingdom and that the USSR had merely extended its help at the request of Souvanna, who had charged that his government was overthrown by US-supported forces. Neither the US nor Soviet Union, Mr. Khrushchev continued, should "get involved," but the USSR could not accept the US "pretension to special rights" in Laos. Nevertheless, because the prestige of both nations was involved, the US and the Soviet Union would have to exercise restraint.

President Kennedy responded by noting that the existing US commitments to Laos, which he wished to reduce, had been undertaken prior to the current crisis and that the present American effort was directed at stabilizing the situation. No reduction of US commitments could begin, however, until an effective cease-fire was in force and a truly neutral government had subsequently been established. The President then stated that situations "involving reaction and counteractions," such as a competitive build-up of forces, would endanger the peace and should be avoided.

At the close of the meeting, President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev issued a joint communique which stated that they had "reaffirmed their support of a neutral and independent Laos under a government chosen by the Laotians themselves, and of international agreements for insuring the country's neutrality and independence; in this connection they have recognized the importance of an effective cease-fire."

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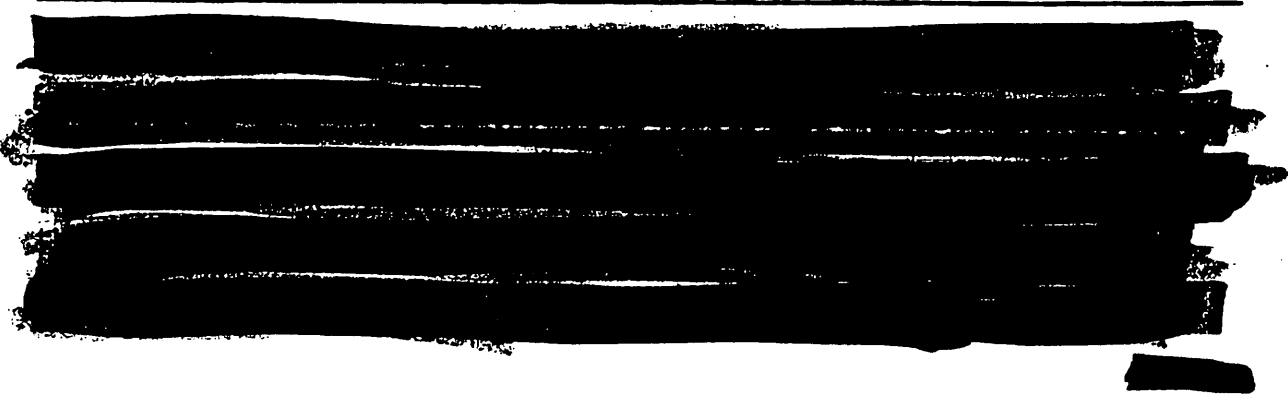
(On 7 June, in a circular message to all diplomatic posts, the Secretary of State commented upon the Vienna communique. He pointed out that, while the statements committed the Soviet Union publicly, the terms of the communique neither guaranteed a change in Soviet policy nor insured that Soviet influence with the Pathet Lao would be used energetically to bring about a genuine cease-fire. The US, he continued, was closely watching Soviet and Pathet Lao actions and would shape its policy and operations in the light of developments in Laos.)

(S) Msgs, Vienna to SecState, SECTO 16, 4 Jun 61; Paris to SecState, SECTO 25, 5 Jun 61; (C) Msg, Dept of State Circular 1972, 7 Jun 61; (U) Msg, Paris to SecState, SECTO 22, 5 Jun 61; (U) Dept of State Bulletin, vol. XLIV, 26 Jun 61, p. 999.

5 Jun 61 CINCPAC transmitted to the JCS a CHMAAG Laos report that attributed FAL reverses "almost entirely to lack of training." The French trainers, CHMAAG had said, had been completely ineffective in tactical training and had, in some fields, such as logistics, made no attempt to instruct but had performed the functions themselves. Consequently, when the French had withdrawn their advice, a void had resulted. The US training effort, limited at first to technical training, had not yet had sufficient time to remedy the FAL deficiencies (see item 10 June 1961).

(S) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 051958Z Jun 61.

6 Jun 61





7 Jun 61 After two days of artillery bombardment, Ban Padong, Meo redoubt on the southwest rim of the Plaine des Jarres, fell to the Pathet Lao. The Meo evacuated, "in surprisingly good order," to a new position seven miles to the southwest.

(On the following day, in response to an urgent request from Ambassador Harriman, Ambassador Brown forwarded to Geneva a MAAG estimate of the significance of this setback. The Meo had attempted a conventional defense of Ban Padong, the MAAG said, because of the prestige which both the RLG and Vang Pao, the Meo commander, attached to holding that site, and because of the need to defend the large Meo refugee camp nearby. If the refugee camp could be relocated, there would be no reason why the Meo could not resume their original guerrilla tactics and, in fact, improve their effectiveness.

The PL would need 7-10 days to prepare an attack upon the new Meo position, the MAAG estimated; whereas the Meo who, despite the defeat, were still loyal to Vang Pao and willing to fight, could be completely redeployed and ready for conventional or unconventional defense in 5-7 days. The MAAG

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would advise Vang Pao against holding future positions too long - and the MAAG observer at Ban Padong thought the Meo leader would "think twice" before attempting a conventional defense again. Rather, the MAAG would advise harassing tactics; having successfully evacuated Ban Padong, the Meo could in future actions "fall back and evade" without further disintegration.) (See item 22 June 1961.)

(S) JCS Laos SITREP 142-61, 8 Jun 61. 

7 Jun 61 The Secretary of State instructed the US Ambassador in Moscow to "seek the earliest appointment with Gromyko" and deliver to the Soviet Foreign Minister a message which expressed "a most grave view" of the Ban Padong incident. "The occurrence of such a deliberate, carefully prepared offensive military action," the Secretary of State continued, could not be "reconciled with the understanding reached before the Geneva Conference on Laos was convened that the Conference should not meet until there was a cease-fire," nor with the discussions held in Vienna between Secretary Rusk and Foreign Minister Gromyko. Because of the Ban Padong fighting, the Secretary of State believed it imperative that the Geneva co-chairmen instruct the ICC "to fulfill from this moment its functions of supervising the cease-fire" and at the same time call upon the Laotian factions to cooperate with the Commission. The course followed by the US delegation at Geneva, Secretary Rusk warned, would hinge upon the effectiveness of the cease-fire and the degree of cooperation given the ICC.

(On 16 June at Geneva, Foreign Minister Gromyko handed Ambassador Harriman a reply to Secretary Rusk's message.

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The cause of the Ban Padong attack, Mr. Gromyko insisted, was RLG incursions, including the dropping of parachutists and supplies, into airspace controlled by forces of Kong Le and the Pathet Lao. Thus, according to the Soviet Foreign Minister the RLG was responsible for the outbreak of hostilities. Mr. Gromyko then stated that the USSR desired a peaceful settlement to the Laotian crisis.

In commenting upon Foreign Minister Gromyko's reply and the general Soviet attitude at Geneva, Ambassador Harriman informed the Secretary of State that the USSR was trying to interpret the cease-fire in such a way that: 1) the Pathet Lao forces would be able to mop up RLG units isolated behind their lines; 2) efforts of the RLG to supply these units would be considered violations of the truce; 3) the RLG would not be allowed to post troops in areas not physically occupied at the moment the cease-fire went into effect; and 4) the ICC, with no equipment of its own, would not be allowed to visit areas beyond the front lines. Ambassador Harriman recommended a firm reply to the "arrogant attitude reflected in Gromyko's note . . ." and requested guidance for the conduct of the US delegation at Geneva.)

(S) Msgs, State to Moscow, NIACT 2138, 7 Jun 61; Geneva to SecState, CONFE 232, 20 Jun 61; Geneva to SecState, CONFE 256, 22 Jun 61.

7 Jun 61 The French, after consultations with the US and UK, presented to the Geneva Conference a draft protocol dealing with ICC control machinery. The French draft sought agreement among the 14 nations on the following 12 articles:

1. The establishment of an ICC responsible for supervising and controlling the Laotian cease-fire as well as

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the kingdom's declaration of neutrality. The Commission was to act "in close cooperation" with the Government of Laos, which would "ensure that the assistance requested by the Commission and its services is provided at all administrative and military levels."

2. The ICC was to have both fixed and mobile inspection teams; a sufficient number of operation centers, particularly at the main points of entry to and exit from the kingdom; and the ability to move its installations according to need.

3. The inspection teams were to have free and unrestricted access to all parts of Laos; access to relevant documents; and full freedom to inspect, at any time, known or suspected military installations, establishments, units, organizations, and activities.

4. The ICC would have unimpeded use of its own logistic resources, "including all means of transport and communications for the effective performance of its duties."

5. The Lao Government was to insure the security of the Commission and its inspection teams.

6. ICC inspections could be carried out at the request of either the Lao Government, any one member of the Commission, or any one member of an inspection team.

7. Decisions of the Commission relating to operations, inspections, or procedural matters were to be made by majority vote.

8. The ICC was to issue a quarterly report to the membership of the Geneva Conference. In case of emergency, however, the Commission might submit special reports along with recommendations for action by the Conference. In the event of disagreement, commission members could submit minority reports.

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9. The ICC would remain in being until the conference nations agreed that it should be terminated, "and in any case until 21 July 1964." Upon its termination, the Commission would render a final report to the Conference.

10. Ambassadors of the conference nations would meet annually.

11. A method was proposed by which the conference nations would pay the costs of the ICC.

12. Articles 26-40 of the 1954 agreement were declared superseded. These obsolete articles prescribed the organization, responsibilities, and method of operation for the existing ICC.

As had been agreed before the draft was introduced, Ambassador Harriman merely reserved the right to offer comment on or amendments to the French draft (see item 20 June 1961), while British co-chairman MacDonald expressed full support of the proposal. To emphasize the more satisfactory nature of the French draft, Mr. MacDonald called attention to the Soviet version (see item 17 May 1961) and noted that the USSR, unlike France, sought to undermine the 1954 agreement. Specifically, the Soviets would: 1) eliminate the French presence authorized in 1954; 2) remove from the ICC those peace-keeping functions assigned it in 1954; 3) force the ICC to seek the consent of the Geneva co-chairmen before undertaking investigations; 4) require unanimous decisions by the ICC on all but procedural matters; and 5) provide only perfunctory treatment of the problem of controlling the introduction of arms into Laos.

(S) Msgs, Geneva to SecState, CONFE 116, 4 Jun 61; CONFE 139, 7 Jun 61.

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7 Jun 61 According to a press release in Pravda, Mikoyan, speaking at a Kremlin luncheon, had stated in the presence of Souvanna and Souphanouvong that "'as far as he knew'" Souphanouvong was satisfied with the position the Soviet Government had taken in the Vienna talks (see item 3, 4 June 1961) and that the USSR would support this position in the Geneva talks. However, earlier in his speech Mikoyan had said that the international conference at Geneva could not decide all questions as this would amount to interference in the affairs of the kingdom and would be "'a new form of colonial rule over Laos.'" In response, Souvanna had declared that he was fully convinced of the "disinterested" nature of Soviet support and aid for Laos. Certain countries, the Laotian Prince noted, had "ulterior" motives in the Geneva Conference, but he was confident that with the help of friendly countries, and above all the USSR, it would be possible to extricate the Conference from its impasse. Having received information from Khrushchev on his Vienna meeting with President Kennedy, he and his brother, said Souvanna, would be able to map out a course of action at Geneva. They would, he pointed out, be "patient, stubborn and persistent" in pursuing their goals of "'happiness of people, independence of country, and sovereignty kingdom of Laos, full agreement and unity of all layers of population.'"

On the same day the Soviet press reported that Khrushchev had received the two Laotian Princes. According to the news release, they had discussed a Laotian "'peaceful settlement'" and "further" developments in Laotian-Soviet relations.

(OUO) Msgs, Moscow to SecState, 3057, 8 Jun 61; 3044, 7 Jun 61.

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The US Consul General at Geneva, disturbed by the reaction of America's Southeast Asian Allies to continuation of the French presence in Laos (see items 1 and 3 June 1961), on 8 June informed the Secretary of State that he believed US support at Geneva of the French presence in Laos required a "clear understanding between Washington and Paris" of France's "intentions and will to assume fully significant obligations, particularly with respect to the future training of the FAL." In particular he suggested that the US Government determine the French views on: 1) the prevention of subversions and indirect aggression against a neutral Laos; 2) the size of the future training mission; 3) the type of training envisioned; 4) equipment for the Lao forces; and 5) financing the mission.

While the Government of France was being sounded out on these subjects, the US delegation at Geneva should impress upon the French: 1) the seriousness with which the US regarded the French role in Laos, and 2) the need for US-French cooperation in military planning and in planning for the withdrawal of US advisers.

As for the complaints made by the Southeast Asian nations, the Ambassador suggested that a special effort be made to clarify US motives (see item 27 June 1961) for seeking continuation of the French presence and to emphasize "our firm intention to urge the French to follow through on their obligations with our support."

On 9 June, US Ambassador Gavin at Paris expressed to the Secretary of State his concurrence with the view that the US should initiate discussions with the French "in light of their assuming the primary role in the military field in Laos After observing that the points raised in the Geneva message were "doubtless of interest to the US," Ambassador Gavin

advised

advised against giving the impression that "our objective is to put the French in the dock and insist they carry out a military program in Laos along the same lines we have followed." To argue "over the nuts and bolts of a military program for Laos" or to attempt to supervise the details of a French program could dissipate the favorable atmosphere existing between the US and France.

The US Ambassador at Vientiane suggested on 10 June that the Secretary of State "add a further point to Geneva's list" of items to be discussed with the French. This point was the French attitude toward the FAL. At present, the Ambassador observed, the French military seemed to consider the Lao "practically untrainable" (see item 20 June 1961).

(S) Msgs, Geneva to SecState, CONFE 146, 7 Jun 61; Paris to SecState, 5449, 9 Jun 61; Vientiane to SecState, 2241, 10 Jun 61.

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On 8 June, Chairman Sen of the ICC, in a message to the RLG, expressed the Commission's deep concern about the recent hostilities at Ban Padong (see item 7 June 1961). Having obtained from the three factions agreement in principle to inspections, he now proposed that the ICC, on its own initiative, visit those critical areas where large numbers of opposing troops were in close proximity. Chairman Sen therefore requested prompt agreement at the Ban Namone cease-fire talks on those special arrangements, such as transportation, which would enable the ICC to make these inspections. Ambassador Brown considered the ICC proposal a "major victory" for the RLG and believed that Phoumi should cooperate.

On 10 June, as a result of the Commission's offer to conduct investigations, the JCS authorized CINCPAC to approve the

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the RLG's use of US-supplied equipment to assist the ICC in conducting inspections.

At Geneva, also on 10 June, Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko, during an "hour's inconclusive argument" with US Ambassador Harriman, rejected a US proposal that the Soviet and British co-chairmen of the Geneva Conference issue instructions to the ICC to investigate the Ban Padong incident. Although Ambassador Harriman produced a copy of Chairman Sen's message to the RLG, the Soviet Foreign Minister remained adamant. Finally, Ambassador Harriman suggested that the co-chairman call upon both the RLG and the Pathet Lao to stop violating the cease-fire. The Soviet diplomat made no direct reply at this time, but the co-chairmen did send a message to the Laotian factions urging their cooperation with the ICC in the supervision of the truce.

At the Ban Namone meeting of 14 June, the Ban Padong incident and the Commission's offer to make inspections were discussed. Although the RLG had lodged with the ICC a protest that opposition forces had violated the truce, the Government's delegation at Ban Namone did not, in Ambassador Brown's opinion, press its case with enough vigor. Thus, the Pathet Lao, in spite of the Commission's offer to investigate and the co-chairmen's request for cooperation, succeeded in preventing an ICC visit to the Ban Padong area.

(S) Msgs, Geneva to SecState, CONFE 166, 10 Jun 61. Geneva to SecState, CONFE 183, 13 Jun 61; JCS to CINCPAC, JCS 997398, 10 Jun 61; (C) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState, 2230, 9 Jun 61; 2268, 14 Jun 61.

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On 8 June, Ambassador Harriman called upon Souvanna at Geneva to discuss the future neutrality and independence of Laos. During their conversation, Souvanna accepted the Ambassador's assurances

assurances that the US wanted nothing except an independent and truly neutral Laos and explained that the US views, as stated by Mr. Harriman, coincided with his own. Souvanna maintained that, in his opinion, the Soviet Union would support Laotian neutrality and independence. When asked if he could withstand organized Communist pressure, Souvanna replied that he would have to form a single mass party to oppose the NLHX, which he regarded as Socialist rather than Communist. Souvanna also commented on various other aspects of Lao politics and stated that he would be grateful for any help the US might give in the formation of a coalition government.

In reporting this meeting to the Secretary of State, Ambassador Harriman pointed out that Souvanna considered himself "the one man to lead his country, confident he can control the left-wingers and arouse national popular support."

On 15 June, Souvanna returned Ambassador Harriman's call. During this second meeting, Souvanna commented upon a variety of topics, none of which Ambassador Harriman considered either new or particularly significant. In substance, Souvanna suggested that the US urge Boun Oum and Phoumi to be conciliatory during the forthcoming Zurich meeting (see item 22 June 1961) and to have confidence in Souvanna.

(S) Msg, Geneva to SecState, CONFE 175, 11 Jun 61; (C) Msgs, CONFE 152, 8 Jun 61; 192, 14 Jun 61; 199, 15 Jun 61.

9 Jun 61 The US delegation to the Geneva Conference reported that "tentative force levels for the FAL contained in current drafts of documents to be tabled at the Geneva Conference as a result of US-UK-French discussion show a FAL of 20,000 plus 3,000 gendarmerie." The problem of integration, the
report

report continued, had not yet been discussed in detail, but the US delegation did not consider it feasible to "avoid the problem of force levels until after the problem of integration is worked out." The report further stated that the "thinking at Geneva was that "proportional reduction in forces on both sides would be a gradual process with integration as the final step." It also was noted that the US, UK, and French delegations had agreed that every effort should be made to avoid integration at the battalion level (see items 22 June, 13 September, and 20 October 1961).

(S) Msg, Geneva to SecState, CONF 160, 9 Jun 61.

10 Jun 61 CHMAAG Laos, responding to CINCPAC's 24 May message concerning FAL training (see item), described the various training projects being carried out by the MAAG during the cease-fire:

1. Battalion level training in Thailand.
2. "On-site" training in leadership and tactics "in contact units."
3. English-language training which, if successful, could bring about expansion in CONUS school quotas.
4. Civil affairs and psychological warfare training, and several troop indoctrination programs.
5. Marksmanship.
6. Artillery

6. Artillery training including, for instance, instruction in conversion from French to US fire direction control systems.
7. NCO schools and officer "refresher" courses."
8. Instruction by both MAAG and ECCOIL (Filipino) technicians in training aids, river flotilla operations, engineering, ordnance, quartermaster, signal, and transportation skills.
9. A proposed military intelligence course for the new Lao military intelligence service.

Other fields in which the MAAG was particularly active were: inspection to determine the status of units and programs; assistance in rehabilitation of equipment; coordination in the FAL reorganization and updating of TOEs; and reorganization of the Lao Air Force under USAF concepts.

Realization of these programs on the "intensified basis" the JCS had directed (see item 29 April 1961) would, CHMAAG said, depend upon authorization for and receipt of additional US personnel. As presently manned (see item 26 June 1961), the MAAG would have to carry out its programs on a "first things first" basis; it could not conduct them all simultaneously. CHMAAG recommended, therefore, that 10 additional WSMTT teams be authorized on a temporary duty basis (see item 22 August 1961) and that the MAAG be permanently augmented by from 30 to 80 personnel spaces (see item 1 December 1961).

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(S) Msg, CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC, DA IN 121044,
10 Jun 61; JMF 9155.2/5191 (17 Aug 61).

11 Jun 61 The US Counselor in Bangkok forwarded to the Secretary of State a list of "dissatisfactions and complaints regarding the Geneva Conference" which had led the Thai Government to conclude that its further participation would be of doubtful value and which might cause Thailand to withdraw from the Conference.

The specific complaints and sources of dissatisfaction listed by the US Counselor were: 1) Thailand's "fundamental doubt" that a conference should be relied upon in preference to the "more forceful action" which the Thais had "advocated through SEATO or otherwise"; 2) Thai convictions regarding a "British sell-out" on the seating of the Pathet Lao delegates at Geneva; 3) the apparent Western willingness to continue the Conference in the absence of both an effective cease-fire and satisfactory instructions to the ICC; 4) Thailand's lack of success in presenting its point of view at Geneva; 5) the apparent Western and Communist desire for a Lao coalition government, the type of government which the Thais believed would bring about a Communist take-over of the kingdom; 6) lack of information from the US on the Vienna meeting (see item 3-4 June 1961), even though the future of Laos was one of the subjects discussed; 7) French, and to some extent British, reluctance to consult with Thailand and the

other

other pro-Western Asian states; and 8) the apparent inability of the US to "state what our proposals are for meeting the contingencies of conference failure or large-scale breaking of the cease-fire."

(S) Msg, Bangkok to SecState, 2236, 11 Jun 61.

12 Jun 61 According to the JCS Laos weekly situation report, "following sporadic enemy mortar fire extending over a two-day period, troops from two Lao Army outposts near Hat Bo, about 30 miles northeast of Paksane, withdrew about 3 miles south." These outposts, the situation report noted, had been occupied without opposition by the FAL after the 3 May cease-fire declaration.

(TS JCS Laos Sitrep No. 143-61, 15 Jun 61; (TS) Msg, CHMAAG Laos to JCS, DA IN 122052, 14 Jun 61.

13 Jun 61 During a luncheon for Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko, US Ambassador Harriman asked for Mr. Gromyko's views concerning some form of international economic assistance for Laos, a subject which Ambassador Harriman intended to introduce before

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the Conference. The Soviet Foreign Minister, after observing that this was not a proper subject for the Conference, stated that the international regulation of economic aid would be an invasion of Laotian sovereignty and therefore unacceptable to the USSR.

(C) Msg, Geneva to SecState, CONFE 186, 14 Jun 61.

14 Jun 61 CINCPAC inactivated the US Element, SEATO Field Forces - a component furnished for SEATO Plan 5, and reactivated CJTF-116 - an element of CINCPAC OPLAN 32-59 (see item 6 April 1961). At the same time, CINCPAC established the following DEFCONs:

1. DEFCON 3 for forces earmarked for and in direct support of JTF-116.
2. DEFCON 3 for forces earmarked for and in direct support of SEATO Plan 5.
3. DEFCON 4 for the remainder of PACOM forces. Under these DEFCONs, reaction time of PACOM forces, from receipt of an execution order to the first landing of troops in Vientiane, would be 96 hours.

(TS) Msgs, ADMINO CINCPAC to JCS, 132037Z Jun 61; ADMINO CINCPAC to CSFF (designate), et al., 132040Z Jun 61.

14 Jun 61 CINCPAC assessed for CHMAAG Laos the likely Communist reaction to the implementation of SEATO Plan 5, or a comparable unilateral US plan, as follows:

1. The USSR would not regard Laos under present conditions as the proper place for a full-scale showdown with the US.
2. The Chinese Communists and DRV might intervene under the "military volunteer technique," hoping in this way to
make

make it clear that they did not threaten the continental US or the American people as such, but were simply aiming at the single target of foreign military forces in Laos.

3. If Plan 5 was implemented, the Communists would probably react initially with "propaganda and political measures," followed perhaps by introduction of "volunteers" as follows:

a. One DRV regiment (wet season) or division (dry season) each to the Plaine des Jarres, the Kam Khat area, and the Tchepone area.

b. Possibly one Chinese regiment or division to Sam Neua.

Even if DRV "volunteers" intervened, the military situation did not necessarily go beyond the scope of Plan 5.

4. The execution of Plan 5 would cause additional frictions with the Communists in Laos, but the situation was not likely to escalate seriously.

If the DRV entered Laos in organized units in reaction to Plan 5, CINCPAC added, SEATO forces should attack them by air. If DRV air units then attacked SEATO forces, their bases in North Viet Nam should be destroyed.

(On 24 June, CINCPAC furnished an identical report to the JCS, less only his final opinions on air attack. Additionally he told the JCS that, in his opinion, Plan 5 should be implemented.)

(TS) Msgs, CINCPAC to CHMAAG Laos, 140523Z Jun 61; CINCPAC to JCS, 242040Z Jun 61.

14 Jun 61 Princes Souvanna and Souphanouvong appeared before the Geneva Conference. Souvanna, in the course of his speech, stated that: 1) the ICC, although it "possibly could assist in cases where the Lao themselves were not in agreement," should not
replace

replace the tripartite [RLG-Souvanna-Pathet Lao] military commission in arranging a cease-fire; 2) in addition to preventing foreign interference, the ICC might later supervise elections; 3) Laos would reconstitute a national army; 4) neither the passage through Laos of foreign troops nor the presence of foreign bases would be allowed; and 5) SEATO protection of the kingdom would have to be cancelled.

Souphanouvong was judged by the US delegation to have "used the occasion more effectively than Souvanna to project his ideas and personality." Among other things, Souphanouvong stated that: 1) his NLHX controlled 80 per cent of Laos and was supported by 90 per cent of the population; 2) he was in agreement with the policies of Souvanna's Xieng Khouang government; 3) the Laotian people themselves could solve the problems of forming a national government, organizing elections, unifying the factional armies, accepting foreign aid, and improving economic conditions; 4) he preferred the Soviet draft protocol to the French version, for in his opinion the latter violated the sovereignty of Laos; and 5) he desired the removal of all foreign troops from the kingdom. These statements were accompanied by "intemperate attacks on the US" and references to "NLHX force and power."

(C) Msg, Geneva to SecState, CONF 195, 15 Jun 61.

15 Jun 61 The JCS answered a series of questions, put by the Deputy Secretary of Defense on 8 May 1961, on the use of nuclear weapons in any direct engagement with the Chinese Communists. Among the questions posed and answered were two particularly pertinent to the Laotian situation, as follows:

1. Against

1. Against available Chinese Communist forces, could US and Allied forces hold a defensive line in mainland Southeast Asia? If so, approximately where?

a. Without the use of nuclear weapons, the defense of "key areas" in Thailand, including the Mekong River line, and of the Saigon area would be possible, the JCS said, under the following conditions:

(1) Political stability of pro-Western governments in Thailand, Cambodia, and South Viet Nam.

(2) Full political and necessary military support by the SEATO nations.

(3) Immediate employment of required US forces and prompt initiation of partial mobilization by the US.

b. With nuclear weapons used only in air defense and ASW and tactically against enemy forces, or with unrestricted use of nuclear weapons, the US and its Allies could hold a defensive line running roughly from Tourane through the Kontum-Kleiku plateau in South Viet Nam and the Pakse-Bolovens plateau in Laos, to and thence along the Mekong River. Even if the Chinese responded in kind with Soviet-furnished nuclear weapons, the US and its Allies could hold this line, although rapid reconstruction of support facilities and immediate US and SEATO mobilization would be required.

2. Were there any military actions that the US could take now which would significantly affect the answer(s) to the above question(s)?

"Depending upon the degree of warning received prior to US intervention," the JCS said, "US capabilities would be enhanced

enhanced by the substantial deployment of combat forces to the area of operations." Moreover, there were numerous logistics actions - construction and modernization of air, rail, pipeline, port, road, electronic communication, and storage facilities - that would enhance US capabilities. Increased MAP support of indigenous forces, strengthening of friendly internal security forces, and acceleration and expansion of covert and guerrilla programs would likewise strengthen the US and Allied position in Southeast Asia.

In their memorandum forwarding these answers to the Secretary of Defense, the JCS reasserted their belief that the US did not presently have the capability to conduct a "full-scale nonnuclear war" with the Chinese Communists. For this reason, US intervention in any area where subsequent overt Chinese Communist intervention was possible should be undertaken only after a "firm US governmental decision . . . that the US is thereby prepared and committed to succeed . . . to the extent required by its National objectives, regardless of possible subsequent escalation." And, the JCS concluded, any full-scale nonnuclear operation in Southeast Asia would seriously restrict the capability of the US to conduct similar operations simultaneously elsewhere. Therefore, "a degree of mobilization," expansion of the war production base, augmentation of lift capabilities and waiver of financial limitations would be required in such event.

(See item 3 July 1961.)

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(TS) JSCM-405-61 to SecDef, w/att, 15 Jun 61, derived from JCS 2118/156, 9 Jun 61; JMF 9141/3072 (8 May 61).

15 Jun 61 The Canadian Minister for External Affairs made a "strong plea" that the Geneva Conference provide the ICC as soon as possible with those "essential technical means" for truce supervision which the Commission had already requested (see item 29 May 1961). Specifically, the Canadian diplomat desired that the ICC be given immediately at least three light aircraft and three helicopters with the personnel necessary for their upkeep and operation.

(This Canadian request prefaced a joint US-French offer, made to the co-chairman on 16 June, of equipment for use by the ICC. Included among the items were three US H-34 helicopters. On 17 June, however, Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko refused to agree to the conference's responding to the ICC request for equipment.) (See item 21-22 June 1961.)

(S) Msgs, Geneva to SecState, CONFE 203, 16 Jun 61; CONFE 213, 17 Jun 61; (C) Msg, Geneva to SecState, CONFE 202, 16 Jun 61.

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16 Jun 61 The Secretary of State informed Ambassador Brown that the US desired to investigate the possibility of creating under the RLG Interior Ministry an independent and unified civil police force prior to the Geneva settlement. The US hoped thereby, the Secretary said, to pre-empt the post-settlement training of the police and thus maintain as much influence as possible over this element of state security. The Department of State believed that the civil police should be entirely separate from both the army and the gendarmerie; that US civilians should perform the training; and that support of the police should therefore be dealt with under the economic provisions of the Geneva settlement.

(On the following day, the US delegation at Geneva advised the Secretary that there was "no possibility, . . . in any protocol coming out of this conference," that US training units would be allowed for Lao police or military forces, under economic or military assistance projects. Nonetheless, US officials in Laos developed a plan for such a separate police force; see item 21 August 1961.)

(S) Msgs, SecState to Vientiane, 1378, 16 Jun 61; Geneva to SecState, CONFE 212, 17 Jun 61.

16-21
Jun 61

In response to a request by the Secretary of State that the US delegation at Geneva review its negotiating tactics, Ambassador Harriman on 16 June expressed to the Secretary of State "some thoughts" concerning the principles upon which the US effort at Geneva was based. In addition to asking guidance from the Department of State, Ambassador Harriman asked that the US Ambassadors at Bangkok, Saigon, and

Vientiane

Vientiane inform him of the views of their host governments on the "thoughts" he was expressing.

The first idea set forth by the Ambassador was that the only alternative to the settlement of the Laotian crisis by means of an international conference was the use of force. The US, however, had chosen negotiations in preference to military action and its attendant risk of escalation.

"Having chosen the conference route," he continued, "we must accustom ourselves to accept less than perfect solutions to each of the problems as they arise, unless we are prepared to turn back to the alternative of force."

Ambassador Harriman then suggested that the US, if the Zurich meeting (see item 22 June 1961) did not result in a unified Lao delegation, should encourage the RLG to bring its delegates to the conference table so that the Boun Oum government could present its views.

Turning to the subject of the cease-fire, the Ambassador expressed his belief that the US, by placing the onus for truce violations on the Communists, had gained "world support on this issue" and forced the Communists to restrain the Pathet Lao forces, thus strengthening the bargaining position of the RLG. Extreme emphasis on cease-fire violations, however, might, in Ambassador Harriman's opinion, cause the Conference to collapse. He therefore recommended that the US, while reserving the right to bring future violations to the attention of the Conference, should now turn to such "substantive aspects of the conference agenda" as control machinery, limitations on military forces, declarations of neutrality, and, possibly, economic aid.

Finally, Ambassador Harriman expressed confidence that the US could obtain a satisfactory status for Laos, provided that a "reasonably balanced government of national unity" was established. He stressed, however, that the accomplishment

of this goal would require "a lot of cooperation and willingness at times to deviate from rigid concepts which the course of this conference has proven to be impractical."

On 18 June, the US Ambassador at Vientiane stated his agreement with the message from Geneva "about the desirability of the RLG delegation's accepting the facts of life and taking its place at the conference." Since he considered it useless to discuss RLG policy with anyone but Phoumi, Ambassador Brown urged most strongly that Ambassador Harriman make every effort to see Phoumi.

Ambassador Brown also agreed that the Geneva Conference should turn to more substantial issues, even though he doubted that the RLG's bargaining position had been strengthened or that the Pathet Lao had given up the offensive. He believed, however, that the US should continue to seek improvements in the machinery of the ICC and to stress those cease-fire violations in which the Communists were clearly at fault. Referring to the comment in the Geneva message about less than perfect solutions, Ambassador Brown stated his conviction that the US would have to accept Souvanna as Prime Minister if the partition of Laos was to be avoided.

The Secretary of State on 21 June forwarded to Geneva his comments on Ambassador Harriman's assessment of conference tactics. Secretary Rusk agreed in general with the Ambassador's views on the accomplishments of the Conference and stated that these achievements, principally the fixing of blame on the Communists for truce violations, would "stand us in good stead" if negotiations should collapse and "we are forced to turn to other measures."

The attitude of both Thailand and South Viet Nam, the nations most directly concerned with a Laotian settlement, troubled

troubled the Secretary of State. Should these nations withdraw from the Conference, the US position would be "considerably embarrassed and weakened."

Finally, Secretary Rusk noted that the time might come when agreement was patently impossible and expressed the hope that, in such event, a number of delegations would join the US in terminating the conference.

(S) Msgs, State to Geneva, FECON NIACT 129, 15 Jun 61; FECON 162, 21 Jun 61; (S) Msg, Geneva to SecState, CONFE 205, 16 Jun 61; (S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 2290, 18 Jun 61.

17 Jun 61 The CNO informed the Secretary of Defense that the JCS, mindful of the "over-riding political considerations," accepted the terms of reference for the talks between CINCPAC and UK Admiral Luce (see items 9 and 29 May and 2 June 1961), but on the assumptions that:

1. The terms of reference would not be interpreted to indicate that the ultimate US objective was a Laos divided along the 3 May cease-fire line.

2. The proposed plan for intervention would not be introduced into SEATO, nor would a proposal be made to revise SEATO Plan 5 in accordance with the terms of reference. The objectives of the proposed plan were less than those of SEATO Plan 5, the CNO said; its introduction into SEATO would, therefore, have a very adverse effect upon all SEATO members except the UK and France.

3. Every effort would be made to avoid the appearance of US-UK combined planning, because it too would have a detrimental effect upon other Allies.

On the same day, CNO, acting for CJCS, warned CINCPAC that the British might attempt to use the Felt-Luce conversations as a beginning for combined planning. CINCPAC was instructed

instructed to "make it very clear" that combined US-UK planning was not acceptable to the US.

CINCPAC was also cautioned to reject any British proposal that agreements reached during the conversations be submitted to SEATO as modifications to Plan 5. Such a "white man's solution" to an Asiatic problem "would not be readily accepted by our Asiatic friends."

(On the following day, CINCPAC expressed his "wholehearted concurrence with CNO that no effort should be made in SEATO to change the objectives of Plan 5.)

(See item 22 June 1961.)

(TS) Memo, CNO to SecDef, 17 Jun 61, encl to JCS 2344/3, 24 Jul 61; JMF 5412 (17 Jun 61); (TS) Msgs, JCS to CINCPAC, JCS 997726, 17 Jun 61; CINCPAC to JCS, 182350Z Jun 61.

20 Jun 61 Ambassador Harriman placed before the Geneva Conference draft provisions designed to supplement the French draft protocol on ICC machinery (see item 7 June 1961). The US proposals, which consisted of articles 13 through 22 of what came to be known as the French-US draft, called for the following:

13. The ICC would control the movement of "all military personnel and advisers, armaments, munitions, and military equipment" into and out of Laos.

14. As soon as the ICC had established sufficient operation centers to carry out the tasks outlined in article 13 and considered itself ready to begin functioning throughout Laos, it would "so notify the Government of Laos and the members of the Conference." After an agreed interval had elapsed, the Commission would commence its operations.

15. Not later than 30 days after the protocol entered into force, the ICC would take census of the various armed forces throughout the kingdom.

16. All

16. All foreign military personnel and advisers, except the French whose presence was consistent with the 1954 agreement, were to be withdrawn by an agreed date.

17. The ICC was to supervise the disposition of armament in excess of the needs of a unified Lao Army.

18. No armaments, munitions, or military equipment inconsistent with the role and mission of the Lao Army could be introduced into the kingdom.

19. Prisoners of war and civilian internees were to be released to the custody of the ICC for repatriation to the destinations of their choice.

20. Reprisals against former enemies were forbidden.

21. Articles 10 and 19 of the 1954 agreement were declared superseded. These articles had established the points through which foreign troops might enter Laos and extended to the kingdom the terms of the 1954 cease-fire.

22. Subject to the conditions in article 14, the protocol would enter into force on the day that it was signed.

(On 21 June, the French delegation "welcomed the US draft military provisions" but reserved detailed comment pending further study. Soviet co-chairman Pushkin on the following day charged that the "'Franco-American'" proposals "proved that the West was hostile toward the independence and neutrality of Laos." The type of ICC called for in the French-US draft, Mr. Pushkin continued, would interfere in the kingdom's domestic affairs. Since the basic aims of the Conference were to deal with Laotian external affairs, he concluded that the Western proposals were contrary to the purpose of the Geneva Conference.

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(C) Msgs, Geneva to SecState, CONF 253, 21 Jun 61; CONF 269, 23 Jun 61; (U) Msg, Geneva to SecState, CONF 240, 20 Jun 61.

20 Jun 61 The Secretary of State, in response to recommendations that the US discuss with the Government of France the possible future role of a French Military Mission in Laos (see item 8-10 August 1961), approved the initiation of preliminary talks on this subject and provided guidance for presentations by the US Ambassador at Paris and the US delegation at Geneva. A similar presentation, Secretary Rusk added, would be made to the French Embassy at Washington. Although unwilling to suggest it at the time, the Secretary of State expressed the hope that the French would offer to enter into detailed military discussions to work out plans for the replacement by a French mission of the MAAG in Laos.

In brief, the US presentations were to include: 1) an observation that a French Military Mission, such as had been authorized by the 1954 agreement, was contemplated in the US/French draft protocol under consideration at Geneva (see previous item); 2) a statement of the importance of a French Military Mission, with emphasis on the fact that not even a strengthened ICC could effectively safeguard the neutrality of Laos unless the kingdom had, at the least, an army able to "contain illegal armed forces in the country and inhibit the resurgence of Pathet Lao guerrilla activity;" and 3) a series of specific questions to elicit French views on the composition and mission of the Lao armed forces, the type of training to be given, the type and size of the mission, the equipping of Lao forces, the financing of the mission, the "potential capabilities" of Lao soldiers and officers, and the prevention of Communist subversion.

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(S) Msg, State to Paris, 5812, 20 Jun 61.

20 Jun 61 As the meeting of the Laotian Princes at Zurich was getting underway, US diplomats held discussions with Prince Sihanouk of Cambodia and with Phoumi separately. Sihanouk expressed belief that the three Princes should concentrate on the framing of an "international statute" for Laos and on the appointment by the King of a unified Lao delegation to the Geneva Conference. Sihanouk also stated that complete agreement would not be reached at Zurich, that the integration of Pathet Lao forces into a unified Lao Army was the most dangerous issue facing Boun Oum's government, and that, since the King probably would not serve as Prime Minister, Souvanna seemed the only other possible candidate for that office.

Phoumi also seemed "gloomy" concerning the prospects for agreement at Zurich. He held out scant hope for agreement on the appointment of a unified delegation or for acceptance by Souvanna and Souphanouvong of the King as Prime Minister. Also, Phoumi refused to allow the RLG delegation to sit at the conference table but seemed willing to have the delegation available at Geneva. He felt that a failure at Zurich could lead to the collapse of the Geneva Conference and the resumption of hostilities. After stating this hypothesis, Phoumi asked for a clear enunciation of US policy in the event that fighting erupted anew. He was told, however, only that the US considered it desirable to continue negotiations and preserve the cease-fire.

(S) Msg, Geneva to SecState, CONF 241, 20 Jun 61;
(C) Msg, Geneva to SecState, CONF 236, 20 Jun 61.

During

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Jun 61

During a discussion on 21 June of the proposed responsibilities and rights of the ICC, the Canadian delegation again (see item 15 June 1961) urged that sufficient equipment be provided the existing ICC to enable it to carry out its functions. Because of the French-US offer of "adequate equipment," there was no need for debate by the Conference. Instead, the co-chairmen needed only to accept the existing offer. The US, France, and the UK supported the Canadian stand.

On the following day, the Soviet co-chairman insisted that the ICC continue to obtain its equipment from the "parties in Laos." The Conference, however, agreed that the three ICC nations represented at Geneva should inquire of the Commission members if sufficient equipment was available from Laotian sources.

(The British co-chairman later agreed to Pushkin's proposal that the ICC be directed to acquire equipment from the parties in Laos. When the UK co-chairman withdrew his consent, his Soviet counterpart on 10 July said that, although no message would be sent, the issue had been settled by an offer of equipment on the part of Souvanna's Xieng Khouang faction. Since Boun Oum's RLG had made no offer, Mr. Pushkin noted that "as far as the Savannakhet group was concerned . . . this question 'indeed remains obscure.'") (See item 11-13 July 1961.)

(S) Msg, Geneva to SecState, CONFE 260, 22 Jun 61;
(C) Msgs, Geneva to SecState, CONFE 269, 23 Jun 61; CONFE 361, 11 Jul 61.

21, 23
Jun 61

Ambassador Harriman, noting reports from Zurich which indicated Souvanna was proving perhaps more inflexible than Souphanouvong toward the RLG, informed the Secretary
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of State that "Souvanna seems to need some concerted effort, especially on the part of Western friends to:

- a) get him to act like the real neutral he claims to be;
- b) give him the facts of life about Russian tactics, particularly for dumping, once Soviet designs are achieved, those who count on their support; and c) tie in with non-Communists as much as possible, such as inducing non-Communist Lao to join him in a move away from complete dependence on the Pathet Lao." On 22 June, Ambassador Harriman reported to the Secretary of State that he had approached French and British diplomats at Geneva on the subject of influencing Souvanna and expressed the hope that further discussions of this subject would be carried on at Paris and London.

In a further effort to influence Souvanna "Westward," Ambassador Harriman on 23 June requested from the Secretary of State authority to extend to Souvanna a renewed invitation to visit Washington (see item 25 June 1961).

(The US Ambassador at Vientiane, commenting upon Ambassador Harriman's efforts to influence Souvanna, on 23 June informed the Secretary of State that he believed the US soon would have to choose between opposing Souvanna, at the risk of renewed hostilities, or trying "positively to influence him." In making such a decision, Ambassador Brown added, the US would need to know more about Souvanna's real intentions. The Prince could provide this knowledge by stating: 1) whether he still believed that the Pathet Lao should be denied key cabinet posts; 2) in what cabinet position he would accept Phoumi; 3) to what extent he would utilize the services of members of the existing RLG and of neutrals not already aligned with him; and 4) whether he would

accept effective control machinery to protect against Viet Minh interference in Laotian affairs.

The Ambassador then pointed out certain difficulties inherent in supporting Souvanna. The Prince was bitter against the US "because of past experience as he interprets it." A shift of support to Souvanna might so disillusion Phoumi that the latter would renew the fighting. Also, US acceptance of Souvanna as Prime Minister in lieu of Phoumi would raise problems with Thailand and South Viet Nam.

(S) Msgs, Geneva to SecState, CONFE 244, 21 Jun 61; 261, 22 Jun 61; 265, 23 Jun 61; (S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 2321, 23 Jun 61.

22 Jun 61 The US Ambassador at Vientiane reported that the King had informed the French Ambassador that: he 1) fully approved the French drafts submitted to the Geneva Conference (see item 7 June 1961); 2) he would not serve as Prime Minister; and 3) he would accept Souvanna as Prime Minister and Souphanouvong as a member of the cabinet. The King added, however, that any new government would have to be approved by the National Assembly.

(C) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 2306, 22 Jun 61.

22 Jun 61 CINCPAC and UK Admiral Luce met on Okinawa to discuss plans and circumstances for intervention in Laos. The two men agreed, at the start of their conversation, that SEATO Plan 5 should not be "scrapped." CINCPAC termed Plan 5 the "proper vehicle for the contemplated action" and he and Luce agreed that it needed only to be modified to meet the current situation in Laos.

In regard to the terms of reference developed for these conversations (see items 9 and 29 May, 2 and 17 June 1961),

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Admiral Luce emphasized that the UK had not inserted, as a "circumstance of initiation," the agreement of the US and UK on clear failure or Communist violation of cease-fire (see item 2 June 1961) in order to tie the hands of one or the other government, but merely to "strengthen the collective US-UK view." CINCPAC agreed, but emphasized the US fear that SEATO would gain the impression that the US and UK were engaged in the bilateral drafting of a SEATO plan for military action (see item 17 June 1961).

Regarding the military objectives in the terms of reference Admiral Luce stated that the UK considered SEATO would move into only those "key areas" under FAL control. In the UK view, before SEATO could retake "key areas" the FAL had failed to hold, new instructions from the SEATO governments to the SEATO Field Force would be necessary. CINCPAC called this a "disturbing restriction."

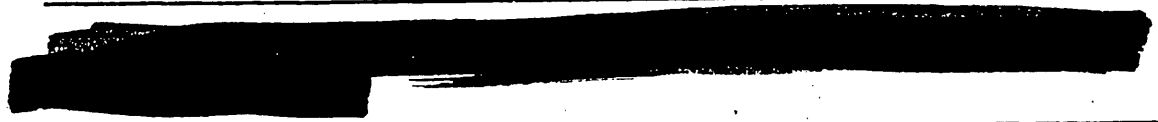
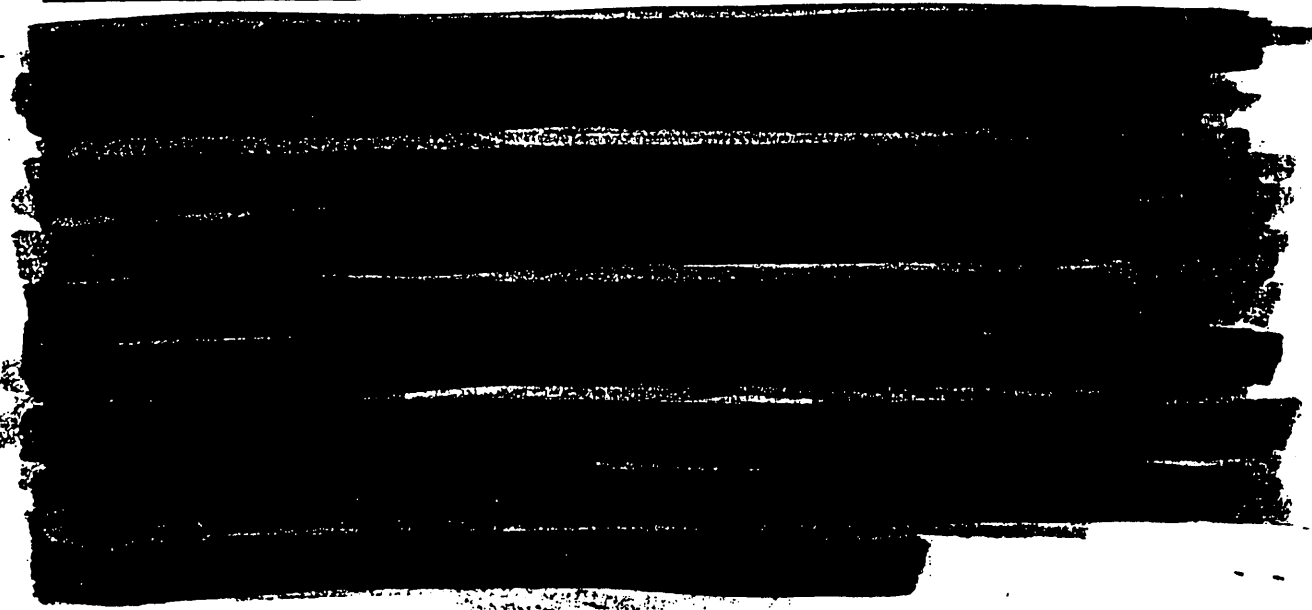
As the conversation continued, Admiral Luce indicated that he considered the reaction to the contingency of substantial DRV reinforcement of the Pathet Lao to be the "key" to any SEATO plan of action in Laos. He felt that if DRV forces crossed into Laos but did not come into contact with SEATO forces, Communist China would remain in the background; but if DRV and SEATO forces did clash, the Chinese would "react positively." CINCPAC thought that the Communists would probably respond initially with "volunteer units" and a world-wide propaganda offensive, or they might initiate a "Plan 5 in reverse" to free the Pathet Lao for combat. The two men agreed that, for any open DRV intervention, the SEATO should grant the DRV no sanctuaries in Laos. Moreover, if the DRV forces were reinforced and threatened SEATO forces or if DRV planes based in North Viet Nam (Luce could agree to these two actions only "militarily";

"militarily"; and he was not optimistic about the chances of securing his government's agreement).

Finally Admiral Luce asked how the modifications needed for Plan 5 would be introduced into SEATO. He was, CINCPAC thought, "feeling out" CINCPAC to see if the US would be willing to introduce the necessary modifications. CINCPAC replied only that the "discussions had been productive" and that the US and UK should individually make recommendations through the SEATO Military Programs Office (MPO) for changes to Plan 5.

(TS) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 231944Z Jun 1961; OCJCS Files, 091-Laos (3).

22 Jun 61



22 Jun 61 In a memorandum to the Secretary of Defense, the JCS, adopting recommendations by CINCPAC and the Laos Country Team, urged that the US avoid recommending force objectives for Laos to the Geneva Conference until such time as the details of any future integration of Lao armed forces had been analyzed. (The JCS, CINCPAC, and Country Team comments had all been occasioned by a 24 May request from the US delegation at Geneva for suggestion:

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on the best organization for a force restricted either to 20,000 or to 10,000 men.) In addition, the JCS thought it neither feasible nor realistic to determine specific force levels and composition of forces until the following unknowns were resolved:

1. Composition of the RLG and its national objectives.
2. Extent of Pathet Lao participation in the government at provincial and lower levels.
3. ICC powers.
4. Method by which the Lao forces would receive military assistance.

If the US remained in Laos and continued to train the FAL, the Chiefs said, the forces objectives should be those already approved for MAP support, FY 63-67: 25,000 regular troops and 16,000 ADC. If, however, the US had to develop a position in which the US presence could not be assumed, and while the negotiations at Geneva were still in progress, only the following "general guidance," as presented by CINCPAC, should be advanced:

a. For a neutral Laos, not antagonistic to the United States and SEATO interests, and not communist-oriented, the future Lao military forces should be capable of reinforcing local civilian security forces and capable of rapid expansion to prevent a communist takeover. A strong military base of operations should be located on the strategic terrain of the Plaine de[s] Jarres.

b. If, however, Laos has a government infiltrated by communists and the Lao Force includes Kong Le and Pathet Lao troops integrated at the battalion level, the Lao Force should be a constabulary type of essentially a police force with a military organization. Its mission should be to maintain order among the various Lao ethnic and political groups.

(See item 6 September 1961.)

(TS) JCSM-426-61 to SecDef, 22 Jun 61, derived from JCS 2344, 19 Jun 61. (TS) Msgs, CINCPAC to JCS, 070207Z Jun 61, and 032307Z Jun 61; (S) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState, 2185, 2 Jun 61; Geneva to SecState, CONFE 49, 24 May 61. All in JMF 9155.2/3100 (6 Jun 61).

At

22 Jun 61 At the conclusion of their four-day meeting at Zurich, Princes Boun Oum, Souvanna, and Souphanouvong issued a joint communique on "the problem of attaining national harmony by forming a national union government." According to the communique, the Princes had agreed on certain aspects of a political program for Laos and upon several "immediate tasks" for the national coalition.

The Princes announced their agreement that a provisional government would be formed by means of direct designation and appointment by the King and that this government would carry out a political program based upon a policy of peace and neutrality. The domestic aspects of the program included implementation of the cease-fire and unification of the factional armies into a single national force. In the realm of foreign affairs, the program forbade participation in, or the acceptance of protection from, any military alliance or coalition. Also prohibited were the use by foreign nations of Laotian soil and the establishment in Laos of foreign military bases, with the understanding that the related aspects of the 1954 Geneva agreements would be "the subject of a special study." Other salient principles for the future conduct of foreign relations were: 1) freedom from foreign interference in Laotian domestic affairs; 2) the withdrawal of all foreign troops and personnel, and a ban against their re-introduction; and 3) acceptance of the "direct, unconditional aid of all countries wishing to help Laos build an independent, autonomous national economy on the basis of respect for the sovereignty of Laos."

The communique also stated that the provisional government would carry out immediately the following tasks: 1) appoint a governmental delegation to participate in the Geneva Conference; 2) carry out the cease-fire and restore peace throughout the kingdom;

kingdom; 3) honor obligations undertaken in the name of Laos at the Geneva Conference and implement agreements by the three Laotian political factions; 4) release all political prisoners; 5) organize general elections; and 6) continue during the transitional period those government agencies established during the hostilities.

(U) Msg, Geneva to SecState, CONFE 264, 23 Jun 61.

23 Jun 61 In a message to the Secretary of State, Ambassador Brown stated that in some of the US position papers on Laos, partition was suggested as a fall-back position preferable to an unsatisfactory coalition government controlling the entire country. In his opinion, an acceptable fall-back position would be difficult, if not impossible, to achieve simply by negotiation in view of the present power realities on the ground.

Though the PL claimed control of almost the entire country, except for "pockets" of land along the Mekong River, the US, Brown felt, could just as confidently claim firm RLG control of certain areas. The RLG had 7,000 to 9,000 troops in various parts of Xieng Khouang and Sam Neua; sizeable areas in the east and north were under firm RLG control; in the south, the situation was precarious.

The US should not, Brown felt, delude itself into thinking that the RLG had a firmly held southern redoubt into which to withdraw. It was unrealistic for the US to think either that the PL would honestly abide by terms of a proposal to withdraw their forces behind their lines, or that the RLG had any greater capacity to hold any partition line sufficiently extended to protect the whole Lao/Thai border, than it had to hold the present cease-fire line.

In

In the Ambassador's view, suggestions for division of the country were unrealistic, and the US should recognize, therefore, that partition did not offer any "easy or peaceful way out."

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 2316, 23 Jun 61.

23 Jun 61 During a conversation in Zurich with the US Embassy Counsellor at Vientiane, Phoumi stated that he was "quite satisfied" with the results of the meeting of the Princes (see item 22 June 1961). He based this feeling of satisfaction on the success of the RLG in participating in the conference and sounding out the opposition without being forced to accept Souvanna as Prime Minister-designate. In Phoumi's opinion, the conference at Zurich had resulted in the acceptance by Souvanna and Souphanouvong of the King's "authority and decision." Phoumi also believed that the conference had served to consolidate the support of some of his former political enemies.

Although satisfied with these aspects of the Zurich meeting, Phoumi admitted that everything hinged upon the formation of a coalition government. The RLG, he added, would never yield to the demands of the other sides that Souvanna be installed as Prime Minister.

(C) US Embassy Counsellor, Vientiane, memo of conversation with Phoumi, 23 Jun 61, OASD (ISA), FER/SEA Branch files.

25 Jun 61 Ambassador Harriman again met with Souvanna, who was pausing in Geneva while en route to Paris after the conclusion of the Zurich meeting. Mr. Harriman suggested that Souvanna make an informal visit to the US, but this suggestion was rejected. In the Ambassador's opinion, Souvanna was confident of becoming Prime Minister in the coalition government and preferred to make a formal visit to the US after assuming office.

Ambassador

Ambassador Harriman also sounded out Souvanna on several other subjects. Among other things, Souvanna expressed a willingness to have Phoumi in the new government, provided that Phoumi would sever his ties with the FAL. Souvanna also stated that the other Princes would have to agree to his candidacy for the office of Prime Minister before he would seek the King's approval, that the King could by pass the National Assembly in appointing a provisional government, and that the problem of a continued French presence would have to be settled bilaterally between Laos and France. Speaking of neighboring countries, Souvanna maintained that the movement of Viet Minh troops through Laos and into South Viet Nam could be stopped once a neutral Laos had been established. In response to various statements by the Ambassador, Souvanna expressed a lack of confidence in the effectiveness of the ICC, showed a realization of his kingdom's need for economic aid, and stated that he owed no political debts to the Communists.

(S) Msgs, Geneva to SecState, CONFE 277, 25 Jun 61; 278, 26 Jun 61; 285, 26 Jun 61; 287, 26 Jun 61.

26 Jun 61 The Director of Military Assistance, OASD (ISA), adopting a 22 June recommendation by the JCS, approved, subject only to "possible minor changes," the first Joint Table of Distribution (JTD) for MAAG Laos. The JTD called for 253 US military spaces. This JTD, proposed by CHMAAG Laos on 14 April, had been endorsed by CINCPAC on 17 May with some modifications: the addition of 7 spaces and the conversion of most US civilian spaces to US military spaces. The JTD equalled almost exactly the number of personnel then assigned either PCS or TDY to the MAAG, the CHMAAG had said in proposing it. It did not include personnel spaces for the White Star Mobile Training Teams (WSMTT) presently operating in Laos (see item 22 August 1961).

Special

(S) Ltr, CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC, w/encl 14 Apr 61, and 1st Ind, CINCPAC to JCS, 17 May 61. (S) JCSM-424-41 to SecDef, 22 Jun 61, derived from JCS 1849/508, 16 Jun 61. (S) 1st N/H of JCS 1849/508, 28 Jun 61. All in JMF 1040.1 (14 Apr 61).

27 Jun 61 Special National Intelligence Estimate 10-2-61 estimated as "unlikely" a major military intervention in Southeast Asia during the next few months by either North Viet Nam or Communist China. The Chinese Communists, despite their obduracy at Geneva and ambiguous "intervention" statements, were not making any military deployments to south China. Furthermore, China's own economic crisis would discourage any major military adventure at this time; and such an adventure would be out of character with China's projection of a "reasonable" image in Southeast Asia. Neither was the DRV, progressing as it was with its present tactics of subversion and guerrilla warfare, likely to shift to conventional attack. If, however, in the absence of a firm Geneva agreement, US forces were introduced into Laos, the Bloc reaction would be "strong" (as described in detail by SNIE 58-2-61; see item 5 July 1961).

(TS) SNIE 10-2-61, 27 Jun 61; J-2 Secretariat.

27 Jun 61 The Secretary of State informed the US Consul General at Geneva that the US had decided to table at the Geneva Conference a draft protocol providing for the retention of the French military presence in Laos because of "our conclusion that this is the only feasible course of action at present as giving us both credit with the French and a good tactical position at the conference."

Nevertheless, the Secretary of State continued, there remained certain "misgivings" regarding French performance.

Thus,

Thus, the US was "not prepared to pay too high a price" for continuation of the French presence, nor did the US consider that its commitment to the French on this issue was "unlimited." The misgivings referred to by Secretary Rusk were: 1) a lack of conviction that France was willing to maintain a first-class military mission over the long run; 2) realization that FAL resentment of the French might make France's task "next to impossible"; and 3) the possibility that the "supporting [of the] French" by the US might increase Thai and Vietnamese suspicions of US intentions (see items 1 and 3 June 1961).

If the French role in Laos became an issue at Geneva, the Secretary of State believed that the US should remain flexible enough to permit the acceptance, as a compromise solution, of the presence of a neutral military mission, preferably one provided by an Asia nation, possibly India.

(S) Msg, State to Geneva, FECON 190, 27 Jun 61.

27 Jun 61 Boun Oum and Phoumi called upon US Consul General Martin in Geneva. Phoumi observed that during the Zurich discussions (see item 22 June 1961) Souvanna and Souphanouvong had behaved toward Boun Oum as victors toward the vanquished. In spite of this, Phoumi believed that the RLG faction had won from the opposition at least an acknowledgement of the powers of the Laotian constitution and of the King. If, however, there were to be meaningful negotiations, the existing military imbalance in favor of the Pathet Lao would have to be remedied. In this regard, Phoumi did not believe that the presence in Laos of friendly foreign troops would be necessary, provided that the US emphasized that any Communist military offensive would be met by force.

Upon

Upon being questioned about Souvanna's freedom of action, Phoumi expressed his belief that Souvanna depended completely upon Souphanouvong's military and political support.

Consul General Martin interpreted the conversations to mean that Phoumi desired assurance of US military backing if the RLG and the King should decide to reject a compromise with Souvanna.

(On 28 June, Ambassador Brown commented from Vientiane on the issues raised by Phoumi's conversation, as interpreted by the Consul General at Geneva. Ambassador Brown could not accept Phoumi's opinion that the military equilibrium could be restored without the introduction into Laos of foreign troops. The Ambassador also doubted that the presence of American forces at a few key points along the Mekong would enable the ill-trained FAL to undertake major offensive or defensive operations. Moreover, the US could not be sure that the enemy would remain idle in the event that American troops were deployed along the Mekong. Thus, in the Ambassador's opinion, the US should be prepared to fight "at least a Korean type and perhaps a larger war," before intervening or threatening to intervene.

The Ambassador admitted that the US faced risks in cooperating with Souvanna. He believed, however, that cooperating with Phoumi also entailed risks, for example the possibility that he might seek the partition of the kingdom.

In conclusion, Ambassador Brown pointed out the importance of defining US objectives and actions before promising military aid to Phoumi and the need to establish the "firmest possible political base for . . . military action before undertaking it."

(TS) Msgs, Geneva to SecState, CONF 288, 27 Jun 61;
Vientiane to SecState, 2332, 28 Jun 61.

The

28 Jun 61 The Secretary of State, in a message to the American Embassy at Paris, observed that the Zurich communique (see item 22 June 1961) had disclosed major concessions on the part of Boun Oum. These concessions were the rejection of SEATO protection, a failure to refer to the need for effective control machinery, and the acceptance of direct economic aid from all countries. The Secretary of State added, however, that the communique could not be implemented unless the King bypassed the assembly to form a coalition government. Both the King's agreement to this political procedure and Souvanna's ability to form a balanced coalition seemed "questionable."

(C) Msg, State to Paris, TOPOL PRIORITY 1856, 28 Jun 61.

28 Jun 61 The White House promulgated National Security Action Memorandum No. 57, containing approved US policy on the conduct of paramilitary operations in the Cold War. By the provisions of this policy, the Department of Defense would "normally" be responsible for overt paramilitary operations and for any paramilitary operation, [REDACTED] that required significant numbers of trained military personnel, amounts of equipment in excess of normal [REDACTED] stocks, or "military experience of a kind and level peculiar to the Armed Services." [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] (See item 28 July 1961 for the effect of this new policy upon planning for Meo operations in Laos.)

(S) NSAM No. 57, 28 Jun 61, encl to JCS 1969/217, 6 Jul 61; JMF 3310 (18 Jun 61).

28 Jun 61 The JCS forwarded to the Secretary of Defense a proposed "US Policy for Laos," which they recommended be approved for use during

during Phoumi's impending visit to Washington (see item 29, 30 June 1961). The JCS recommended that the US objective in Laos should remain "an independent and neutral Laos, tied to no outside power or group of powers, threatened by no one and free from any domination." The conditions essential to the achievement of this objective were, the JCS said: 1) a legally-constituted non-Communist government able to maintain the stated objective; 2) an effective cease-fire; 3) effective international machinery to maintain the peace; and 4) economic and technical development for Laos. The US would continue negotiations toward these ends but would, if political negotiation failed, undertake military operations in Laos, either through SEATO, with those SEATO members prepared to participate, or unilaterally.

The JCS posed two further conditions for US intervention: 1) the RLG must request SEATO or US intervention; and 2) the FAL would fight. If the intervention occurred, its objectives would be: 1) to secure the key Mekong Valley centers and the lines of communication connecting them; 2) to assist the FAL in regaining lost areas; 3) to prevent Laos being overrun by the Communists and to keep an RLG in being on Lao soil; and 4) to permit, by the achievement of a substantial military position on the ground, successful political negotiations for a unified, independent, and neutral Laos.

(TS) JCASM-442-61 to SecDef, 28 Jun 61, derived from JCS 2344/2, 28 Jun 61; both in JMF 9155.2/3100 (28 Jun 61).

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Jun 61

US Consul General Martin reported from Geneva that the Communists were planning to reap a propaganda harvest from the Zurich communique (see item 22 June 1961) by creating the
impression

impression that this joint statement represented a significant reconciliation on the part of the three Princes. Mr. Martin suggested that, since the US delegation at Geneva could not effectively counteract this sort of propaganda, the Communist interpretation be put to a test. The Department of State might discuss with Ambassador Harriman and with Phoumi a plan whereby the King would summon the Princes to Luang Prabang for the purpose of forming a provisional government. The Consul General believed that Souvanna and Souphanouvong would reject the invitation, thus lessening the effectiveness of Communist propaganda and providing the King with justification to appoint a government of his own choosing, a regime that could be either neutral or militantly anti-Communist as circumstances might dictate.

On 29 June, the US Ambassador at Vientiane informed the Secretary of State that he agreed with Consul General Martin's suggestion that Phoumi try to convince the King to call a meeting of the Princes. Ambassador Brown doubted, however, that Souvanna and Souphanouvong would flatly refuse a royal invitation. Instead, they probably would call for a postponement.

The Ambassador also warned against counting upon the cooperation of the King. In his opinion, the King would not designate a provisional government unacceptable to the Pathet Lao. "As for Prime Minister," Ambassador Brown concluded, "I am convinced our choice is now Souvanna or military action."

(S) Msg, Geneva to SecState, CONF 295, 28 Jun 61; (S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 2334, 29 Jun 61.

29 Jun 61 The National Security Council "discussed the Laos situation on the basis of a report by the Secretary of State, supplemented by Ambassador Harriman's summary of current negotiations in Geneva."

On

(S) NSC Action No. 2433, 29 Jun 61, in JCS Cont. Div.

29, 30
Jun 61

On 29 June Phoumi Nosavan visited Washington to confer with the President and other US officials. In the first day of discussions, Phoumi reiterated his view (see item 23 June 1961) that the RLG had not made important concessions in the formulation of the Zurich communique (see item 22 June 1961). He emphasized again that the final sentence of the communique had placed the entire fate of the country in the hands of the King, but he warned that the King would be reluctant to take action implementing the communique until he knew more precisely what the US would do under various possible future circumstances.

Later on the 29th, the Secretary of State stated frankly to Phoumi current US policy on Laos. The new Administration had not been able, the Secretary stated initially, to change abruptly the earlier US policy that a peaceful solution should be obtained without the commitment of US troops. Not only were US and world public opinion unprepared for such a move, but, more important, the specter of World War III hovered over all policy deliberation on Laos. It was the tragedy of the Lao, the Secretary said, that they were involved at all, where they had no place, in a confrontation of the great powers.

Nonetheless, the Secretary continued, the US was aware that it had undertaken to do its utmost to prevent a Communist takeover, out of quite valid concern for the Lao themselves, for the future of Southeast Asia, and for US world prestige. There were circumstances, then, when the US would find it necessary to commit its own forces to the defense of Lao independence. But it was impossible to state precisely and in advance, as Phoumi apparently wished the US to do, what these circumstances

circumstances would be; this would amount, the Secretary stated, to delegating to the RLG responsibility for the policy and decisions of the US. But some of the RLG's uncertainty in conducting its policies could perhaps, the Secretary suggested, be removed by daily contact between the RLG and US, so that full and frank expressions of thoughts and intentions could continually be had.

The Secretary then renewed his advice (see item 13 May 1961) that the RLG not make premature concessions in its negotiations with the enemy. It was the "historical moment," the Secretary continued, for the King to exercise a greater degree of direct influence. The Lao had great respect for the King, the Secretary knew, and the King might be reluctant to risk the institution of the monarchy; but there were times "when respect could be safeguarded by appropriate actions." Clearly, the Secretary concluded, there would be no place for the King in a Communist Laos. In reply, Phoumi simply said again that the lack of clarity in the US position made action by the King difficult.

On 30 June, in conversation with the President, he tried again to gain definite US commitments for defined circumstances. The President, however, repeated the sentiments of the Secretary of State. Although the US would always be influenced by Phoumi's judgment, the President said, the US must nonetheless evaluate the continuing developments and act in the light of existing circumstances.

(See items 1, 3, and 8 July 1961.)

(S) MemCons; Phoumi et al. and Under SecState (PA) et al., 29 Jun 61; Phoumi and SecState, 29 Jun 61; Phoumi and Pres, 30 Jun 61. All in OASD (ISA) FER/SEA Br. Files. (S) Msg, SecState to Vientiane, 001, 1 Jul 61.

Ambassador

20 Jun 61 Ambassador Gavin reported that Souvanna Phouma had opened their conversation that morning by saying he had "regretfully" decided that, at the present time, he could not accept Ambassador Harriman's invitation to visit Washington (see item 25 June 1961). The principal reason expressed by Souvanna for declining was the lack of time. However, another reason which emerged later in the conversation and which, in Ambassador Gavin's opinion, was probably equally influential in his decision, was Phoumi's presence in Washington; for Souvanna had stated he did not want to give the impression that the fate of Laos was being decided in the United States.

(C) Msg, Paris to SecState, 5803, 30 Jun 61.

30 Jun 61 Total US economic aid to Laos for the period FY 1955 through 30 June 1961 amounted to almost \$264 million. About 99% of this assistance was in grants from the Mutual Security Program with the small balance coming from relief programs provided for in PL 480. US economic assistance to Laos for Fiscal Years 1955-1961 is shown below:

(Millions of dollars)

Total economic grant-aid	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	Total
	40.9	49.5	44.5	31.7	25.5	42.3	32.7	263.9

Of the \$32.7 million in obligations and loan authorizations for 1961, \$30.8 million had been earmarked for "supporting assistance." Of the \$263.9 million seven-year total, \$250 million had been programmed for this same purpose.

The amount programmed for Laos for FY 1961 represented approximately 4% of the US obligations and loan authorizations for the entire Far East region during that year. A comparison of economic aid to Laos from FY 1955 through FY 1961 with the program

program for the entire Far East region during those same years discloses that Laos received roughly the same percentage of the over-all total.

According to data prepared by AID for presentation to Congress, almost \$39 million in economic assistance had been programmed for FY 1962; the FY 1963 program was estimated to be about \$40 million.

From FY 1950 through FY 1961, US aid to Laos under the Military Assistance Program reached a cumulative total of \$106.1 million. Of this amount, \$104.5 million was expended. In addition, Laos actually received from excess US stocks items with a total value at acquisition of \$13.9 million.

According to statistics prepared by the Agency for International Development, slightly less than 6% of the military assistance programmed for the Far East region during FY 1961 was scheduled for Laos. From FY 1955 through FY 1961, however, only about 2.3% of the cumulative total for the Far East region was programmed for Laos. Included in these statistics were grants, loans, and other military assistance.

The authorized FY 1961 military assistance program for Laos was \$32.5 million in military aid plus \$2.7 million from excess US stocks without charge to MAP-appropriated funds. According to figures prepared by DOD for submission to Congress, the estimated expenditures and deliveries during FY 1961 were \$46.5 million in military aid along with \$.8 million from excess stocks.

Programmed for FY 1962, as of 4 January of that year, were \$62 million in military aid and \$1.5 million from excess stocks, while \$32.7 million in aid and \$.8 million from excess stocks were proposed for FY 1963.

In

In terms of key end-items, MAP aid to Laos, 1950-1962, was broken down as follows:

Items	Programmed			Estimated
	1950-1961	1961	*1962	deliveries and expenditures 1950-1961
C-47 aircraft	9	1	1	9
L-19 aircraft	6	2	1	6
L-20 aircraft	9	-	4	9
H-19 & H-34 helicopters	-	9	2	-
Tank, light	5	-	21	5
APC	5	-	-	5
1/4-ton truck	728	30	18	728
3/4-ton truck	449	40	1	449
2 1/2-ton truck	1,251	23	81	1,251
4 to 6-ton truck	26	-	-	26
75 mm rifle	15	6	45	15
105 mm howitzer	27	-	-	27
60 mm mortar	157	87	450	157
81 mm mortar	78	59	44	78
4.2-inch mortar	11	5	-	11
Carbine	24,164	22,719	331	12,764
Rifle	10,819	5,406	7,943	10,819
Cal. 30 machine gun	546	101	220	306
3.5 rocket launcher	110	243	340	110

*As of 4 January 1962.

Agency for International Development statistics compiled at the close of FY 1961 offered the following information on the finances of the Lao Government:

	(Millions of dollars)		
	1960	1961	1962 (Budget)
Total Expenditures	38.8	41.7	48.7
(Defense Expenditures)	(21.1)	(25.5)	(28.7)
(Capital Outlays)	(2.1)	(2.0)	(2.3)
Domestic Revenues	8.3	5.7	9.7
Budget Receipts from Non-US Foreign Aid	0.5	0.3	0.4
Budget Receipts from US Aid (Grants and Loans)	30.2	32.0	35.3
Remaining Deficit (-) or Surplus (+)	+0.2	-3.7	-3.3

Agency for International Development, (U) "US Foreign Assistance and Assistance from International Organizations-July 1, 1941 to June 30, 1961;" (C) "Proposed Regional Programs for Fiscal Year 1963," Vol. IV. Military Assistance Program, (S/NOFORN) "Fiscal Year 1962 Estimates;" (S/NOFORN) "Fiscal Year 1963 Estimates."

Returning

1 Jul 61 Returning to Laos from the US (see item 29-30 June 1961), Phoumi stopped in Hawaii for a conversation with CINCPAC. Phoumi told CINCPAC that he foresaw two possible results of the next three--Princes' meeting: 1) a coalition in which the PL and Souvanna predominated; or 2) a coalition under the King (which Phoumi claimed the King had already agreed to). If the PL and Souvanna would not accept the latter solution, hostilities might then resume; but the FAL, having improved its training and re-equipped during the cease-fire, was prepared.

Phoumi stated that he had eight Groupements Mobiles (GM) deployed for defense: five south of the Nam Ca Dinh; and three in north Laos - one at Luang Prabang, one at Vientiane, and one in reserve. When hostilities resumed, again Phoumi saw two possible phases of action: the first without Thai and South Vietnamese assistance for the FAL; the second, with. In the first phase, the FAL would hold southern Laos and conduct limited guerrilla actions in the north; Vientiane and Luang Prabang might or might not be held. In the second phase, the Thai and South Vietnamese would occupy southern Laos, freeing the bulk of the FAL for action in the north. If, at this point, the DRV did not reinforce the PL, then the FAL could "manage" the situation in northern Laos. Even if the DRV did send in troops, the FAL formations would offer more effective resistance in the north than would guerrillas.

If hostilities were not resumed and a coalition government was formed, Phoumi continued, he expected a Souvanna-PL effort to reduce anti-Communist strength by reducing the FAL. The Souvanna-PL forces would however, Phoumi said, maintain their own clandestine elements. To counter this, Phoumi was
preparing

preparing the formation of a non-Communist clandestine force (see item 2 September 1961).

In conclusion, Phoumi asked for CINCPAC's approval of these plans. CINCPAC did not give his approval, but he did urge Phoumi to start improving his logistics system by appointing a general officer as Chief of Logistics.

(See item 6 July 1961 for CHMAAG's comments on Phoumi's statements and plans. See item 8 July for final comment on Phoumi's impression of the results of his conversations with US officials.)

(S) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 031845Z Jun 61.

2 Jul 61 Ambassador Galbraith informed the Secretary of State that Indian Foreign Secretary Desai had expressed the opinion that the important thing to consider in a future Lao government was to "build up the center." Instead of balancing so many "left" against so many "right," the policy must be to cut down the number at the extremes and get the maximum number who would build up Souvanna.

Galbraith had also met with Defense Minister Menon who stated that it was "vital to get Laos settled before Vietnam blows." The best next step, he strongly emphasized, was for the US to use its influence in Vientiane and with the King to expedite the formation of a coalition government along the lines of the Zurich protocol. Menon also stated that Souvanna, whatever his merits and demerits, was the "only possibility."

Later in the conversation Menon expressed the opinion that the cease-fire would not be entirely effective prior to the forming of a coalition government and the merging of the
armies

armies; "otherwise one side or the other," and the PL in particular, would not resist the temptation to clean up the pockets.

Galbraith, raising the subject of the ICC, made his "usual point" that in the absence of effective Lao sovereignty, the ICC had to be strong. Menon objected to the use of the word "strong," and substituted "effective." By "effective" Menon meant that the ICC would have "control" of the borders and mobile teams to report on guerrilla or "other" threats to law and order.

(S) Msgs, New Delhi to SecState, 7, 8, 2 Jul 61.

3 Jul 61 The Acting Secretary of Defense, replying to, inter alia, a JCS memorandum on the use of nuclear weapons against Communist China (see item 15 June 1961), noted that it had been clear for some time that, as stated by the JCS, US capability in Southeast Asia was adversely affected by inadequacies in logistics, air fields, and lines of communication. The JCS were therefore requested to provide "specific data on the requirements for, and order of magnitude costs of, the logistic, airfield, and communication improvements needed in Southeast Asia" (see item 6 October 1961).

(TS) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 3 Jul 61, att to JCS 2118/157, 7 Jul 61; JMF 9150/4000 (3 Jul 61).

3 Jul 61 Ambassador Harriman, in an hour's conversation in Paris, discussed with Souvanna the integration of Lao forces, the importance of the ICC, Souvanna's candidacy for the office of Prime Minister, the continued French presence in Laos,

and

and other related matters.

The US Ambassador informed the Secretary of State that Souvanna shared the US concern over possible domination by the Pathet Lao of a unified Lao Army. Souvanna believed that precautions in this regard would have to be taken when the factional contingents were integrated (see item 15-17 September 1961).

Ambassador Harriman also reported that he had outlined for Souvanna the US position that a strong and effective ICC could aid Laos in maintaining its neutrality and independence. Souvanna, according to the Ambassador, expressed agreement, stating by way of elaboration that such an ICC would require large numbers of men along with its own helicopters and other means of transportation. Souvanna, however, did not believe that fixed control posts would be effective in a country as large as Laos. Instead, the Prince thought the ICC should be stationed at Vientiane where it could be informed by the Lao Government of matters that might require investigation. Turning to other aspects of the US position, Souvanna stated that an independent ICC, capable of acting without permission from the Lao Government, would be an infringement on Lao sovereignty. He added, however, that the ICC should not be supervised by the Geneva co-Chairmen and that the ICC should police the Laotian elections.

When Souvanna asked if the US was prepared to support his candidacy for the office of Prime Minister, Ambassador Harriman declined to make a direct reply, stating instead that the US was concerned about the role of the Pathet Lao in his proposed government and the type of men he would include in his cabinet. Souvanna thereupon observed that possibly Souphanouvong might not be included in the government. As

examples

examples of good men, Souvanna listed Quinim Pholsena, Sissamang Sisalemqak, Khamsouk Keoula, and Pheng Phongsavan, all of whom Harriman understood to have been "considered pretty close to the Pathet Lao."

Concerning the continued French presence, Souvanna said that the status of the Seno base would have to be altered but that the general provisions of the 1954 accord could be maintained with some modifications.

(S) Msg, Paris to SecState, 22, 3 Jul 61.

3, 5
Jul 61

Ambassador Brown travelled to Luang Prabang to inform the King of the course of Phoumi's discussions in Washington (see item 29, 30 June 1961). Expanding upon the Secretary's exhortation to Phoumi that the King take an active part in the formation of a coalition government, Brown urged that the King invite the three parties to confer in Luang Prabang so that he could exercise his great influence toward the formation of an acceptable government. Otherwise, Brown feared, Souvanna and Souphanouvong would attempt to extract concessions from the RLG and then come to Luang Prabang and present the King with a fait accompli.

The King did not accede to Brown's request, however, stating that, to the Laotian mind, such an invitation to Souvanna and Souphanouvong would confer great status upon them. In view of this factor, the King said, he would have to consider Brown's recommendation very carefully.

At another place in the course of this conversation with Ambassador Brown, the King emphasized the value of local aid projects in securing the loyalty of Lao people; he attributed much of the past success of the Pathet Lao

to

to their skillful use of such tools. Ambassador Brown agreed, and the Department of State reacted, on 5 July, by asking Brown for a Country Team report on further nonmilitary aid efforts that could usefully be undertaken in Laos (see item 21 July 1961).

(S) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState, 005, 3 Jul 61; 008, 4 Jul 61; SecState to Vientiane, 020, 5 Jul 61.

3, 7
Jul 61

US-French conversations on the continuation of the French military presence in Laos took place in both Washington and Paris. On 3 July, French Counselor Winckler called at the request of the Department of State to confer with the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs. During the discussion, Assistant Secretary McConaughy informed the French diplomat that the US believed "the French role might well be decisive in retaining Western influence after a Geneva settlement" and then posed seven questions previously prepared by the Department of State. Although Counselor Winckler did not attempt to answer the questions, agreeing instead to refer them to Paris, he did state that maintaining a French military mission would be "difficult 'even with Souvanna.'"

Also on 3 July, Ambassadors Harriman and Gavin called upon the French Foreign Minister in Paris. The US diplomats were told, among other things, that Souvanna had accepted the continuation of the French military presence in Laos. The French Foreign Minister also agreed that in Geneva the West should take a strong position, insisting upon adequate authority and equipment for the ICC and upon enforcement of the cease-fire. He further believed that the West should be firm in negotiations regarding the long-term authority of the

ICC

ICC but doubted that much progress could be made on this matter until a coalition government had been agreed upon. Finally, the Foreign Minister, after agreeing to use French influence with Souvanna "in an attempt to pull him out of Communistic clutches," made it clear to the Americans that he believed "Souvanna's Prime Ministership was the only course open."

As a result of the 3 July discussion in Paris, Ambassador Gavin on 7 July called upon the Director, Asian Affairs, of the French Foreign Office. This conversation dealt with the questions (see item 20 June 1961) prepared by the Department of State in order to determine French plans for continuing the military mission to Laos. These questions, according to Ambassador Gavin, were answered as follows:

1) Composition and mission of Lao forces. The Director, Asian Affairs, tentatively favored an "army of gendarmerie type to be exclusively for internal security purposes."

2) Type of training. This was considered a "'technical-administrative problem,'" involving the establishment of confidence in the army, the abolition of corruption, the establishment of a network of training posts, and a consideration for the rights of minority groups. It was considered obvious, however, that the reconstituted army should be lightly armed, mobile, and trained in anti-guerrilla operations.

3) The type and size of the mission. Although an increase in both funds and personnel had been approved even before the outbreak of the Laotian civil war, the exact type and size of the mission was not yet decided.

4) The type of equipment for Lao forces. This problem remained to be studied.

5) The

5) The financing of the mission. This subject, too, remained to be studied, although it already was recognized that close cooperation with the US would be necessary.

6) The potential capability of Lao troops and officers. The Director, Asian Affairs, regarded Lao soldiers "as 'not bad' if well-officered," but he was "a bit skeptical regarding the war-like qualities of the Lao people." He believed that the future capability of Lao officers and men would "depend to a great extent on their political appreciation of the role they are playing."

7) The prevention of Communist subversion. Although the Director, Asian Affairs, recognized that this was a serious problem, he admitted that further study would be necessary.

(On 24 July, after the Foreign Minister had told the French National Assembly that France was willing to continue military assistance to Laos, an official of the American Embassy approached the Director, Asian Affairs, for further details concerning the military mission and the reconstituted Lao Army. The US diplomat was told that "no firm conclusions have as yet been reached as the situation at Geneva is still too tenuous." The Director, Asian Affairs, also expressed apprehension that the Geneva Conference ultimately would decide that "membership in SEATO and the provision of military training by a SEATO member were incompatible with Lao neutrality.")

(S) Msg, State to Paris, 67, 5 Jul 61; (S) Msgs, Paris to SecState, 7, 3 Jul 61; 92, 7 Jul 61; 404, 25 Jul 61.

5 Jul 61 Special National Intelligence Estimate 58-2-61, prepared at the behest of the Department of State, addressed the following two problems:

1. The

1. The consequences for South Viet Nam and Southeast Asia of predominately Communist control of southern Laos. The fall of southern Laos would radically increase the difficulties of the non-Communist position in Southeast Asia generally and South Viet Nam particularly. But in both cases, the fall of southern Laos would not of itself open the way to eventual Communist domination. The nature and amount of US support and the future internal and external actions of the respective governments would, in the long term, be the primary determinants of the future of the area.

2. The consequences of the following courses of action:

Course A: A coordinated South Vietnamese-Thai-RLG military action, beginning gradually and on a small scale, designed to secure the Savannakhet-Tchepone-Lao Bao line (Route 9) and extending eventually to a cleanup of southern Laos.

Course B: In conjunction with Course A, temporary US occupation of Vientiane, Thakhek, and Savannakhet, together with coordinated actions by Thai, Lao, and Meo troops in the Mekong Valley and northern Laos.

The Communists would probably contest Course A with whatever force they deemed necessary to resist it, including unacknowledged DRV forces. They would probably announce that the non-Communists had broken the cease-fire, and would probably resume military operations throughout Laos. If this initial response did not succeed, they would probably further expand operations and attempt seizure of Vientiane, Luang Prabang, and other key points; DRV regulars might at this point be overtly committed. Meanwhile, the DRV would continue to infiltrate South Viet Nam through Laos but probably would not, for fear of large-scale US counteraction, openly attack

South

South Viet Nam. Chinese Communist forces would not be introduced into either Laos or South Viet Nam at this stage.

Against Course B, the PL, supported by the Bloc, would probably attempt to confine US and allied control to the population centers, harassing supply lines and engaging in terrorism and sabotage, and attempt to destroy RLG control elsewhere. Dependent upon the size and apparent intent of the US interventions, the DRV might be overtly introduced, but DRV troops would, at least initially, avoid direct engagement with US forces. If, however, Communist-controlled Laos were threatened during extended US-PL clashes, then direct US-DRV engagement would probably result. The Chinese Communists might possibly intervene in this circumstance and would almost certainly do so if the DRV were threatened with defeat.

The RLG, for its part, would be reluctant to accede to Course A unless US forces also participated. They would recognize that Course A implied surrender of northern Laos and failed still to guarantee that the US would intervene to save the RLG. Phoumi, moreover, would realize that acceptance of this course would destroy his hopes for a political future in any neutralist Laotian government. Nevertheless, with sufficient US urging, the RLG would probably accept Course A. In so urging, the US should, however, recognize that the failure of Course A would bring about a "considerable chance" that RLG resistance to Communist pressures would evaporate. The RLG leaders would strongly prefer that Courses A and B be undertaken concurrently; most of them would welcome Course B.

The Thai and South Vietnamese would also welcome Course B. The latter would also agree without hesitation to Course A, but the Thai would agree only reluctantly to a course that benefited only South Viet Nam, leaving Thailand open to Communist retaliation. Of the SEATO members, France would

would most strongly oppose both courses. The UK would also oppose, at least while the Geneva Conference continued, and the remainder of the SEATO nations would applaud. Among the Asian states, India, Cambodia, Burma, and Malaya would almost certainly criticize either course, but the Nationalist Chinese would support either.

The Sino-Soviet Bloc would be likely to consider either course as "not vital to their own interests." They would believe themselves able to deny the US its objectives and would consequently probably leave to the US any decision to expand hostilities. There would be in the envisaged allied actions, however, constant danger of expansion. US threats to launch air attacks on North Viet Nam would probably not be taken seriously, unless there were evidences that the US was preparing a major military effort in Southeast Asia. On the other hand, an actual US air attack would provoke a strong Bloc response and "an entirely new crisis situation," which--the possibility could not be ruled out--the Chinese might consider a major threat to their security and which, consequently, might bring about major Chinese military action in Laos or elsewhere.

The envisaged courses of action could not, the SNIE continued, effectively curtail Communist infiltration of South Viet Nam; only a "major military operation" involving substantial South Vietnamese and possibly US forces could achieve this objective. The planned Thai, South Vietnamese, and Lao forces could hinder but not curtail the infiltration. Furthermore, neither action would solve the problem of Viet Cong success in recruiting the majority of their strength locally in South Viet Nam.

Course

Course A in its initial inconspicuous phase would probably have little effect on the Geneva Conference. Course B or the advanced stages of Course A might cause the Communists to withdraw from the Conference; more likely, however, they would continue to sit, using the Conference as a platform for castigating the US. Neither course would, the SNIE concluded, exert significant pressure toward making the Communists more reasonable at the conference table.

Neither, finally, would the status of the Geneva negotiations have great bearing on Communist responses in Laos. The situation in Laos and world reaction to the US-backed actions would play far greater part in Communist decisions.

(TS) SNIE 58-2-61, 5 Jul 61; J-2 Secretariat.

6 Jul 61 The Indian Ambassador in Laos, Ratnam, informed Ambassador Brown that, during a meeting with Boun Oum, the Laotian leader had said that if negotiations either between the three Princes or at Geneva broke down, the best solution would be to partition Laos. This could be done, Boun Oum was reported to have said, by either drawing a line across the narrow neck of the kingdom, thereby holding only the southern part of Laos, or by drawing a line roughly down the middle of the country along the approximate boundary between areas controlled by the two sides.

Ratnam also reported that the last time he had seen Souphanouvong in Xieng Khouang, the latter had declared that partition was one thing that he would "absolutely fight to prevent."

(C) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 19, 6 Jul 61.

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6 Jul 61 The French Minister of Foreign Affairs, in a letter to the Secretary of State, asked if it were "possible to maintain . . . , from Iran to northern Japan, positions of strength that require a tremendous effort at a time when the American atomic monopoly no longer exists." This, he continued, was in essence the subject of all past French-US discussions on Laos. Apart from intervention by the Chinese Communists, in which case military intervention by the West would be immediately necessary and justified, France believed that the West's efforts should be limited to political, cultural, and economic means with the least possible interference with a nation's internal policies. It was in this spirit that France remained in Laos, Cambodia, and South Viet Nam, and France believed it would in the long run exert a considerable influence by such means. Thus, France was willing to accept the neutralization of Laos and Cambodia, if not of South Viet Nam, which constituted a special case.

In the opinion of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the partition of Laos was out of the question, for the Communists would not accept it. Since no agreement could be reached at Geneva unless a single Lao Government was formed, the West should make the best of a bad situation by promoting a unified government headed by Souvanna.

The chief difficulty at Geneva, the Minister of Foreign Affairs predicted, would be the competence and powers of the ICC. In this regard, he expressed his belief that a continuation of the French presence in Laos would provide a more effective guarantee for the West than would a continuation of an ICC upon which Poland, India, and Canada were represented.

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(S) Ltr, French Minister of Foreign Affairs to SecState, 6 Jul 61, OASD (ISA), FER/SEA Branch file.

6 Jul 61 At CINCPAC's request, CHMAAG Laos commented upon the statements and plans advanced to CINCPAC by Phoumi on 1 July (see item). CHMAAG considered that, on the whole, Phoumi's comments had been "misleading and over optimistic," if applied to the current situation or the immediate future. "Not by any stretch of the imagination," CHMAAG said, was the FAL adequately trained or capably led. The effectiveness of Phoumi's eight GM would be "practically negated" by poor leadership unless they were cadred from outside sources. In the matter of equipment, there were still general deficiencies in crew-served weapons, and a poor logistics system. (CHMAAG concurred in CINCPAC's suggestion to Phoumi that a general officer be appointed Chief of Logistics.) Furthermore, Phoumi's artillery was not as well prepared as the Laotian had intimated, and his Savannakhet airfield was suitable for heavy aircraft only during the dry season.

Concerning Phoumi's concept of operations, CHMAAG felt that the FAL unassisted could probably hold the area south of the Nam Ca Dinh against the PL-Souvanna forces, as Phoumi planned, but the introduction of Viet Minh forces would immediately render this capability questionable. Regarding Phoumi's plans for defense of the north, with Thai and South Vietnamese forces holding the South, CHMAAG said, there was no indication that the FAL would be any more effective than it had been in the past. And Phoumi's clandestine army, planned for use after a coalition government was in office, remained a very nebulous concept (see item 5 September 1961).

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(S) Msg, CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC, DA IN 128621, 7 Jul 61.

7 Jul 61 The Chairman, JCS, in response to a request made at the 29 June NSC meeting (see item), furnished to the President an estimate of the current capabilities of the FAL. Following closely in substance and language a CHMAAG report of 1 July, the Chairman evaluated the FAL as follows:

1. At the time of the cease-fire, it had been estimated that the enemy could advance against the FAL on any front without encountering effective resistance. Although progress had since been made in the manning, equipping, and training of the FAL, deficiencies still existed in leadership, supply, and morale; furthermore, the enemy was also improving his capability. Thus, the FAL, without outside military assistance could not yet offer more than a delaying action to an enemy attack.

2. The MAAG had initiated, since the cease-fire, an intensive training program. To date, one infantry battalion had completed six weeks of unit training in Thailand, and two battalions were undergoing this training; three artillery batteries had converted from French to US techniques, and a fourth was now undergoing this transition; and 13 Lao pilots were training in Thailand, with an additional 15 scheduled to commence training on 1 September. In addition to these formal training courses, tactical training of deployed units was being conducted wherever possible. Some improvement in "basic soldiering," NCO leadership, unit positioning and tactical proficiency, and individual equipment maintenance had resulted. However, officer and NCO schooling, as well as specialist training, had been neglected because the

Ministry

Ministry of National Security, citing the pressure of other commitments, refused to approve such programs.

3. The status of supplies had improved since the cease-fire. Equipment, however, remained in "fair to poor" condition; and the FAL maintenance capability was improving but slowly, because of insufficient trainees, low technical ability, and language difficulties. There remained, therefore, an "excessive" backlog of equipment in need of maintenance.

4. The most notable FAL improvement had occurred in intelligence. The organization of the FAL intelligence activities had been overhauled, and a Royal Lao Military Intelligence School had been established and regional intelligence schools were being organized to train officers and specialists.

5. In summary, the FAL was not yet an effective fighting force. Correction of the basic deficiencies of leadership and motivation were prerequisite to the attainment of effectiveness. The improvement of FAL capability would be "an uphill battle for some time to come."

(See item 8 July 1961.)

(3); (TS) Memo, CJCS to Pres, 7 Jul 61; OJCS Files, 091 Laos (TS) Msg, CHMAAG Laos to JCS, DA IN 127376, 2 Jul 61.

8 Jul 61 In a conversation with CHMAAG Laos, Phoumi recounted his version of his recent conversations with US officials (see items 29, 30 June and 1 July 1961). Phoumi had found in these conversations, CHMAAG reported, assurance that, if hostilities were resumed, the US would intervene to maintain his military posture. By Phoumi's account, ("allegations was CHMAAG's word) he had told US officials that the peaceful solution

solution to the Lao problem advocated by the West would not succeed and that the US should be prepared for the resumption of hostilities in the near future. Further, Phoumi reported he had told the JCS and CINCPAC that Laos was entering a new phase which would entail extensive preparation for eventual military action against the Communists; at the same time negotiations would be continued "as far as possible." Everyone, Phoumi said, had agreed with him, and everyone, including the President, had assured him that no more concessions would be made to the Communists. Moreover, the US had assured him that, after the formation of a coalition government, the US would support the FAL at its present size for the foreseeable future.

(TS) Msg, CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC, DA IN 129403, 10 Jul 6

8 Jul 61 In a message to CINCPAC, the CJCS termed the improvements in the FAL, as he had assessed them for the President (see item 7 July 1961), both "heartening," and "discouraging." Although tactical training and intelligence capability seemed to be progressing satisfactorily, FAL efforts in improving leadership, motivation, specialist training, and logistics were "too meager and too slow." The FAL must be convinced, CJCS said, of the importance of initiating leadership schools "right now." Moreover, the unwillingness or disinterestedness, whichever the case, of the FAL to undertake reconnaissance and combat patrols must be overcome.

(TS) Msgs, JCS to CINCPAC, JCS 998718, 8 Jul 61.

10 Jul 61 At Ban Namone, Souvanna's representative introduced draft truce regulations designed to prevent the troops of all

factions

factions from advancing beyond the positions held on 3 May 1961. The draft regulations, when adopted, would: 1) forbid troop concentrations near the stabilized front; 2) ground military aircraft and prevent all aerial intrusions into territory held by the opposing faction; 3) forbid the movement of guerrillas, weapons, and supplies across the front; and 4) force withdrawals by both sides in areas where large numbers of troops were in contact.

Enforcement of the truce was made the responsibility of a tripartite joint committee which would establish joint subcommittees on the various battle fields. The committee would be assisted by the ICC, but the international organization was to "tend to respect the principle of sovereignty and the independence of Laos." In the event of a truce violation, the committee could call upon the ICC to send a mobile investigation team to the area involved. Routine investigations, however, were to be conducted by the joint committee and its subordinate elements (see item 7-13 September 1961).

(U) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 49, 11 Jul 61.

11 Jul 61 During a meeting of the Laos Task Force at the Department of State, U. Alexis Johnson, Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, stated that General Maxwell D. Taylor had visited him and discussed certain courses of action that could be undertaken in Laos short of implementing SEATO Plan 5. Mr. Johnson then listed these following courses of action:

1) 

2) A modified Plan 5 utilizing, predominately, Southeast Asians and very few US troops.

3) A

3) 

4) An operation similar to SEATO Plan 5 confined to the "Panhandle" of Laos.

5) Developing a base from which to apply military pressure on North Viet Nam, using Viet Cong aggression in SVN as a justification for this action.

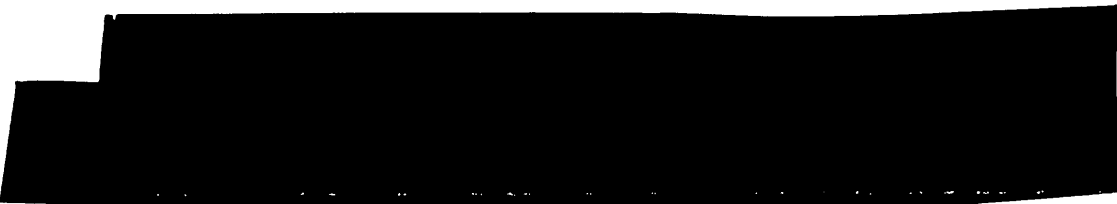
Mr. Johnson desired the task force to initiate planning for these actions, but at the suggestion of the JCS representative, Deputy Director, J-3, he agreed to postpone this undertaking until General Taylor had discussed the subject with the JCS.

On the same day, presumably in connection with the foregoing, the Director, Joint Staff, requested that J-5 prepare an outline plan that would, in the event the US found it necessary to accept a geographical division of Laos, accomplish the following objectives:

1. Control over a suitable area in the Mekong Valley and Southern Laos in order to protect Thailand and South Viet Nam from conventional attack or guerrilla penetration from northern Laos or North Viet Nam.

2. Offensive air and guerrilla operations from this secure base against northern Laos and North Viet Nam.

3. Maintaining a threat of naval surface operations against North Viet Nam.


(See items 20 July, 7 and 17 August 1961.)

General

(S) DepDir, J-3 Memo for Record, 12 Jul 61, on file with Deputy Director for Operations. (TS) 1st N/H of JCS 2339/11, 3 Aug 61; JMF 9150/3100 (13 May 61).

11 Jul 61 General Phoumi, reporting on the Zurich negotiations at a National Assembly meeting, reaffirmed the RLG position that any new Lao government would have to be formed in accordance with the constitution, and would require the approval of both the National Assembly and the King's Council.

(C) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 48, 11 Jul 61.

11-13
Jul 61

The US delegation at the Geneva Conference, after informal discussions with the French, British, and Canadian delegations recommended on 11 July that the Department of State "stimulate an offer from the RLG of a "significant quantity of essential equipment for exclusive use by the ICC without restriction as to the territory in which it might be used or the mission in which it might be employed."

On 13 July, the US Consul General in Geneva listed for the Secretary of State certain features that he considered "important to the success of the RLG offer of equipment." The "purpose of the offer" remained "to sharpen" the access issue by making it clear that the ICC would be sufficiently independent to "carry out inspections requested by either side." To accomplish this purpose the RLG proposal should insure that: 1) the transportation and communications equipment would be adequate to enable full teams to visit any part of Laos; 2) the equipment would be made available as soon as the ICC was willing to accept it; 3) the US would provide the RLG with either the articles themselves or with replacements, so that the "US or RLG capability to

support

support the FAL" was not weakened; and 4) the US through the RLG would assist in painting, operating, and maintaining the equipment.

In anticipation of a request based on the 11 July message from Geneva, the US Ambassador in Vientiane on 13 July forwarded to the Secretary of State a draft text which the RLG could use as the basis for its formal offer to release supplies and equipment to the ICC. The draft, which the Secretary of State on 13 July approved with only slight modifications of language, imposed no restrictions on the Commission's use of the equipment (see item 19 July 1961).

(S) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState, 52, 12 Jul 61; Geneva to SecState, CONF 362, 11 Jul 61; CONF 374, 13 Jul 61; State to Vientiane, NIACT 39, 13 Jul 61.

12 Jul 61 In an informal meeting in Geneva, US Ambassador Harriman agreed in principle to a compromise suggested by Soviet co-Chairman Pushkin. According to the terms of this compromise, the declaration of neutrality and the protocol on controls would be considered as a single entity, the discussion of neutrality would be followed by a discussion of the protocol, and debate on any one provision in either the declaration or the protocol would be limited to a single day. Thus, the Conference would not be stalled by early disagreements and yet would be able to return at a later date to unresolved issues.

(The Secretary of State on 14 July approved Ambassador Harriman's action and instructed him to arrange the details using his own discretion. The Ambassador, however, was to make certain that the final agreement on procedure did not "preclude the handling of the ICC equipment and access

issue

issue in the relatively near future.")

(S) Msgs, Geneva to SecState, CONFE 365, 12 Jul 61;
State to Geneva, FECON NIACT 253, 14 Jul 61.

12 Jul 61 The JCS recommended to the Secretary of Defense that he seek a US governmental decision that, "upon the next occurrence of a proven Communist violation of the cease fire," the US would:

a. Withdraw its delegation from the Geneva Conference on Laos.

b. Undertake military operations in Laos through SEATO, or with those SEATO members prepared to participate, or, if necessary, unilaterally. The objective of military action would be to achieve the necessary military position to permit successful political negotiation for a unified independent and neutral Laos.

The US had agreed to participate in the Geneva Conference, the JCS said, subject to the establishment of an effective cease-fire. Such a cease-fire had not been achieved - as the fall of Padong (see item 7 June 1961), the attack on outposts near Hat Bo (see item 12 June 1961), and the capture of villages near Paksane testified; yet the US was participating in the Conference. Moreover, said the Chiefs, "it would appear that US determination not to walk out of the Conference is dominating all other considerations." During the Conference the US negotiating position had been weakened. US policies were diluted both in the drafting of tripartite papers with the UK and France and in the 14-nation forum. Examples of this weakening were the US acquiescence in the procedures for seating Laotian delegations and the US decision to begin substantive discussions without an effective cease-fire. If present trends in Geneva and Laos continued, the Chiefs said, the outcome would be "a Laos more Communist than neutral"

neutral" --another serious blow to US prestige.

"Continued political retreat by the United States in the face of Communist challenges will surely immobilize the national will of those nations who have allied themselves with us," the JCS said, "and it may induce many to seek an accommodation with Communism." Already in Southeast Asia there were indications that Thailand and the Philippines were considering moving toward neutralism. And the Asian SEATO members generally failed to understand and took as a sign of weakness the continued US failure, particularly since August 1960, to "exercise active leadership of SEATO."

"Credibility in the US deterrent is waning," continued the JCS. "The challenge has been made in Southeast Asia. Khrushchev has indicated Berlin may be next." If the US took a stand in Laos, the dangers of escalation could not be avoided, but they would be less for Laos, in any event, than during a more direct confrontation with the USSR over Berlin. A firm political and military position could be taken in Laos without serious effect upon general war posture and could enhance the credibility of US determination to use its military force wherever needed to protect its interests.

The Padong incident had provided an occasion of short duration wherein the US would have been justified in sending in troops. It was highly probable, given the past Communist pattern in Laos, that such an opportunity would present itself again. The US should at that time be prepared to respond immediately in the manner recommended by the JCS.

(TS) JCSM-460-61 to SecDef, 12 Jul 61, derived from JCS 2344/1, 27 Jun 61; JMF 9155.2/3100 (24 Jun 61).

The

12 Jul 61 The daily Joint Staff Intelligence Brief estimated pro-Communist forces in Laos to number 22,500. Of this number, approximately 7,000 were responsive to Souvanna/Kong Le, 14,000 were Pathet Lao, and 1,500 were Viet Minh advisers and technicians.

(S) JSIB, 12 Jul 61.

14 Jul 61 Indian Defense Minister Krishna Menon, in what the US Consul General at Geneva termed "a typically disorganized presentation," placed before the Geneva Conference a draft protocol dealing with ICC machinery. The Indian draft, according to the Consul General, contained these salient features:

1. Responsibility for implementing the cease-fire would be placed on the parties. The draft also placed "great emphasis, in general, on the cooperation of the Lao Government."

2. The Lao Government would be empowered to veto ICC investigations.

3. The withdrawal of foreign personnel and the re-introduction of foreign troops or equipment were, from the US point of view, given satisfactory coverage.

4. French military training contingents would be permitted to remain "on the basis of Lao-French bilateral agreement." France, however, could not delegate its training functions to any other nation except Laos.

5. The question of majority voting in the ICC was avoided.

6. Only the nationals of India, Canada, Poland, and Laos would be eligible to serve with the ICC.

7. The

7. The ICC was to have control over its personnel and equipment.

8. ICC expenses were to be shared according to a formula that incorporated the principles governing contributions toward UN expenses.

In elaborating upon the Indian draft, Mr. Menon referred to the problem of ICC equipment (see item 15 June 1961), noting that the RLG had offered generous support (see item 11-13 July 1961) and the "other side had given token assistance." The equipment issue, the Defense Minister was reported as saying, "would have been settled by the commissioners on the spot if it had not been raised 'to a high level of controversy here.'"

(S) Msg, Geneva to SecState, CONFE 392, 15 Jul 61.

14, 15
Jul 61

On 14 July Ambassador Brown reported that Ambassador Morsky, the Polish ICC representative, had told the British Ambassador in Vientiane, Addis, that the partition of Laos "would mean war and not just a local war." On the following day Brown reported that Indian Ambassador Ratnam had told the Australian military attache that, if the partition of Laos should be proposed, the Soviets would withdraw from the Lao scene and give the Chinese Communists and North Vietnamese the "green light" to take any action they chose, and "continue to supply them in so doing." The Australian expressed the opinion that Ratnam's source had been the Indian Embassy in Moscow.

(S) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState, 69, 14 Jul 61; 72, 15 Jul 61.

Responding

16 Jul 61 Responding to Boun Oum's 7 July invitation to meet at Luang Prabang to resume discussions on the formation of a coalition government, Souvanna cabled from Paris that because of his health, he would prefer Phnom Penh as a meeting place (see item 5 August 1961).

(On 18 July, Boun Oum transmitted a cable to Souvanna, informing him that his proposal had been accepted.)

(U) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 27, 7 Jul 61; 102, 19 Jul 61.

17 Jul 61 Ambassador Brown reported on the conflicting impressions that Australian Minister Morris and the British Ambassador had received from their recent respective conversations with Phoumi. To Addis, Phoumi had presented a picture of reasonableness, of pressing ahead "of" negotiations on all fronts in good faith, and of reasonable optimism regarding a satisfactory political solution.

On the other hand, Morris had received the impression that Phoumi was dissatisfied with negotiations and despondent about their prospects. Phoumi was going through an exercise which might work, but Phoumi doubted it. According to Morris, Phoumi had said flatly that he had been "'forced into these negotiations by the Americans.'" Morris also said that Phoumi had stated that he had been making good use of time afforded by the negotiations. "'We are no longer in position in which we have to surrender and the other side knows it'," the Laotian General had declared.

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 82, 17 Jul 61.

17 Jul 61 In a message to US diplomatic posts, the Secretary of State, noting the "wide-spread expressions of disillusionment with SEATO,"

SEATO," instructed US representatives to attempt to counterbalance such sentiments by emphasizing SEATO's continuing strengths. The US continued to regard SEATO as a necessary and effective instrument of US and free world policy, the Secretary said. SEATO had posed and did pose an important deterrent to overt Communist aggression. That the US and other SEATO members had chosen to seek their objective in Laos by negotiation did not imply that they had excluded the possibility of military action should the need arise. Moreover, SEATO continued to afford an organized basis for military planning and a forum for the exchange of views. The notion that the US was encouraging the formation of an "Asian Neutral Belt" was false, the Secretary concluded; rather, the hope of the US was that the nations in the area would develop "indigenous sources of strength and cohesion" in an association determined and able to defend itself against Communism.

(S) Msg, SecState CIRC, CA-49, 17 Jul 61.

18 Jul 61 After surveying the situation in Laos since the three-Princes meeting in Zurich, Ambassador Brown told Secretary Rusk he had come to the conclusion that despite some "apparent" agreement there, the real current trend within Laos was toward a greater "polarization" of forces.

Souvanna and the Pathet Lao were insisting on Souvanna as Prime Minister with the bulk of portfolios in the coalition government for, at best, Souvanna's supporters and, at worst, the Pathet Lao. The PL were steadily building up their supplies, training forces, propagandizing the population, and otherwise consolidating their position in

areas

areas under their control. These factors, in Brown's opinion, clearly indicated the PL's determination that they were "here to stay."

On the other hand, Phoumi had returned from Washington "vastly encouraged," and with the feeling that the US was now prepared to back him militarily. The Laotian General was reorganizing his forces and had definite military plans (see item 1 July 1961). Consequently, said the US Ambassador Phoumi intended to take a "stiff" position in negotiations with the two Princes--negotiations for which he had little enthusiasm and in which, Phoumi had more than once stated, he had been "'forced'" to participate by the United States.

Phoumi, Brown continued, might make a genuine effort to obtain approval, both by the King and by the Souvanna and PL factions, for his proposal that the King be Prime Minister or "presiding officer" of a new government. Even if this "King's gambit" failed, Brown said, Phoumi would not support Souvanna as Prime Minister. According to Brown, Phoumi felt that Souvanna was "unretrievably" lost to the Communists, and the men upon whom Souvanna relied as neutralists were in fact either too weak to exert a moderating influence or already were under Communist control. Therefore, Phoumi did not think that a government under Souvanna could offer a "reasonable" prospect for an independent, united, and neutral Laos. Equally important, Brown said, was Phoumi's belief that even if a coalition government, more predominantly neutral than he considered possible, were formed, it could not survive

under

under the present "imbalance of psychological antimilitary forces" in Laos. Phoumi saw no real hope that the Geneva Conference or the ICC would be able to establish, by control measures, an effective deterrent to Communist control. Since the US had told the Laotian General "categorically" that it would not accept a government which might lead to Communist control of Laos, Phoumi had concluded that he could count on US support in the military action which, in his opinion, would almost certainly be required.

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 92, 18 Jul 61.

18 Jul 61 Australian Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs Menzies, in a message to the Secretary of State, stated that a "firm" Western and RLG attitude would be necessary to hold the Communists to the cease-fire, compel them to negotiate seriously, and thus achieve a "genuine neutralization" of Laos. Signs of weakness, particularly unmatched concessions, would only increase the Communist unwillingness to make concessions, Menzies said. The West should therefore insist at Geneva upon a logistically independent ICC, unhampered by a co-Chairman's veto or a requirement for unanimity; and the RLG should make no concession at Ban Namone until "real progress" had been made on this issue.

If the Communists refused to concede a strong ICC, then the Geneva negotiations might collapse upon the initiative of either side. In Laos, either hostilities would resume or the present uneasy military truce might continue. Even in the latter case, said the Australian, Western aid to the RLG would have to increase, to counter Communist subversion.

The more serious danger of a resumed PL offensive might be forestalled, Menzies suggested, by introduction into

Laos

Laos of a set of international observers other than the ICC, or of the UN Peace Observation Commission. And if, after all, the PL did resume the offensive, Menzies questioned whether the planned Western response took proper account of a situation in which "negotiation has broken down after many weeks of complete intransigence by the Communists [and the] Pathet Lao have consolidated their position over the greater part of Laos."

Against this background, Menzies concluded, the Australian Chiefs of Staff were studying SEATO military plans, directing particular scrutiny upon the "bridgehead" concept of SEATO Plan 5 (see item 6 October 1961).

(TS) Msg, JCS to CINCPAC, JCS 999504, 24 Jul 61.

18-25
Jul 61

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The JCS on 18 July recommended to the Secretary of Defense that the B-26 and RB-26 aircraft stationed in Thailand ~~_____~~ since April (see items 9 March, 4 and 6 April 1961) be removed from that country. According to CHJUSMAG Thailand, the Royal Thai Air Force (RTAF) needed Takhlī airfield, where the US aircraft were stationed. Furthermore, the JCS considered, as did CINCPAC, that "the requirement for the employment of B-26 aircraft as a part of an over-all effort in Laos no longer exists."

On 24 July, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA) presented the above facts and views to the Department of State. He stated that, if the Department of State did not object, the aircraft would be redeployed ~~_____~~

~~_____~~ On the next day the Department of State informed the US Ambassador in Thailand that the removal of the B-26s had been approved.

A return

A return message of the same day indicated that Sarit also agreed.

(TS) JCSM-481-61 to SecDef, 18 Jul 61, derived from JCS 2350, 18 Jul 61; (S) 1st N/H of JCS 2350, 26 Jul 61; JMF 9158/3440 (5 Jul 61). (TS) Msgs, CHJUSMAG Thailand to CNO (for CINCPAC) 130800Z Jun 61; CINCPAC to JCS, 292311Z Jun 61.

19 Jul 61 The US Ambassador in Paris called upon Souvanna and, in a brief conversation, discussed with him the Americans missing in Laos, the role of the ICC, the Harriman-Pushkin compromise (see item 12 July 1961), the Prince's talk with Ambassador Harriman (see item 3 July 1961), and a possible visit by Souvanna to the US (see item 25 June 1961).

Concerning the missing Americans and Ambassador Gavin's request for their release or, at least, information on their condition, Souvanna said he would look into the matter when he returned to Laos.

Souvanna then stated that he preferred that the Laotian Government play a dominant role in the operations of the ICC. He indicated that the Laotians should be able either to initiate ICC investigations or to approve those proposed by the Commission and its members.

The Prince appeared uninformed about the Harriman-Pushkin compromise but "said he was pleased to hear about it."

Souvanna also expressed a desire to remain in contact with Ambassador Harriman.

When Ambassador Gavin voiced the hope that Souvanna would visit the US after the new government had been formed, the Prince replied that he would not fail to do so.

(C) Msg, Paris to SecState, 291, 19 Jul 61.

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19 Jul 61 The US Ambassador in Vientiane, in a message to the Secretary of State, requested comment upon his own proposal that he outline for Phoumi the reasons (see item 27 June 1961) why the US had entered into discussions with France concerning the future of the French Military Mission in Laos. If he did not explain the value of the talks, which were believed "progressing into the area of specifics," Phoumi might learn of the conversations from "other sources" and react with accusations of US double-dealing.

In addition, the Ambassador believed that Phoumi might interpret the US interest in continuation of the French presence "as amounting to direct US support for a French-backed Souvanna Phouma government." Because of the past "mutual antipathy between him and the French," Phoumi might then attempt the partition of the Kingdom, "aided as he would hope by the Thais and South Vietnamese."

(On the following day Secretary Rusk replied that the RLG was aware of the reasons why the US was interested in continuing the French military presence. Nevertheless, because of the risk of an attempt at partition, the US Ambassador in Vientiane was instructed to avoid giving the impression that the US-French talks dealt with specific matters. In fact, said the Secretary, the discussions merely represented an effort to "explore French thinking regarding their possible future role and their determination to fulfill such a role satisfactorily."

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 96, 19 Jul 61; (S) Msg, State to Vientiane, PRIORITY 77, 20 Jul 61.

19 Jul 61 The RLG delegate, Phoui Sananikone, called the attention of the Geneva Conference to his government's recent offer of
equipment

equipment for the ICC. Ambassador Harriman pointed out that the RLG, unlike Souvanna's faction, had neither restricted the use of the equipment to its own territory nor demanded that the ICC obtain its permission before using the equipment to make inspections. The US Ambassador expressed confidence that the ICC not only would accept the RLG offer but would "prevail upon the Xieng Khouang representative to modify theirs accordingly." He also stated that the US-French offer (see item 15 June 1961) remained open. [Inexplicably, up to 11 June 1962, the whole question of ICC equipment apparently has not been raised again at the intergovernmental level.]

(U) Msg, Geneva to SecState, CONFE 421, 20 Jul 61.

20 Jul 61 In response to a JCS message of 14 July, CINCPAC commented upon the "outline plan for Laos" under development within the Joint Staff (see item 11 July 1961). First of all, CINCPAC stated that the plan's objective of controlling areas of "maximum contribution" to the defense of Southeast Asia contradicted the assumption of the JCS message that the geographical division of Laos would "generally coincide" with areas presently held by the PL and RLG. The "military fact of life," CINCPAC said, was that the PL presently controlled the key access routes to Southeast Asia.

Furthermore, CINCPAC continued, if the JCS plan was to provide participation by only US, Thai, South Vietnamese, and Lao forces, and was therefore to be a plan "separate and distinct from" SEATO Plan 5, it would "virtually destroy" SEATO. If the FAL was to be assisted in controlling its area in a divided Laos, CINCPAC said, the operation should be undertaken

undertaken within the "framework" of SEATO. If there was not "continued confidence in SEATO and a willingness by the US to provide leadership and support for SEATO military operations," it was CINCPAC's view that the whole of mainland Southeast Asia would in time be lost.

Proceeding to specific provisions of the JCS plan, CINCPA said that:

1. "Southern Laos and the Mekong River Valley" should be defined as nothing less than that area demarcated by him on 16 May 1961 (see item). Otherwise, the following condition would result:

- a. Exposure of the northwest border of South Viet Nam to greatly increased Viet Cong infiltration.
- b. Control by the enemy of key mountain passes.
- c. A forward mounting area for the Communists in southern Laos that would be ideal for overt or covert aggression in Southeast Asia.
- d. A territory remaining to the RLG that would be militarily difficult to defend.

2. Bases in Laos to mount air operations against North Viet Nam and possibly South China, as envisioned by the plan, would not be necessary. Bases in Thailand or South Viet Nam and US aircraft carriers were more feasible. The principal airbase requirement in Laos would be the use of Seno for logistical airlift.

3. The plan should recognize that the situation in Southeast Asia might be "considerably more critical" at the time of its implementation than at present.

4. Although the Communists might negotiate for a politically divided Laos, they would probably not agree to withdrawing from certain key areas. Regaining this territory would

would entail a "combat situation requiring sizeable friendly forces."

5. Regarding the stipulation that participation by US combat forces would be held to a minimum, CINCPAC did not believe that the US should back down on its SEATO commitments. A reduced US commitment could, for instance, provide Sarit with some justification for hedging on Thai commitments. The plan should therefore, CINCPAC said, incorporate the basic force structure of SEATO Plan 5, with the possible addition of South Vietnamese forces.

(See item 7 August 1961.)

(TS) Msgs, CINCPAC to JCS 200007Z Jul 61; JCS to CINCPAC, JCS 999022, 14 Jul 61.

20 Jul 61 The Office of Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA) issued, for its own use, a report of the current situation in Laos. This report dwelt at some length on the status of the Geneva Conference, the political situation in Laos, the Laotian military situation, and the differences of opinion between the US and UK regarding military action in Laos. The report also noted in passing that the ICC remained ineffective in controlling the cease-fire.

Status of the Geneva Conference. According to the ISA report, the Communist delegations had adopted the line that a strengthened ICC, such as that sought by the US and France, would infringe upon the sovereignty of Laos. The Communists first had refused to agree to send instructions to the ICC and insisted that the control commission depend on the "parties in Laos" for necessary materiel, in spite of US and French offers of equipment. Next, the Communists had balked at any discussion of control arrangements, urging

instead

instead that the Conference begin substantive discussions of Lao neutrality.

The US, convinced that no Lao Government could maintain its neutrality in the absence of effective controls, had insisted that the Conference first come to grips with the question of strengthening the ICC. The US stand had been supported by the UK, RLG, South Viet Nam (SVN), Thailand, France, and Canada.

The Communist and Western delegations, however, had compromised by agreeing to consider first a declaration of neutrality and then turn to the subject of controls. If continued disagreement on a particular provision prolonged debate for more than one additional day, the Conference would move on to the next provision. Also, the discussions of neutrality and of controls were to form a "single whole," and agreement on individual articles would not be binding until the Conference had approved an entire settlement to the Laotian problem.

Political situation in Laos. The ISA noted a more marked "polarization" of forces since the Zurich communique. Souvanna and Souphanouvong were pressing for a dominant role in the coalition government, while the Pathet Lao was building up its forces. At the opposite pole, Phoumi, who had returned from Washington (see item 29,30 June 1961) with an apparent misunderstanding of the scope of US commitments, was reorganizing his forces and perfecting his military plans.

Phoumi was attempting to maneuver Souvanna and Souphanouvong into accepting the authority of the King and of the Lao constitution. He hoped eventually to talk the King into serving as Prime Minister of the coalition government, a post demanded by Souvanna. Since the King probably

would

would refuse to head the government, the US might well have to choose between accepting Souvanna as Prime Minister or supporting Phoumi with force.

At Ban Namone, the Pathet Lao continued to oppose the seating of ICC representatives. The RLG, in the meantime, was seeking, with some degree of effectiveness, to disrupt the Souvanna-Souphanouvong front by warning the neutrals that the Pathet Lao would dominate an integrated national Army.

Military situation. The report stated that the Pathet Lao forces, which were growing in strength, could capture the population centers within a few days, provided that no outside help was received by the FAL. Phoumi planned to concentrate in the south and to hold that portion of the Kingdom with the assistance of South Viet Nam and Thailand. He also hoped that US forces would become involved.

US-UK differences. The report outlined three differences of opinion that had come to light during the conversations between CINCPAC and Admiral Luce of the Royal Navy (see item 22 June 1961).

1. The US, unlike the UK, favored support, after intervention, of an FAL offensive to recapture the ground lost since the 3 May cease-fire.
2. The US, in spite of British reservations, favored the recapture, in the event of intervention, of any Mekong River sites lost to the Communists before SEATO troops arrived on the scene.
3. The US, notwithstanding UK reservations, believed that the FAL was capable of fighting effectively if given adequate support by foreign forces.

(UNK) "Current Situation in Laos," 20 Jul 61; CASD (ISA) FER/SEA Branch files.

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21 Jul 61 In response to a State Department request (see item 3 July 1961), the US Country Team in Laos reported on further non-military efforts that might usefully be made to strengthen the position of the RLG and the King within Laos. The Country Team emphasized at the outset of its report that severe restrictions presently existed upon the effectiveness of such nonmilitary endeavors. First, there were few areas in Laos where either US or Lao civilians could operate with reasonable personal safety; second, to succeed, these efforts would have to overcome the administrative ineptitude of the RLG and the shortage of trained Lao personnel. Within these limitations, the Country Team recommended a number of projects - medical, civic action, information and psychological warfare, village self-help, food, and transportation - "which could in due course have a useful effect." In the final analysis, the Country Team concluded, the success or failure in these efforts would depend on the extent to which the Lao felt they were being provided not only material benefits but also security against Pathet Lao intimidations and reprisals.

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 106, 21 Jul 61.

21 Jul 61 General Phoumi told Ambassador Brown that the King wanted to know if the US had decided to support Souvanna as Prime Minister of Laos. In response, Brown explained that the US had not taken a position for or against Souvanna as Prime Minister. The US reaction regarding a Souvanna government would depend on the composition of the government and especially the role that Phoumi and his colleagues would play in it.

The US, said the Ambassador, would support any government upon which the Lao would agree, and which gave assurance that

that it would not be Communist-dominated. US policy, continued the US Ambassador, had been clearly expressed by the President when he had told General Phoumi in Washington (see item 29, 30 June 1961) that the US would have to reserve its judgement until it could "look at the entire package."

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 114, 21 Jul 61.

21 Jul 61 The British Minister in Washington informed the Secretary of State of Lord Home's "increasing concern" about developments in Laos. The UK Foreign Secretary thought it possible that Phoumi's unyielding attitude might, for example, result in the collapse of the cease-fire. Since progress at Geneva went hand in hand with progress at Ban Namone and among the Princes, the Conference might be unable to restore the shattered truce. Phoumi might then attempt to partition the country, with southern Laos being held by SEATO.

Concern over this possible sequence of events prompted Lord Home to suggest that the US, UK, and France urge Phoumi and Boun Oum to be flexible in negotiations. The British Foreign Secretary considered the formation of a coalition government headed by Souvanna to be the key to a peaceful solution of the Laotian problem. The RLG, however, was not to be encouraged to give in to unreasonable demands.

(S) Ltr, Br Min in Wash to SecState, 21 Jul 61, OASD (ISA), FER/SEA Branch files.

23 Jul 62 CINCPAC recommended to the JCS that consideration be given to providing the RED EYE weapon (a heat-seeking ground-to-air rocket) to the Meo or selected FAL regular units, for use against the Soviet airlift into Laos (see item 10 August 1961)

(TS) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 230011Z Jul 61.

24, 28
Jul 61

On 24 July, CINCPAC requested that he be authorized to augment the Filipino technicians in Laos (ECCOIL) by 76 men, in order to help correct FAL maintenance deficiencies (as noted by the CJCS - see item 7 July 1961).

On 28 July 1961, the Department of Defense approved CINCPAC's request.

(S) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 240143Z Jul 61; (C) Msg, OSD to CINCPAC, DEF 999725, 28 Jul 61.

26 Jul 61 While discoursing on the subject of Berlin with Mr. John J. McCloy, the President's Adviser on Disarmament, Khrushchev referred briefly to the Laotian problem. He reiterated the Soviet line that it was the United States, not the Soviets, who had first interfered in Laos. The US had given weapons to Thailand to be used in attacks against Souvanna, the Soviet leader asserted. Since the US, UK, France, and even King Savang "agree" to have Souvanna as Prime Minister, these matters, Khrushchev stated, should be discussed without anyone's interfering in Laos.

(C) Msg, Moscow to SecState, 323, 28 Jul 61.

26 Jul 61 General Maxwell D. Taylor, in a memorandum for the President, stated that during his examination of the need to increase the SVN Army he had become "increasingly aware of the need for a rational analysis of the need for military forces in Laos and Thailand, as well as in Vietnam." In this regard, General Taylor pointed out that no existing military plan was adequate to cope with continued Communist infiltration from the north, through Laos, into South Viet Nam. In General Taylor's opinion, the rebuilding of the FAL did not provide the entire solution to the immediate military danger.

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The general believed that the effort in northern Laos should be continued and that a secure base should be established in southern Laos to provide support for operations in the north.

The establishment of such a base, however, would require cooperation among Laos, Thailand, and South Viet Nam, together with US encouragement and assistance. Thus, what was needed, according to General Taylor, was a strategic plan for the entire Southeast Asia area.

(S) Memo, Gen Taylor to Pres, "Southeast Asian Planning," 26 Jul 61, copy on file with DepDir, J-3.

28 Jul 61 Brigadier General Lansdale, Assistant to the Secretary of Defense, requested that the Joint Staff develop plans for the contingency that, in the "post-Geneva period," the Department of Defense might assume responsibility for Meo operations in Laos

[REDACTED]

(S) Memo, Asst to SecDef to DJCS, 28 Jul 61, att to JCS 2344/5, 7 Aug 61; JMF 9155.2/3100 (28 Jul 61). (TS) Msg, JCS to CINCPAC, JCS 2018, 26 Oct 61.

28 Jul 61 During an interview with King Savang, Ambassador Brown mentioned Phoumi's proposal for a national Congress to amend the constitution in order to give "full power" to the King. When asked by Brown if he had approved this proposal the King replied: "'The Congress yes, the full powers no However, if the Government and the Congress want it, I must accept.'"

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 151, 28 Jul 61.

At Ban Namone

~~TOP SECRET~~
28 Jul -
16 Aug 61

~~TOP SECRET~~

At Ban Namone on 28 July, the RLG presented draft cease-fire regulations designed to prevent the movement of troops beyond positions certified by a control committee as having been occupied on 25 April 1961. In areas where movements had taken place after that date, the troops involved were to return to the certified positions. The regulations also placed limitations on the movements of troops and equipment, called for the separation of large concentrations of opposing troops, and imposed restrictions on supply operations.

Joint military committees established on the central, regional, and local levels were made responsible for supervising and controlling the truce. In general, these committees would certify troops positions, attempt to ease tensions, impose limits upon the areas occupied by opposing forces, control reinforcements and resupply, prevent offensive operations, and settle any disputes that might arise. The committees also were responsible for investigating possible truce violations.

The ICC, which was to cooperate with the committees in a spirit of "mutual consideration, assistance, and fairness," had the task of observing and assisting in the implementation of the cease-fire agreement. Although the ICC was expected to aid in resolving disputes, serious disagreements could be resolved only at the highest echelon of the committee system.

In commenting upon this draft, Ambassador Brown called the attention of the Department of State to the "inadequate treatment" of the ICC. Subsequently, however, Phoumi offered a revised draft in which the ICC received even briefer mention.

The Secretary of State, upon learning of Phoumi's proposed revision, informed Ambassador Brown on 16 August that the document remained "highly unsatisfactory" and urged that

the RLG

the RLG withdraw it. On the following day, however, Ambassador Brown reported that the amended version had on the 14th been introduced at the Ban Namone conference (see items 12 and 29 August 1961).

(S) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState, 174, 30 Jul 61; 184, 1 Aug 61; 268, 17 Aug 61; (S) Msg, State to Vientiane, 135, 1 Aug 61; (C) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState, 170, 29 Jul 61; 201, 6 Aug 61; 253, 15 Aug 61; (C) Msg, State to Vientiane, 172, 16 Aug 61; (U) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 169, 29 Jul 61

29 Jul 61 In a circular telegram, the Secretary of State expressed the Department's concern with the "generally negative attitude of the Lao toward strict ICC controls" (see previous item) and instructed the US representatives in Vientiane and Geneva as well as in Bangkok, Phnom Penh, and Saigon, to endeavor to "get the Lao to assume a more realistic viewpoint on this subject."

In general, these US diplomatic representatives were to review the recent history of Laos, stressing the obvious need for strong protection from "outside meddling" until the kingdom had organized a system of administration, developed its "physical infrastructure," and created adequate internal security forces. The necessary interim protection could best be provided by an ICC with complete freedom of access to all parts of Laos. Moreover, the objection that an effective ICC would infringe upon the kingdom's sovereignty was invalid, for the presence of the ICC would pose less danger to Laotian sovereignty than would the subversion and civil strife which the Commission could halt.

In addition, US diplomatic representatives in London, Paris, and Geneva were instructed to point out to the French and British the importance to the "entire program of deterrence" of obtaining an effective ICC and the fact that those who

who desired a settlement should realize that "there is a price to pay." In this case, the price was a strong ICC. If France and the UK did not want SEATO action, observed the Secretary of State, "then let them support us in securing proper controls to safeguard the free world interest." Also, the French, subject to the concurrence of the US delegation at Geneva, might be persuaded to sound out Souvanna on the subject of the ICC.

The RTG and the Government of SVN were to be informed of US tactics and requested to support the American position. The Indians, Burmese, and Cambodians could be informed to the extent that US diplomatic missions considered appropriate.

(On 2 August, the American Embassy in London reported to the Secretary of State that, according to the British Foreign Office, "Her Majesty's Government fully shared our views and is highly disturbed by the RLG's 'selling the US down the river.'" The Foreign Office was especially concerned that the RLG had submitted its draft without consulting the US. The British, the report continued, considered the RLG cease-fire proposals so unsatisfactory that to attempt to amend them would merely underline US and UK differences of opinion with the RLG and "provide open invitation for Communist exploitation."

On 7 August, Ambassador Harriman, commenting on the reported views of the British Foreign Office, stated that the RLG cease-fire document could be amended in a satisfactory fashion. He added, however, that because the existing ICC was unpopular with all factions in Laos, stronger representations would have to be made to Phoumi and Souvanna. Phoumi, the Ambassador continued, "must be made to realize that as the representative of a minority (at least in the

sense

sense of military strength and probably in the next coalition government) he cannot survive without help and support from a fully effective ICC. Souvanna must be convinced that a written guarantee of such an ICC is an essential prerequisite of any US support for him as Prime Minister.")

(S) Dept of State CIRC 173, 29 Jul 61; (S) Msgs, London to SecState, 505, 2 Aug 61, and Paris to SecState, 680, 7 Aug 61.

30 Jul 61 The Lao National Congress passed a constitutional amendment authorizing the Congress, when the kingdom's "existence is threatened" to grant the King the power to form a government. The King could then either assume the premiership himself or appoint a government "of his own choosing." Parliamentary investiture would not be necessary.

(U) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 165, 29 Jul 61; (OUC) Vientiane to SecState, 176, 30 Jul 61.

30, 31
Jul 61

CHMAAG Laos in a message to CINCPAC, and the US Ambassador in Laos in a message to the Department of State, recommended that RB-26 "Eyeball" reconnaissance missions be resumed. (B-26 reconnaissance flights had previously been authorized on 26 April (see item) "until the cease-fire"; they had consequently ceased on 3 May.) These missions were deemed necessary to obtain adequate intelligence on enemy build up and resupply activities. Both officials stated further that the C-45 and PV-2 aircraft presently conducting "eyeball" reconnaissance flights could not carry on against the improvised Communist anti-aircraft defenses.

(See items 27 and 29 August 1961.)

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(S) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState, 172, 20 Jul 61;
CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC, DA IN 137089, 3 Aug 61.

31 Jul 61 The Geneva Conference engaged in a three-day discussion of whether a continued French military presence in Laos should be specifically mentioned in the proposed declaration of Laotian neutrality. The US and UK supported France by urging the exemption of French contingents from any blanket requirement for the withdrawal from Laos of all foreign troops. The RLG, however, merely stated that the status of the existing French Military Mission had been fixed by an agreement negotiated between the two Governments involved and that, for this reason, the future of the mission was a matter that should be reserved for the coalition government. The NLHX opposed this perpetuation of French influence. Souvanna's delegation at first supported fully the NLHX position, then declared that the Zurich communique (see item 22 June 1961) required the evacuation of French personnel but that the status of the Seno base should be the subject of future negotiations.

In commenting upon the actions of the RLG delegation, US Consul General Martin indicated that the "strong anti-French position of Phoumi and the RLG delegation at Zurich" may have resulted in a compromise with Souvanna (see item 15-17 September 1961 for Souvanna's comments) and a "muddled communique followed by NLHX watering down of their [RLG?] previously clear endorsement of the continued French military presence." Once again, continued the US Consul General, the Western position had been "eroded by the failure of the Boun Oum-Phoumi government to face the realities of the situation." Mr. Martin then concluded by pointing out that Phoumi should be warned

be warned that US support entailed cooperation and consultation on the part of the RLG.

(C) Msg, Geneva to SecState, CONF 488, 4 Aug 61.

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1 Aug 61 The Deputy Secretary of Defense requested that the JCS undertake a study of force requirements for Southeast Asia. The purpose of the study would be "to set forth a force structure (US and Allied) to include forces deployed on the mainland of Southeast Asia and in reserve, which is considered capable of holding non-Communist Southeast Asia against attack by the Communist Bloc, including Communist China." The area to be held would include Thailand, Cambodia, South Viet Nam, and "the necessary southern part of Laos"; however, other less ambitious lines of defense might also be examined. The study should state the requirements for defense of the area both "under conditions in which neither side employ nuclear weapons" and "under conditions in which either side initiates the use of nuclear weapons." The study should, finally, include an assessment of the logistical problems for both sides. It should assume the cooperation of the Southeast Asian SEATO Allies and should cover the time span 1962-1966.

(See items 18 September 1961 and 15 November 1961.)

(S) Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 1 Aug 61, encl to JCS 2339/12, 9 Aug 61; JMF 9150/3410 (1 Aug 61).

2 Aug 61 In a circular telegram, the Secretary of State informed various US Embassies of "current Washington thinking" on US diplomatic strategy regarding a Laotian settlement and provided guidance for future actions by US representatives in Geneva and in Laos. The objective of US strategy, according to the Secretary of State, was the "reunification of Laos under a neutral government whose neutrality would be safeguarded by an effective international presence."

After making this general statement, the Secretary of State discussed five facets of US policy: 1) the ICC;

2) international

2) international aspects of the cease-fire and the re-organization of a unified Lao Army; 3) the formation of a government of national union; 4) tactics for the Geneva Conference; and 5) present courses of action to be continued by the US. In addition, the Secretary of State asked the US diplomatic representatives in Geneva and Vientiane for recommendations on how to convince Souvanna that a "satisfactory" ICC was an "essential element" of a Laotian settlement.

1. The ICC. Secretary Rusk noted that "the central issue coming into focus at Geneva is the power of the ICC to supervise and control: a) the withdrawal of foreign troops, b) the terms of a cease-fire to be negotiated between the parties at Ban Namone, and c) the introduction of foreign military personnel and equipment." He considered it vital that the ICC be able to carry out these tasks.

In order to perform these three functions, the Secretary of State continued, the ICC would require "unrestricted ability to move, to investigate, and to report." In turn, the principal means to insure that the Commission had this ability was to provide it with: a) unconditional control of its own communications equipment and transport; b) free and immediate access to all parts of the kingdom; c) authority to decide issues by majority vote and to make minority reports; d) adequate personnel; and e) a guarantee that the Lao Government would assure the commission's security. An effective ICC, moreover, could not be hampered by a veto exercised by either the Geneva co-Chairmen, the Lao Government, or the commission members. In addition, the ICC should be able to deal in some way with the basic problem of the Lao coalition, the integration of factional contingents

into

into a unified army.

2. International aspects of the cease-fire and the integration of Lao forces. Secretary Rusk hoped that the Western and RLG positions could be introduced, preferably at Geneva but if necessary at Ban Namone.

3. Formation of a government of national union. Regarding the composition of the cabinet, the Secretary of State commented that a fairly detailed analysis of the various possibilities would be necessary. No cabinet, however, was to be formed until a satisfactory ICC had been agreed upon, and a satisfactory cease-fire was in effect. If the cabinet were formed before these issues had been settled, the US, the RLG, and Souvanna's Xieng Khouang faction would forfeit their bargaining power; for the Pathet Lao, if unchecked by an ICC and by cease-fire terms, would dominate the kingdom.

4. US tactics at the Geneva Conference. The Secretary of State believed that the US delegation should attempt "to get the equipment and access issues satisfactorily resolved insofar as the existing ICC is concerned" before the Conference neared the end of its agenda. In the event that the Conference bogged down completely, the US would seek an indefinite suspension on the basis of a continued cease-fire rather than move to have the Conference terminated. If the Conference were indeed suspended before action could be taken on the reform of the existing ICC, the US would simply declare that the commission's supervision of the cease-fire was inadequate but take no action to end the commission's activities. In the meantime, the US would continue working with Souvanna and the RLG to obtain a satisfactory cease-fire an accomplishment which could lead to the resumption of the suspended

suspended Conference.

5. Present US courses of action. The US, in Secretary Rusk's opinion, would have to continue to support the existing RLG, train and equip the FAL, and seek implementation and further development of plans to contain Pathet Lao and Viet Minh armed forces and of programs of political action, economic aid, and technical assistance.

(S) Dept of State CIRC 197, 2 Aug 61.

2 Aug 61 The US Ambassador in Vientiane, having reviewed various proposals concerning the formation of a coalition cabinet, informed the Secretary of State that the US should "aim for as large a cabinet as possible." The most realistic solution seemed to be the inclusion of Souvanna and three of his followers, three representatives of the Pathet Lao, three members of the present RLG, and four strongly anti-Communist neutrals not associated with Souvanna's Xieng Khouang faction.

As to the individual cabinet portfolios, Ambassador Brown considered it "most important" that anti-Communists hold Defense, Interior, Foreign Affairs, Religion, Information, and Education, while the Pathet Lao was limited to comparatively minor posts. Such a distribution, however, could be complicated by Souvanna's insistence upon key posts for his followers or by the Pathet Lao's desire to offset the influence of vigorous anti-Communists who might be selected for the cabinet.

Because of Souvanna's habit of not consulting with his colleagues, the anti-Communist ministers would have to be strong men, capable of overcoming the Prince's autocratic tendencies. In addition, the membership of the cabinet

should

should, in the Ambassador's opinion, provide appropriate representation to the various provinces.

Among the specific individuals recommended by the Ambassador were, for the RLG bloc, Phoumi as Minister of either Defense or Interior and Khampan Pantha, "the only really strong personality" within the RLG, as Minister of either Foreign Affairs or Information. Ambassador Brown also believed that Phoumi should be urged to press for the inclusion of Phoui among the four anti-Communist neutrals.

(C) Msg, Bangkok to SecState, 156, 2 Aug 61.

3 Aug 61 The Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, after calling attention to General Taylor's views on South-east Asian planning (see item 26 July 1961) and mentioning the limitations of SEATO Plan 5, suggested to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA) that contingency military plans be developed for three possible Laotian political situations.

Situation 1. A deliberate Communist breach of the cease-fire at the conclusion of the rainy season in an effort to overrun Laos rapidly. If such a situation did develop, the Deputy Under Secretary believed that Western response "would be in accordance with SEATO PLAN 5." The US, however should "realistically realize" that France "would not participate actively with her forces" (see item 29 September 1961).

Situation 2. An attempt by Phoumi, with or without the King's consent, to maintain the Boun Oum Government after the collapse of negotiations among the Princes and in the face of pressure from Souvanna and Souphacouvong.

In this

In this situation, which he considered the likeliest of the three, the Deputy Under Secretary suggested that the US "offensive" be based "first from Vietnam and also from Laos." The operation in Laos, however, "would be a holding one or one that would strengthen an operation by the RLG, supported by the Thai and Vietnamese, in the panhandle. American support would be kept to a minimum as far as ground operations were concerned. . . ." The US, he continued, "should contemplate carrying the offensive in its final stages to the DRV itself" (see item 7 August 1961).

Situation 3. The successful establishment of a neutral provisional government for Laos. Should this happen, the US would have to withdraw its forces from Laos and respect that nation's sovereignty and neutrality; but, while waiting to see whether a neutral Laos could really exist, "our insurance for the security of Southeast Asia would have to be based on our programs in Thailand and Vietnam."

(TS) Ltr, Dep USec State (Pol Aff) to Dep ASD (ISA), 3 Aug 61, copy on file with Dep Dir Opns, J-3.

3 Aug 61 In furtherance of a program suggested by the JCS on 2 June (see item), the Department of State requested each Chief of Mission in Southeast Asia to review the intelligence collection efforts in his country and present his analysis and recommendations (see item 15 August for Ambassador Brown's report).

(S) SecState, CIRC 204, 3 Aug 61.

5 Aug 61 After conferring at Phnom Penh on 1, 2, and 4 August, Princes Boun Oum and Souvanna distributed to the press a joint communique summarizing the results of their meeting.

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The communique stated that, subject to the approval of the absent Prince Souphanouvong, they had agreed to cooperate in establishing a true coalition cabinet which would not be a mere enlargement of the former cabinet of either Prince. They agreed to a future meeting at Luang Prabang, a session to which Prince Souphanouvong would be invited. This meeting was to be held after delegations from the three factions had, during the meetings at Ban Namone or at some other acceptable site, studied the issues involved in forming a new government (see item 6 September 1961).

(On the following day, while forwarding to the Secretary of State his comments on Phoumi's report of the Phnom Penh meetings, Ambassador Brown observed that, although contact had been re-established between the two Princes, it was evident that neither party had made any real effort to reach agreement on a new government or to explore the other party's ideas.)

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 200, 6 Aug 61; (U) Msg, Phnom Penh to SecState, 106, 5 Aug 61.

6 Aug 61 CINCPAC recommended to the JCS that the three helicopters proposed for loan to the RLG and subsequent use by the ICC (see item 11-13 July 1961) be provided from CONUS assets. CINCPAC stated that none of the helicopters presently in Laos could be spared for the ICC without injury to existing missions, and that his helicopter strength had already been severely depleted. (See item 2 September 1961.)

(S) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, DA IN 137819, 6 Aug 61.

7 Aug 61 The JCS forwarded to CINCPAC for his comments, a "Concept for Multinational Task Force Operations in Southeast Asia." This

This paper, developed in the Joint Staff, (see item 11 July 1961) set forth a plan for securing and defending the remaining friendly areas in Southeast Asia subsequent to a division of Laos. Presuming a RLG appeal to the Free World nations for military assistance, the plan established a multinational task force (MTF), comprised of non-mainland-Southeast Asian countries, which would deploy to Thailand, South Viet Nam, and southern Laos to free the native armies of these nations to conduct "other military activities." The MTF would also be prepared to conduct offensive air, naval, and guerrilla operations from its positions against northern Laos, North Viet Nam and southern China, as applicable.

The plan called for the deployment of the following forces:

1. Multinational Task Force

- a. 1 USARPAC infantry division and 1/3 Marine Div/Wing Team to secure key localities in the vicinities of Tourane, Udorn, Savannakhet, Seno, and Khorat.
- b. 1 US logistical command (augmented) to Bangkok.
- c. 1 US Composite Air Strike Force to appropriate bases in South Viet Nam and Thailand.
- d. 1 US Special Forces Group to Udorn.
- e. 1 Pakistani brigade-size force to Thakhek.
- f. 1 New Zealand infantry battalion (if available) to Paksane.
- g. 1 Australian infantry battalion (if available) to Pakse.
- h. 2 US attack carrier strike groups off the South Viet Nam coast.

i. 1 US

- i. 1 US airborne battle group held in reserve at Clark AFB, P.I.
- j. Philippine and UK forces (if available) held in reserve in Thailand.
- k. French forces (if available) to assist in securing the Seno area.

2. Indigenous Forces

- a. 1 Thai infantry division to Sayboury province.
- b. Available South Vietnamese forces to the Lao-South Viet Nam border areas.
- c. The FAL would secure Luang Prabang and, if the New Zealand contribution did not materialize, Paksane.
- d. Other Thai, South Vietnamese, and Lao forces would intensify their respective internal security activities.

(Presumably as a result of CINCPAC's strong objections (see item 20 July 1961), this plan differed significantly in concept from its original version (see item 11 July 1961). The MTF concept took into account CINCPAC's views that any operation of this type should take place within a "SEATO framework." Also, in harmony with CINCPAC's warning that the US should not promulgate any plan that reduced US contributions in Laos, the plan provided US forces as large as those envisaged for SEATO Plan 5 (see item 5 April 1961). Moreover, the plan, which originally had specified simply that US force contributions would be "minimum" and Southeast Asian contributions "maximum," now stipulated that "without reducing the priority of US force deployments, emphasis will be placed on the conspicuous utilization of Asian forces." (See

item

item 17 August 1961.)

[The President was briefed on this plan on 10 August; the President "noted" it.]

(TS) JCS 2339/11, 2 Aug 61; JMF 9150/3100 (13 May 61).
(TS) Msg, JCS to CINCPAC, JCS 1051, 7 Aug 61.

7 Aug 61 The CJCS responded to a Presidential query regarding the current status of Wattay (Vientiane) and Seno (Savannakhet) airfields. Both airfields, said the Chairman, were in "good" condition. Wattay's capacity was 36 sorties daily by either C-124 or C-130 aircraft; Seno could handle 60 sorties, but could not be used by fully loaded C-124s.

(TS) CM-307-61 to Pres, 7 Aug 61, OCJCS Files 091
Laos (3).

7 Aug 61 The US Ambassador to Thailand suggested to the Secretary of State that US military units be rotated into and out of Thailand for joint training with Thai units. The US could realize in this manner, the Ambassador emphasized, a continual US combat presence in Thailand, while skirting the RTG objection to the permanent stationing of US combat troops.

(On 20 August, CINCPAC endorsed the Ambassador's proposal, but warned that any Thai participation in the program would have to be subsidized.) (See item 2 October 1961.)

(S) Msgs, Bangkok to SecState, 181, 7 Aug 61; CINCPAC to JCS, DA IN 142050, 20 Aug 61.

7 Aug 61 The foreign ministers of the US, UK, and France, in session in Paris, agreed that their three governments should seek a
basis

basis for a common policy supporting Souvanna as Prime Minister of a neutral Laotian Government. However, in order to arrive at such a basis, prior understanding should be sought with Souvanna and other Lao leaders on: 1) composition of the neutral government; 2) the role of the ICC; 3) the future of the Lao Army and the problem of PL forces; and 4) the French military presence. Regarding tactics, the ministers agreed that the French should make the initial approach to Souvanna, emphasizing the Western consensus on composition of the government and the future of the FAL; the British would follow up, concentrating on the role of the ICC and the French military presence. Simultaneously, the US would inform the RLG of the tenor of the Western position and attempt to persuade the RLG to conform to this position in its negotiations with Souvanna (see item 9-11 August 1961).

The following were the agreed positions of the three nations:

1. Composition of a Neutral Lao Government

First, Souvanna should "support the monarchy and the constitution." Second, the cabinet portfolios of Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Interior should be denied to the PL or even to Souvanna followers closely associated with the PL. Phoumi should be given a "very high civilian post," and a large center group should be constituted from figures associated with neither the PL nor the RLG. A few PL could be in the cabinet, provided they held no key portfolios, and were balanced by an equal number of Phoumi adherents.

Further, Souvanna would be "expected" to postpone national elections until: a) suitable provision had been made for handling the problem of PL forces; b) the

non-Communist

non-Communist elements had been able to organize their political strength; and c) a "satisfactory degree of tranquility" had been restored to Laos.

2. The ICC

The present composition of the ICC was acceptable. Its authority should encompass supervision of the cease-fire, withdrawal and any subsequent entry of foreign military personnel and equipment, and, eventually, elections. The ICC should be empowered to conduct investigations anywhere in Laos, at the request of the Lao Government or any ICC member. Since Souvanna was known to feel that the ICC should have Lao consent to conduct its investigations, he should be pressed to guarantee that such consent would never, in fact, be withheld. Further, "the ICC should not be hampered by veto powers," and it should submit majority and minority reports. Finally, the ICC should be adequately manned and logistically independent, and its security should be assured by the RLG.

3. The Laotian Army and PL Forces

A small Laotian Army, loyal to the central government, should be formed and all other forces disbanded. Souvanna should be asked whether he had practical plans for achieving this aim "in a manner likely to minimize Pathet Lao influence."

4. The French Presence

Souvanna should agree that a French military presence would be maintained under conditions satisfactory to the French.

Reporting to the Department of State, the Secretary of State noted he had told his confreres that the US would be in no way obligated to the above agreement if a new Lao

Government

Government was constituted "in such a manner as to make neutrality impossible."

(S) Msgs, Paris to SecState, SECTO 30 and SECTO 31, 7 Aug 61; SECTO 42, 8 Aug 61.

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In a message to the Secretary of State the US Consul General in Geneva, commenting upon recent instructions from the Secretary of State (see item 2 August 1961), stated on 7 August that to introduce at Geneva any proposals dealing with the reorganization of the Lao Army would "simply add fuel to the already strong Communist attack on the French/US drafts (for JCS views on the discussion of this subject, see item 22 June 1961). For this reason, he agreed that it would be necessary to work with Souvanna and the RLG in order to resolve this question at the Ban Namone cease-fire talks.

On 9 August, the US Consul General stated that the principal advantage of including provisions for the integration of Lao armed forces in the cease-fire agreement was that such an arrangement would enable the ICC, in the course of supervising the cease-fire, to control the integration and demobilization of the factional forces. He suggested that Ambassador Brown might find it desirable to explain this line of reasoning to Phoumi. The Consul General then expressed his belief that it was probably appropriate to emphasize to Phoumi the US view that provisions for "handling the Pathet Lao and reconstituting the Lao Army" should be negotiated before the formation of a coalition government. It would be necessary, however, to develop a clear formula, which the US had not yet done, so that Phoumi would have "some pretty specific ideas on how this might be accomplished before he gets into serious negotiations on this with the

Souvanna

Souvanna and Pathet Lao groups."

(S) Msg, Geneva to SecState, CONFE 498, 9 Aug 61; (C) Msg, Geneva to SecState, CONFE 492, 7 Aug 61.

8 Aug 61 In a circular telegram, Under Secretary of State Ball, in response to a request from Geneva for guidance concerning the problem of determining the future relationship between Laos and SEATO, expressed the belief that the US, UK, France, and other nations should urge possible leaders of the Laotian coalition government not to "act too hastily or impetuously in cutting the RLG off from SEATO," an objective sought by the Communists, and not to abridge the right of the kingdom, as a member of the UN, to call for outside help in the event of armed attack.

At present, American diplomatic representatives were to stress the defensive character of SEATO, the fact that SEATO could not intervene in Laos without the consent of the Laotian Government, the respect that SEATO had shown for Cambodian neutrality, and the possible future value of SEATO protection in bargaining between the Laotian Government and Communist nations.

Meanwhile, the Department of State would consider possible alternatives to SEATO protection in the event that the coalition government, in spite of US arguments to the contrary, was intent upon renouncing aid from all military alliances. Any US concessions, which might ultimately prove necessary on this issue, were to be reserved, if possible, until the end of the Geneva Conference, and then granted, if necessary, in return for genuine concessions by the Communist

(C) Dept of State CIRC 236, 8 Aug 61.

The JCS

8 Aug 61 The JCS deferred, approval of CINCPAC's request that RED EYE missiles be used in Laos (see item 23 July 1961). Their final decision would depend, the JCS said, upon: 1) the results of upcoming tests of the missile; 2) comparison of the missile's probable effectiveness in Laos with the risks of its probable early compromise; and 3) political approval.

(TS) Msg, JCS to CINCPAC, JCS 1091, 8 Aug 61.

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Aug 61

The Department of State, believing that "closer definition" should be given to the "key" portfolios of a Lao coalition government (as discussed by the US, UK, and French foreign ministers; see item 7 August 1961), requested Ambassador Brown on 8 August to give his views on the relative importance of cabinet posts. The Department felt that Defense, Interior (if the police fell under it), Youth, Veterans, Religion, and Social Affairs were posts which should "definitely" be denied the PL; Foreign Affairs, Education, and Information, while also important, formed a second category. The remaining posts (e.g., Finance, Economic Affairs, et al) might with less risk be entrusted to the PL.

On 9 August Ambassador Brown replied to the Department. He agreed that Foreign Affairs, which portfolio Souvanna would undoubtedly retain for himself, was not of the first importance. However, contrary to the Department's view, he felt that the portfolios of Education and Information, because of their influence on Lao thought, were of first importance. Moreover, Economic Affairs, while not a crucial post, might, Brown warned, include Rural Development. Brown considered the most important cabinet posts, excluding Foreign Affairs, to be, in order of importance: Defense, Interior, Rural

Rural Development, Information, Religion, Education, Social Affairs, Youth, and Veterans.

(S) Msgs, SecState to Vientiane, 150, 8 Aug 61; Vientiane to SecState, 216, 9 Aug 61.

8-11
Aug 61

On the evening of 8 August, Communist howitzers in Xieng Khouang town opened fire on Meo units in the nearby hills. The Meo units held their positions, however, and responded with mortar and recoilless rifle fire. This "artillery duel" continued until 11 August, without any troop contact.

(S) JCS Laos SITREP/52-61, 17 Aug 61. (S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 259, 16 Aug 61.

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On consecutive days, Ambassador Brown explained the Western foreign ministers' agreement on Laos (see item 7 August 1961) to Phoumi, Boun Oum, and the King. He detailed to the three Lao each provision of the Western accord, refraining only from emphasizing that Souvanna was the putative prime minister under the agreement and, at the suggestion of the Department of State, from mentioning that the ICC would have authority to supervise elections. The three Lao accepted with little or no comment the Western proposals on the coalition government, the ICC, and the army. But all three deplored the Western insistence on a French military presence, citing variously their dislike of French hauteur, distrust of French intent, and disillusion with past French performance.

(S) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState, 209 and 210, 9 Aug 61; 221, 10 Aug 61; 237, 11 Aug 61. (S) Msg, SecState CIRC 219, 8 Aug 61.

11 Aug 61 Ambassador Brown, commenting upon the Secretary of State's recent statement of "over-all strategy" for Laos (see item

2 August

2 August 1961) stated that the "basic factor in Laos today which in its impact overrides all others" was the military situation on the ground. The US would continue to operate at a disadvantage as long as this situation continued to favor the Communists. This factor affected US efforts to:

- 1) secure agreement on effective international controls and a strong ICC;
- 2) bring about withdrawal of foreign forces from Laos;
- 3) devise measures for integration of PL forces into any national Lao Army which may emerge;
- 4) help work out satisfactory cease-fire agreement among Lao factions at Ban Namone;
- and 5) bring about formation of coalition government of a character "we feel we can live with."

The Communists, said the Ambassador, were determined to reap the maximum political advantage from their favorable military posture. Therefore, it would be unrealistic for the US to expect the achievement of a satisfactory role for the ICC or an acceptable arrangement for the integration of PL forces into the Lao Army. Although Phoumi might be willing to negotiate on these points, Brown felt that it was the "other side" that, until a coalition government was formed, would be most unlikely to negotiate.

The military imbalance also served to weaken the effectiveness of US efforts to "hold and force back pro-Communist NLHX and followers" by political action and economic and technical assistance programs. The good results of such programs tended to vanish rapidly when villagers were threatened with the loss of life by the PL. Self-preservation, which was the most important consideration of the average Lao, would probably determine how he would vote in any future election. Nevertheless, Brown recognized the need for continuing and even stepping up activities in the "political-psychological action area." It was clearly essential for the

US

US not only to assist the RLG in "immunizing" areas still under its control against Communist blandishments and encroachments, but also to build up a solid base for expansion of such activities if and when the situation permitted. Aside from military strength, what was most needed in Laos, stated Brown, was a strong cadre of dedicated, brave and effective local provincial administrators and civil servants, including police.

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 231, 11 Aug 61.

12 Aug 61 The Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA) informed the Director, Joint Staff, that the RLG cease-fire agreement tabled at Ban Namone on 28 July (see item 28 July-16 August 1961) contained "serious inadequacies" in the role to be given the ICC, and "no provision at all" for the formation of a national army. It did not appear possible to negotiate at Geneva any satisfactory formula for constitution of a new Lao Army, the Defense official said (see item 7, 9 August 1961); control of such reconstitution might therefore devolve upon the ICC. In order that the US position on the ICC at Geneva would not be undercut, the US was urging the RLG to change its draft (see item 28 July-16 August 1961). The Acting Assistant Secretary requested that, for the development of the US position vis-a-vis the RLG, the Director submit the views of the Joint Staff on: 1) regroupment of Lao forces; 2) dissolution of the Pathet Lac; and 3) creation of a new army of Laos. (See item 6 September 1961.)

(S) Memo, ASD (ISA) to DJS, 12 Aug 61, encl to JCS 2344/7, 18 Aug 61; JMF 9155.2/3100 (12 Aug 61).

In separate

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In separate messages, CHMAAG (to JCS) and the US Ambassador in Laos (to State) gave substantially identical evaluations of FAL combat capability. The FAL, the US officials thought remained incapable of offering more than delaying action against enemy attack. Despite some progress in training, organization, and equipment, the FAL continued to be crippled by poor leadership. The "only timely solution" to this leadership problem, the two US officials said, was encadrement of the FAL by US WSMTT's down to the battalion level and Thai personnel down to the platoon level (see item 29 August 1961).

The Ambassador, relying upon CHMAAG's assessment also responded to several questions put to him regarding the possible concentration of FAL forces in the south (as envisaged by a JCS plan under development; see items 11 July and 7 August 1961). This concentration would enhance the FAL capability to delay the enemy, the Ambassador said, but "no scheme of maneuver can of itself compensate" for the basic FAL weakness in leadership. If FAL leadership improved then Thai and South Vietnamese forces in the order of one well equipped and trained division, with one fighter-bomber wing and one troop carrier wing in support could join with the FAL in securing southern Laos.


There was little doubt, the Ambassador continued, of Phoumi's willingness to regroup his forces in the south; he had long indicated that such an operation was "in the back of his mind." The Ambassador had in fact long feared that Phoumi would prematurely launch such an operation and be crushed. Moreover, Phoumi would be glad to cooperate with the Thai and South Vietnamese.

The US

(TS) Msgs, SecState to Vientiane, 152, 8 Aug 61;
Vientiane to SecState, 247, 14 Aug 61; CHMAAG Laos to JCS,
DA IN 140391, 15 Aug 61.

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61

The US Country Team in Laos submitted its recommendations for future Meo operations under several possible conditions, as follows:

Situation No. 1. With the beginning of the dry season, the Meo would be under heavy enemy pressure, particularly if neither the RLG nor PL initiated a conventional offensive. In this circumstance, the Meo would continue their present irregular tactics. The US would endeavor to improve the effectiveness of the presently organized Meo; at the same time, efforts would be made to enlarge Meo forces in Xieng Khouang province, and to develop the capabilities of minority tribesmen and FAL remnants in Sam Neua province. To accomplish these, and other, aims the Country Team recommended that a Joint Unconventional Warfare Task Force (JUWTF) or joint planning group be formed by MAAG: 

Situation No. 2. A coalition government would be formed with adequate safeguards against a Communist takeover. In this situation, both the US and the Meo would presumably seek an accommodation with this government. The Meo should be instructed to cache their arms and "live with" this new government. The US would, however, guarantee the Meo that, if the new government persecuted them, the US would, at the minimum, support their evacuation and resettlement. In the meantime, the USOM relief program for the Meo would be continued.

Situation No. 3. A coalition government unsatisfactory to the US would be formed. The US might in this case: 1) maintain only a minimal diplomatic presence in Laos;

2) withdraw

2) withdraw diplomatic recognition entirely; or 3) support the present RLG, the Thai, and South Vietnamese in an attempt to defend a partitioned Laos. In either of the first two alternatives, the US should continue whatever assistance was necessary for the evacuation of those Meo who wished to leave Laos. In the third alternative, the US might wish either to support the Meo in their present locations or to resettle them in southern Laos.

Situation No. 4. The present uneasy truce continued. In this circumstance, the activities described in Situation No. 1 (see above) should be undertaken.

Situation No. 5. Hostilities were resumed, by either side, or by US-Thai-South Vietnamese initiative. The Meo would, of course, be of great value as unconventional forces. Ultimate control of their operations would shift from CAS to the Department of Defense.

On 16 August, CINCPAC informed the JCS that he was "in general accord" with the Country Team's recommendations.

On 18 August, the US delegation at Geneva forwarded its comments. With regard to Situations No. 1 and 3 (see above), the delegation expressed concern lest too much emphasis be placed on recruitment, and too little on increased effectiveness of existing units. Situation No. 2 (see above), the delegation said, would be a very favorable outcome for the US, but obviously a very "fragile" situation. The exposure of continued US ties with and support of the Meo might be "embarrassing and possibly serious." Moreover, the existence of organized armed units would be, from both the Meo and US points of view, less necessary. The US should be careful, the delegation concluded, that by maintaining the military organization of the Meo it did not endanger long-range US

interests

~~TOP SECRET~~
interests in a stable, genuinely neutral Laos.

(S) Msgs, ~~TOP SECRET~~

JCS, 162327Z Aug 61.

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21 Aug
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The meetings at Ban Nampone continued in a virtual deadlock over the method of selecting a Prime Minister for the coalition government. The RLG delegation insisted that the names of at least two candidates for the office of Prime Minister be submitted to the King, but the other delegations demanded the submission of a single name, that of Souvanna.

The military subcommittee, facing an impasse over the effective date of the cease-fire, decided to postpone a decision on this question and agreed instead that, whatever the effective date, all troops would remain in the positions occupied at that time.

(C) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState, 249, 14 Aug 61; 262, 16 Aug 61; 300, 21 Aug 61.

15 Aug 61 In response to a request from the Department of State, the US Ambassador to Thailand gave answers to questions as follows:

1. What measures would Sarit be willing and able to take immediately in Northeast Thailand to deter any Communist guerrilla threat which might arise from untoward developments in Laos?

Sarit could, and probably would as a result of recommendations already submitted by the Ambassador, reorganize his security structure in the Northeast. The RTA had already, the Ambassador noted, begun placing special emphasis in training for counter-guerrilla and jungle operations.

2. Would

2. Would Sarit be willing to join in cooperative military actions with Laos and South Viet Nam designed to hold the present cease-fire line while mopping up PL pockets in southern Laos?

Sarit would join in such an operation, Ambassador Young stated, only if US ground and air forces were also participating. Even at that, the RTA would probably request additional logistical and advisory support, and additional unilateral guarantees of protection by the US.

3. Was JUSMAG Thailand adequately manned to meet the requirements of 1 and 2 above?

CHJUSMAG considered he would need an additional 100 men merely to develop the Thai security program. To support Thai combat activity in Laos, a joint task force separate from JUSMAG should be created.

4. What would be the performance of Thai troops if they engaged in the action described in 2 above?

The Thai troops would perform well in Laos if accompanied by US troops.

5. What special problems in command and coordination would be involved in 2 above?

The principal special problem that Ambassador Young foresaw was that, the Thai would not "accept Lao or Vietnamese command or vice versa." Therefore, the more the US assumed the leadership of the operations, the fewer would be the problems of command.

(TS) Msgs, SecState to Bangkok, 165, 8 Aug 61; Bangkok to SecState, 229, 15 Aug 61.

15 Aug 61 Ambassador Brown reported as requested (see item 3 August 1961) on the status of US intelligence collection in Laos.

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The Ambassador stated that efforts to gather overt intelligence information had been restricted by the combat situation, and the de facto division of, Laos. Intelligence collected in Communist-held areas was limited to normal combat intelligence reports, aerial reconnaissance, and reports from other friendly governments - the French, and occasionally the Canadian ICC members.

Under present conditions, Brown concluded, little could be done to "redirect" intelligence efforts in order better to meet requirements. However, additional MAAG intelligence personnel (presently authorized and requisitioned but not yet on hand) were required, as well as additional aerial reconnaissance, preferably by RB-26s (see items 30, 31 July and 29 August 1961).

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 255, 15 Aug 61.

16 Aug 61 In a public address in New Delhi, Prime Minister Nehru outlined Indian policy toward the Laotian problem. It had been "admitted all round," he noted, that Laos should be a neutral state, and that foreign armies should be removed from Laotian territory.

There had been, said Nehru, "some argument" about the role of the ICC. The Indian attitude toward this subject was that the ICC could perform a very important and useful service in Laos. But it could only do this with the good will of the Laotian Government and people. The Commission, he declared, could not be a kind of "super-Government." It must stand on its rights as delineated by the 14-nation conference and operate with a fair measure of freedom to investigate charges of cease-fire violations throughout Laos.

CINCPAC

(U) Msg, New Delhi to SecState, A-74, 1 Sep 61.

17 Aug 61 CINCPAC, as requested, submitted to the JCS his comments on the "Concept for Multinational Task Force Operations in Southeast Asia" (see item 7 August 1961). Having already delivered his objections to the concept itself (see item 20 July 1961), CINCPAC confined himself in this message to comments upon specific planned deployments and command relationships.

(TS) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 170011Z Aug 61.

17, 19
Aug 61

CHMAAG Laos, in a "speculative analysis" submitted to CINCPAC on 17 August, warned that the current situation in Laos demanded "increased watchfulness" for indications that the RLG would attempt to bring about US intervention. There had already been a series of FAL actions, CHMAAG said, indicating that such an attempt would be made. The FAL had "shifted its weight" to the South; and several new commanders had been appointed. Interestingly, "spontaneous interest" had been shown in the creation and training of guerrilla and auto defense choc (ADC) units in the north, while the units in the south engaged in conventional training. Moreover, the FAL had increased significantly its liaison with the Thai and South Vietnamese armies. These and other happenings had been and would be watched closely by the MAAG.

On 19 August, the Secretary of State, disturbed by CHMAAG's report, told Ambassador Brown that Phoumi must be made to understand that "any unilateral action on his part designed to lead to resumption of hostilities would be

strongly

strongly opposed by the USG[overnment] and considered a breach of faith"

(S) Msgs, CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC, DA IN 141302, 18 Aug 61; SecState to Vientiane, 184, 19 Aug 61.

17, 22
Aug 61

In a message to the Secretary of State, Ambassador Harriman expressed the hope that Ambassador Brown would see Soviet Ambassador Abramov in Laos and impress upon him that a coalition government in Laos could be formed only if the Pathet Lao would cease their "exorbitant demands" and agree to accept a minority status. The Soviets should be told that the Pathet Lao could not shoot their way into a "pre-dominant position" in the coalition government. If the Soviets, Harriman added, sincerely desired the early establishment of such a government, they must exert continual influence on the Pathet Lao.

On 22 August Ambassador Brown, after informing the Secretary of State that Harriman's message from Geneva had been delayed, expressed the belief that he should have further guidance before approaching Abramov on the points enumerated in Harriman's cable.

Ambassador Brown considered there was validity to Harriman's statements concerning the PL's "'exorbitant demands'" and the PL's attempts to gain "'predominant position'" only if the PL was regarded as not really distinguishable from Souvanna's "'neutralist'" forces. The only demands which the PL "as such" had made in connection with a provisional government had been 1) that Souvanna must be the Prime Minister, and 2) that the government must be simply an enlargement of Souvanna's "'legal'" government.

In Brown's

In Brown's opinion, the PL's main interest in a provisional government was to gain a foothold and weight in the new government sufficient to press successfully for early elections. The PL was apparently confident that, because of their military control over much of the countryside they would emerge from elections in a dominating position in a new and more permanent government.

(S) Msg, Geneva to SecState, CONF 529 17 Aug 61;
(S) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState, 263, 17 Aug 61; 305, 22 Aug 61.

18 Aug 61 The Chairman, JCS, forwarded to General Taylor, at the request of General Taylor's office, a report on the status of military supplies available in Laos and Thailand to support the FAL if hostilities were resumed. The report listed the tonnage in depot of each class of supplies, the quantities of all types of weapons and ammunition, and the days of combat that could be supported by the present stocks of each class of supplies. There were presently no critical shortages for approved MAP units in Laos, the Chairman said; however, Phoumi was creating and equipping unauthorized units and thereby siphoning off supplies.

(TS) CM-337-61 to Gen. Taylor, 18 Aug 61; JMF 9155.2/31 (8 Aug 61) (2).

19 Aug 61 Phoumi formally requested of CHMAAG that the US approve and provide support for the following augmentation of Lao armed forces:

Regular

	<u>Proposed</u>	<u>Current Authorization</u>
Regular forces	55,934	(38,478)
<u>Auto defense choc</u> (ADC)	15,400	(13,800)
<u>Auto defense ordinaire</u> (ADO)	--	(16,000)
Total	71,334	(68,278)

In his request, Phoumi informed the US for the first time that the ADO forces had in fact been dissolved as of 1 January 1961 (see items 23 October and 29 November 1961). He also showed a keen recognition that leadership was the most serious FAL deficiency and indicated that he would accept Thai cadres to advise FAL units down to the squad level.

(See items 26 and 29 August 1961 et seq. for US actions in regard to encadrement of the FAL. See item 9 September for CINCPAC's recommendations on the force augmentation.)

(S) Msg, CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC, DA IN 142196, 21 Aug 61; CINCPAC to JCS, DA IN 148603, 9 Sep 61.

19 Aug 61 In a message to the Secretary of State, Ambassador Brown reported on a conversation that had taken place between British Ambassador Addis and Indian Ambassador Ratnam. According to Addis, Ratnam had said that Abramov, the Soviet Ambassador, had commented to him that there were a number of world problems between the Soviets and the United States. Berlin, the Congo, Bizerte, Cuba, and Laos. Of these, Abramov reportedly had said, Laos was the "easiest." Therefore, the Soviets intended to "solve Laos first," because of its "effect on other issues."

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 279, 19 Aug 61.

Soviet

19 Aug 61 Soviet Ambassador Abramov called upon the King at Vientiane, and delivered a three-point message: the USSR backed Souvanna fully; a government of national union must be formed quickly; and the USSR desired a neutral Laos. The Soviet emissary was friendly and respectful during his audience, demanding nothing and hinting that "some results would shortly come out of Geneva." His "soft approach" mystified the King, Boun Oum, and Phoumi.

Later the same day, the Soviet Ambassador called upon US Ambassador Brown. The Soviet diplomat, whom Brown characterized as exuding "affability and good-fellowship," expressed his belief that the Geneva Conference had made substantial progress and predicted that a cease-fire agreement would be signed in two or three weeks. When Ambassador Brown outlined the US interpretation of "neutrality" and stated his government's position regarding an international control body, Abramov stated that he agreed and that the Soviet Union desired an independent, neutral, and united Laos. The Soviet Ambassador warned, however, that Phoumi would not be accepted in the new Laotian Government unless he cooperated with its neutral policies.

(S) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState, 278, and 283, 19 Aug 61.

21 Aug 61 The US Ambassador in Vientiane requested the comments of the Secretary of State on a plan, prepared at the Ambassador request by the USOM adviser on police and public safety matters, which provided for the reorganization of the Lao national police force. This plan, not yet shown to Phoumi, had elicited varying reactions among the members of the US Country Team. The director of the overseas mission in particular

particular had expressed strong reservations as to the practicability of trying to put the plan into effect at this time.

The basic plan.

1. The so-called "Ryan Plan" provided for the re-establishment under the Minister of Interior of a 3,200-man police force, ultimately to be expanded in strength to 6,000. The largest component of the proposed force was the provincial police, which eventually would consist of 3,590 men. This group was to be responsible for the vital task of putting down subversion in rural areas.

2. The estimated non-recurring cost was \$3.5 million, while the annual recurring costs were estimated as \$5.3 million.

3. The recruiting, at the rate of 250 per month, and on-the-job training of additional Lao policemen, the recruiting of 17 US technicians, and the procurement of materials were planned for a 12-month period. The time limit however, could be extended if necessary.

4. After the entire staff of a proposed national police academy had been fully trained, a task expected to take two and one-half to three years, it would no longer be necessary to rely upon on-the-job training for recruits.

Prerequisites to the implementation of the plan. Before the plan could be put into effect, the RLG would have to agree in writing to the following:

1. Return of the national police to control of the Minister of Interior

2. Procurement within 12 months of 2,800 men for integration into the police force.

3. Return to police control of as much as possible of former equipment.

4. Measures

4. Measures to "prevent unwarranted 'evaporation' of either [police] funds or material."
5. End-use audits by the USOM, when required.
6. Approval by both the director of police, or his deputy, and the Chief, Public Safety Division, USOM, of all large payments from USOM funds and of all building contracts involving USOM-provided funds.

Assumptions upon which the plan was based.

1. Any coalition government would either be friendly enough to the US to agree to such a plan or, at the least, reluctant to discard the plan if it were already in operation.
2. If no coalition could be formed and the country was divided, the need for a national police of this type would be even greater.
3. France would not be engaged in the development of a Lao national gendarmerie.
4. If a representative of the Pathet Lao became Minister of Interior, the program would have to be either terminated or altered.

(See item 31 August 1961).

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 294, 21 Aug 61.

21 Aug 61 Ambassador Young informed the Secretary of State that the Soviet Embassy in Bangkok had delivered a "strong" note on the Laotian situation to the Thai Foreign Office. The note, after attacking "US imperialists" and claiming that the USSR wanted a neutral Laos, 1) demanded that the three Lao political "'powers'" be permitted to settle the coalition question among themselves, and 2) warned that if the RTG continued to support the Phoumi forces, the situation "'would be fraught

be fraught with most serious consequences for Thailand."

(The contents of the Soviet note had been orally presented by the Soviet chargé to Foreign Minister Thanat on 10 August; the note itself was delivered a "few days" later).

(C) Msg, Bangkok to SecState, 264, 21 Aug 61.

21 Aug 61 In a message to the JCS, CINCPAC argued against US support of Souvanna as Prime Minister.

In the early spring of 1961, CINCPAC related, the "hard" Communist line in Laos, based on military successes there, had been accompanied by a "comparatively soft" SEATO and US line. However, when the US and SEATO took firm action in April 1961--such action as activating the US Element SEATO Field Forces, concentrating 7th Fleet units in the South China Sea, and reinforcing the FAL with Thai personnel and equipment--the Communists, despite their undoubted military superiority in Laos, agreed to a cease-fire. Their failure to continue the offensive, CINCPAC thought, "must be a reflection of their real concern that to do so would trigger SEATO or other US sponsored military reaction."

During the next few weeks, CINCPAC continued, the "major issue" would be "whether the US intends to win in Laos or to surrender by compromise"; and the "most important indication to the Southeast Asians" of a US defeat would be the appointment of Souvanna, the "chosen instrument" of the Communist Bloc, as Prime Minister.

The US, CINCPAC argued in conclusion, could gain by "further hardening" its position in Laos, and giving the "full measure" of its support to Phoumi, the one Laotian leader who "has stood the test of time and adversity."

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(TS) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, DA IN 142178, 21 Aug 61.

22 Aug 61 The JCS, adopting the recommendations of CHMAAG Laos (see item 10 June and 14, 15 August 1961) and CINCPAC, requested that the Secretary of Defense approve the augmentation of MAAG Laos by 10 additional WSMTTs (increasing the WSMTT forces from 166 to 330 men). (See item 26 and 29 August 1961.)

(On 30 August, the Secretary of Defense approved this recommendation.)

(TS) JCSM-575-61 to SecDef, 22 Aug 61, derived from JCS 2344/8, 17 Aug 61. (TS) 2nd N/H of JCS 234418, 13 Sep 61. (TS) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 140450Z Aug 61; CINCPAC to JCS, DA IN 139985, 14 Aug 61; CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC, DA IN 138633, 9 Aug 61. All in JMF 9155.2/5191 (17 Aug 61).

22 Aug 61 At the request of the Department of State, the US Ambassador to Thailand submitted his assessment of the status of SEATO. Since its inception, the Ambassador said, SEATO had been an "unnatural hybrid organization," beset with "internal inconsistencies" and with a "basic antagonism" between the French and the Asian members. Lately, moreover, it had been "downgraded by inaction and contempt to the point of sterility and futility."

The US should not, however, Ambassador Young recommended, desert SEATO at this time. First of all, there was "no immediate alternative that would not entail unacceptable risk of future serious decline in US prestige and increased weakening of Southeast Asia." And second, SEATO retained some "assets": it was the legal framework of the US commitment to defend Southeast Asia; and its Asian and Pacific members were "relatively cooperative" with the US.

Since,

Since, said Ambassador Young, the basic weakness of the alliance was the membership of France, the US should consider "whether the French would tactfully disengage from SEATO." If France would not withdraw from the alliance, the US should secure an "explicit understanding" that France would not veto "operations even if they cannot join them."

The US should, the Ambassador said, take the initiative in directing SEATO's attention toward four basic problems: 1) French membership; 2) a "social action system" to immunize the peoples of Southeast Asia against Communist blandishments; 3) a delineation of and planning for a "military defense perimeter," from South Viet Nam to East Pakistan, against the "inevitable Chinese push to Indonesia and Australia"; and 4) a solution in Laos that would retain anti-Communist control of at least those areas adjoining South Viet Nam and Thailand.

(TS) Msg, Bangkok to SecState, 274, 22 Aug 61.

22, 25
Aug 61

On 22 August CINCPAC set forth to CHMAAG Laos the current concept for logistical support of the MAAG and FAL. The concept consisted of three basic objectives:

1. To fill requirements for supplies and equipment for FAL troop units.
2. To meet the current requirements for training and "small scale combat operations."
3. To provide a 30-day war reserve in Thailand, with all withdrawals controlled by CINCPAC (Project SALT SHAKER).

CHMAAG, with Ambassador Brown's concurrence, replied on 25 August that CINCPAC's supply concept was "entirely adequate." Equally as important as the quantity of supplies however, CHMAAG noted, was the control, distribution, and safeguarding

safeguarding of them. At present, the US had no control over materiel once it arrived in Laos. Much equipment was siphoned off to "units which Phoumi creates at the drop of a hat"; consequently, authorized units were always short of equipment. With resumption of hostilities possibly imminent and "time running out," the most effective solution for FAL logistics would be for the US to "move in and run it." In this way, the US would not only ensure effective logistical operations in Laos; the US would also erect a major barrier to Phoumi's creating further unauthorized units.

(S) Msgs, CINCPAC to CHMAAG Laos, DA IN 142448, 22 Aug 61; Laos to CINCPAC, DA IN 144137, 26 Aug 61.

24 Aug 61 The JCS informed CINCPAC and CHMAAG Laos that the US desired that Lao T-6 strikes be conducted only against enemy forces that were violating the cease-fire. The JCS, therefore, desired to be informed immediately of each T-6 strike, and the character of the enemy action against which it had been directed. (See item 27 August 1961.)

(TS) Msg, JCS to CINCPAC, JCS 1243, 24 Aug 61.

24 Aug 61 Ambassador Brown informed the Secretary of State that, almost for the first time, he had had what might be considered a "genuine" consultation with Phoumi. The Laotian General had opened the conversation by asking, in effect, whether the US was still determined to find a political solution by negotiation. At the Ban Namone meetings, Phoumi reported, the other side was continuing to insist on the acceptance of Souvanna as the sole candidate for Prime Minister. In addition, they were insisting that the King

shoul

should be presented with a full state of ministers so that, virtually, he would be handed a Prime Minister and a government for his approval, but without any choice on his part.

The RLG insisted, Phoumi declared, that the King must have some choice of "Prime Ministers." Phoumi felt that any government under Souvanna would simply be an instrument of the PL and would not work for the best interest of Laos.

In reply to Ambassador Brown's question regarding an alternative to a coalition government under Souvanna, Phoumi said that there were two. One was a government under the King--this was a "real possibility," provided the Western friends of Laos would support it fully. Ambassador Brown expressed serious doubts not only as to whether the King would consent to be the Prime Minister but also whether the other side would accept him in this position. Agreeing with Brown on the latter point, Phoumi suggested that if it were clear that a government under Souvanna was ruled out, the King as PM might be considered, although, he added, the King would want to know whether he could count on the support of the United States. The US Ambassador reiterated that the US was prepared to support any sovereign government which was agreed upon and which gave assurance of being independent and not dominated by Communists. This included, the Ambassador went on, a government under the prime ministership of the King, if the King decided to act in this capacity.

The second alternative, Phoumi said, was to drop the Ban Namone talks--drop Souvanna--and have direct negotiations between Boun Oum and Souphanouvong. Getting "rid of the neutralists" would permit direct confrontation with the enemy to try to work out some kind of solution, Phoumi added. In response to Brown's question on who would be a possible PM emerging

emerging from such negotiations, the Laotian General said they they might be able to agree on some lesser figure, like Kou Abhay.

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 318, 24 Aug 61.

24-27
Aug 61

The Secretary of State on 24 August informed the US Embassies in Vientiane, Bangkok, Saigon, London, Paris, and Geneva that recent conversations with Soviet diplomats in Geneva, as well as in Laos (see item 19 August 1961), could indicate either a new line of Soviet diplomatic and political action or an effort to create false hopes in the non-Communist countries, thus putting the West at a psychological disadvantage when the Pathet Lao resumed hostilities. The Ambassadors were reminded that: 1) if the Pathet Lao forces remained intact, they would emerge following a political settlement as the dominant military power in Laos; 2) the activities of the ICC, as presently visualized, could not inconvenience the Communists, since the work of training and equipping the Pathet Lao had reached the point where Soviet and Viet Minh personnel could be withdrawn and supply activities halted; and 3) Souphanouvaong was reported to be seeking to prevent integration of the Pathet Lao contingent into a national army until after the general election.

Because of the danger posed by the Pathet Lao forces, the Secretary of State considered it important that, prior to the elections, an integrated national army be organized and made subject to the control of the provisional government. Therefore, the US Ambassador in Vientiane was to join his British and French colleagues in a study of the problems of integration and demobilization (see item 20 October 1961).

The US

The US Ambassadors in Paris and London were to discuss with the French and British Foreign Offices the US concern over the possibility that the Soviets were waging a psychological campaign and point out the importance of analyzing the demobilization and integration problems. The other addressees were to discuss with appropriate officials the importance of early action to bring about negotiations on the reconstitution of a Lao Army and the disbandment of the Pathet Lao irregular forces.

In response to the Secretary of State's message, Ambassador Brown on 26 August warned that the introduction of such a controversial issue into the Ban Namone talks would delay the formation of a provisional government; for the Communists would object, and Phoumi would be given an excuse to stall the negotiations.

On 27 August, Ambassador Brown reported that Phoumi had intimated to two South Vietnamese generals that his followers would not accept Souvanna. This incident led the Ambassador to believe that Phoumi would insist upon an integration agreement. In the Ambassador's opinion, Phoumi's bargaining position was not strong enough to force the Communists to accept the disbandment of the Pathet Lao forces and their integration into a national army.

Upon receiving Ambassador Brown's comments, the Secretary of State on 27 August modified his previous instructions so that the Ambassador in Vientiane might defer his approach to Phoumi pending a further analysis of the problem. In addition, the Ambassadors in Bangkok, Saigon, London, Paris, and Ottawa were to point out the desirability of obtaining agreement on an integration formula, instead of stressing more forcefully the importance

of such

of such a course of action.

The Secretary of State in another message sent the same day called attention to the difficulty of controlling the Pathet Lao after the establishment of a national government, the attendant withdrawal of US military aid, and the removal of the SEATO deterrent. Thus, Communist agreement to the disbanding of Pathet Lao forces and their merger into a national army would have to be obtained before the formation of the national union, at a time when the US and the RLG still possessed some bargaining power. The logical approach seemed to be to encourage Phoumi to begin negotiations either at Ban Namone or at a meeting of the Princes, who had agreed at Zurich to the unification by the provisional government of the existing armed forces. If Ambassador Brown considered it completely impractical for Phoumi to undertake negotiations on the subject, the US and allied Ambassadors could approach Souvanna. The Secretary of State expressed his belief that some understanding on the integration of Lao forces was necessary before the US could support a coalition government.

(S) Msgs, State to Vientiane, PRIORITY 202, 24 Aug 61; NIACT 208, 27 Aug 61; PRIORITY 209, 27 Aug 61; (S) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState, 328, 26 Aug 61; 330, 27 Aug 61.

26 Aug 61 CHMAAG Laos summarized for CINCPAC the plans for and progress of Project EKARAD - the training of Lao troops in Thailand. According to CHMAAG, EKARAD, when completed sometime in 1962 would have achieved:

1. 6 weeks training for 8 infantry battalions.
2. 12 weeks training for 6 artillery batteries.
3. 8 weeks training for 1000 recruits.

To

To date, the 7th, 8th, and 9th Infantry Battalions (1766 men) had completed EKARAD and returned to Laos; the 28th Infantry Battalion was currently in training.

(S) Msg, CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC, DA IN 144769, 29 Aug 61.

26 Aug 61

[REDACTED]

26 Aug 61 At a meeting in South Viet Nam, Phoumi and General Khanh, Chief of Staff of the Army of the Republic of Viet Nam (ARVN), agreed inter alia that the location of Lao and Vietnamese border posts and related border activities should be coordinated between the two countries. (CINCPAC had earlier reported that Phoumi planned to man his border posts with Lao guides for Vietnamese pursuit forces.)

(S) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState, 331, 27 Aug 61; CINCPAC to JCS, 182156Z Aug 61.

26 Aug 61 The JCS informed CINCPAC that the Joint Staff was considering, in anticipation of increased Communist activity at the end of the rainy season, actions that could be taken to "stiffen" the FAL. Among the actions being discussed was further augmentation of both US and Thai military advisers. The JCS requested CINCPAC's comments on:

1. Providing

1. Providing US and Thai advisers down to the company/battery level (the JCS estimated that 1025 advisers would be necessary); and the advisability of requesting the Thai to furnish 500 of these advisers.

2. The use of Thai officers and NCOs (approximately 2500) to cadre the FAL down to the platoon or squad level.

(See items 29 August, 2 and 7 September, and 11 October 1961.)

(TS) Msg, JCS to CINCPAC, JCS 1267, 26 Aug 61; JMF 9155.2/5191 (17 Aug 61).

26 Aug 61 The US delegation to the Geneva Conference reported to the Secretary of State that the past week's debate on the terms of reference for the ICC had revealed differences within the Sino-Soviet Bloc. Although the Communist Chinese, Viet Minh, and Pathet Lao representatives had voiced violent objection to US statements concerning a strengthened ICC, the Soviet and Polish delegations remained silent. The US delegation, by refraining from direct attack upon the Soviets and by engaging in private conversations with them, had sought to exploit whatever differences might exist. The Soviets and Poles finally proposed agreement in principle to the US text and its referral to the drafting committee, thus forcing the Communist Chinese representative to reverse his stand. This Soviet maneuver was, according to the US delegation, "attended by ill-concealed argument in the conference room and in the lounge between the Soviet and CHICOM delegations."

(S) Msg, Geneva to SecState, CONFE 558, 26 Aug 61.

CINCPAC

27 Aug 61 CINCPAC recommended to the JCS that RT-33 reconnaissance, both photographic and "eyeball," be authorized, in order to assess the enemy build-up in the Vang Vieng area. CINCPAC proposed the use of RT-33's rather than RB-26's because of their smaller size and greater speed and range.

(See NSAM 80, item 29 August 1961.)

(S) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 270050Z Aug 61.

27 Aug 61 CHMAAG Laos acknowledged the JCS instructions regarding Lao T-6 missions (see item 24 August 1961). At the same time, CHMAAG emphasized that "Phoumi takes orders from no one on employment of the FAL. He makes his own decisions on the employment of T-6s without reference to this headquarters." Phoumi had assured CHMAAG, however, that the T-6s were being used for defensive purposes only; this had been substantiated. CHMAAG said, wherever MAAG personnel had been able to review the results of missions.

[Henceforward, in accordance with the instructions, CHMAAG informed CINCPAC and the JCS of each T-6 mission of which he gained knowledge.]

(TS) Msg, CHMAAG Laos to JCS, DA IN 144330, 27 Aug 61.

28, 29
Aug 61

Ambassador Brown on 28 August informed the Secretary of State that French Ambassador Falaize had called on Souvanna at Xieng Khouang on 27 August and had outlined the US-UK-French foreign ministers' conditions for support of a national union government which might be presided over by Souvanna (see item 7 August 1961). The four major considerations were:

1. Composition of Future Government.

In response to Falaize's statement that the cabinet should be formed with a large center group, and no key portfolios

portfolios should go to the extreme leftists, Souvanna said he contemplated an 8-4-4 distribution of portfolios, with four each to the PL and Vientiane groups, and eight of the center group to be chosen from his own supporters. He agreed that the PL should not hold Foreign Affairs, Defense or Interior. Phoumi Nosavan might get a "'Big Ministry of the Plan'" or possibly Foreign Affairs. Referring to the subject of elections, Souvanna said that they would not be held before January, but added that they would take place when he was "ready."

2. ICC

Souvanna agreed that the ICC should have its own equipment and facilities. Furthermore, he stated that although the ICC would have to obtain permission from the Lao Government to carry out its investigations, this permission would never be withheld.

3. Army

The Laotian Prince agreed on the need for general demobilization and for the evolution of the armed forces into a simple "'police force.'" The mechanics of demobilization, he said, would be worked out by a three-party committee.

4. French Military Presence.

Souvanna assented to continued French military presence in Laos and indicated that the PL would also agree.

On the following day, in a message to Secretary Rusk, Ambassador Brown commented on the Falaize-Souvanna interview. He characterized Souvanna's responses as "profoundly discouraging," "unsatisfactorily vague," "naive," "not satisfactory." It was Brown's feeling that Souvanna should be pressed more explicitly on the subjects which had been covered in the Xieng Khouang interview.

Secretary

Secretary Rusk, agreeing with Brown's analysis of Souvanna's statements, instructed the US Ambassador to immediately invite Souvanna to meet with him and Ambassador Harriman in Paris as soon as possible in order that the US-UK-French foreign ministers' conditions for support of Souvanna as Prime Minister of a neutral Lao government might be discussed in detail.

(S) Msgs. Vientiane to SecState, 340, 28 Aug 61; 343 29 Aug 61; (S) Msg, SecState to Vientiane, 215, 29 Aug 61.

29 Aug 61 At a meeting on Southeast Asia, the President approved the following actions:

1. "An intensification of the diplomatic effort to achieve agreement to the Paris proposals on the part of Souvanna, especially by direct conversations between Ambassador Harriman and Souvanna, with an emphasis not only upon the interlocking importance of the Paris proposals, but also upon US support of Souvanna in the event that he accepts the Paris plan." (See item 15-17 September 1961.)

2. "Authorization to undertake conversations with SEATO allies both bilaterally and with the SEATO Council, exploring the possibility of an enlargement of the concept of SEATO Plan 5" (see items 2 and 6 September 1961). It would be made clear to the SEATO Allies that this exploration was in the nature of contingency planning and did not represent a flat commitment of the United States to participate in such an enlarged enterprise.

3. "An immediate increase in mobile training teams in Laos to include advisers down to the level of the company, to a total US strength in this area of 500,

[REDACTED]

Thais

[REDACTED] (The JCS, believing that 1,000 advisers would be the minimum requirement for encadrement of the FAL - see item 26 August 1961 - had agreed on 25 August to seek governmental approval for the US to provide one-half of the number [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] (See items 2 September and 11 October 1961.)

4. "An immediate increase of 2,000 in the number of Meos being supported to bring the total to a level of 11,000." (See item 24 October 1961.)

5. [REDACTED] (See item 5 September 1961.)

(On 1 September, the Secretary of Defense assigned to the JCS the responsibility for follow-up on the actions set forth in paragraphs 3 and 5 above.)

(S) NSAM No. 80, 29 Aug 61, att to JCS 2339/18, 30 Aug 61; (S) Memo, SecDef to SecArmy, et al., 1 Sep 61, att to JCS 2339/19. All in JMF 9150/3100 (29 Aug 61).

29 Aug 61 CHMAAG Laos, in response to the JCS query of 26 August (see item), provided CINCPAC with the views of the MAAG on the best manner for encadrement of the FAL. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

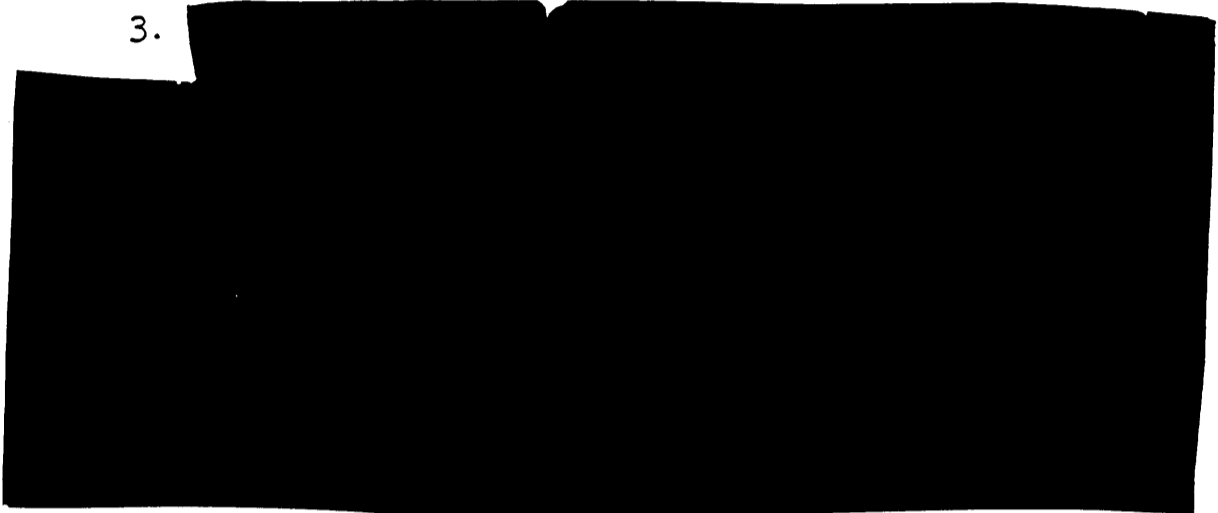
Further, CHMAAG believed encadrement by US personnel of the volunteer and ADC units of the FAL would be of "low value" given the dispersion, employment, and non-conformity to US standards of these units. Therefore, CHMAAG said

said, the encadrement should be organized as follows:

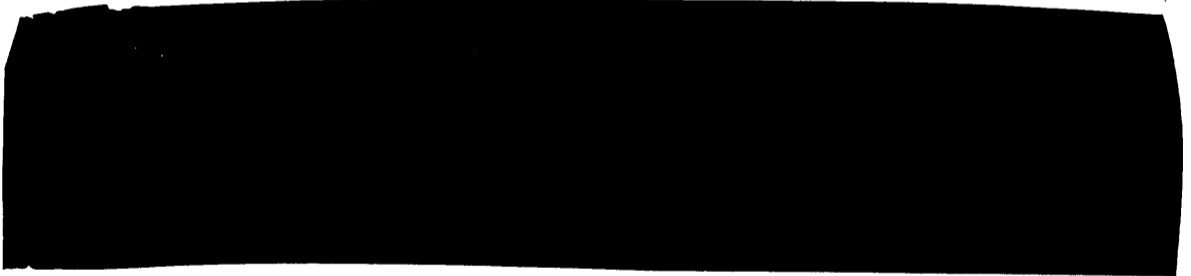
1. All special forces detachments should transfer their attention to organizing, training, and guiding volunteer and ADC units in counter-guerrilla and guerrilla operations.

2. Cadres should be provided only to those elements of the FAL whose functions conformed generally to the functions of US and Thai conventional forces.

3.



4. Above the GM level, the MAAG was already amply manned to influence properly FAL command and staff actions; a notable exception, however, was in MAAG influence upon logistical support.



(See item 7 September 1961.)

(TS) Msg, CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC, DA IN 152176, 19 Sep 61.

29 Aug 61 CHMAAG Laos pointed out to CINCPAC, the JCS, the Secretary of Defense, and others, that the French had "for all intents and purposes" denied the use of Seno airfield to the US and RLG since the cease-fire. In the event hostilities resumed,

CHMAAG

CHMAAG said, it would be "vital" that the US have unrestricted use of Seno; the nearby Savannakhet field would be completely inadequate. CHMAAG urged that negotiation with the French be undertaken immediately to insure that Seno would be available if needed.

(On 2 September, CINCPAC, commenting on CHMAAG's recommendation, pointed out that France had already agreed to the use of Seno by SEATO Plan 5 forces.) (See item 13 October 1961.)

(S) Msgs, CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC et al., DA IN 144773, 29 Aug 61; CINCPAC to JCS, DA IN 146719, 3 Sep 61.

29 Aug 61

~~REDACTED~~
~~REDACTED~~ relocating the Meo tribesmen of Xieng Khouang and Sam Neua provinces, if such a resettlement were to be considered. ~~REDACTED~~ 1) the mountain range along the Laos-Viet Nam border, where the Meo could harass the DRV; 2) Sayaboury province (west of Luang Prabang), where they could help secure the Laos-Thailand border; and 3) the Bolovens plateau in southern Laos.

~~REDACTED~~

29 Aug 61 The US Ambassador in Vientiane, CHMAAG Laos, USARMA Vientiane, ~~REDACTED~~ submitted to the Secretary of State their joint proposal for regrouping Lao armed forces, creation of a new Lao national army, and dissolution of excess forces. The US officials assumed for the purposes of this plan, that: 1) a neutral coalition government representing all parties had been formed; 2) all foreign forces except agreed advisory personnel had been withdrawn; 3) the Ministry of National Security

Security would be responsive to the government, and all armed forces would be responsive to the Ministry; 4) the organizational structure of the integrated force would be determined by the coalition government, but the force ceiling would be established by international agreement; 5) representation in the new army would be based on each faction's percentage of current troop strength in Laos; 6) the government, with ICC assistance, would be able to implement the regrouping, reorganizing, and disbanding of forces; and 7) amnesty would be granted to all demobilized forces. After lengthy discussion of the political and geographical hazards of any plan of this type and of the pro and con of several available alternative means, the US officials recommended that the reconstitution take the following shape:

(1) The constitution of a new Lao army should be phased by first relocating the forces, second integrating Kong Le forces into the RLG forces and later the PL into the RLG-KL force, and third dissolving the excess forces.

(2) Regroup the forces of each faction at holding points designated in each military region to facilitate control and supervision during integration and the period of disarmament of the excess forces.

(3) Determine the strength of the various factions by actual count at the holding points and declare any other forces continuing to operate as outlaw forces.

(4) Integrate by battalions and separate company as much as possible to isolate PL influence in the new army.

(5) Disarm and disband the excess forces after integration so the new army can assist in the process of disarming and disbanding them.

(6) Control entire operation with a central and regional military committees constituted on same percentage basis as fixed for basic integration and working under the authority of Min Sec and through the military chain of command.

(See item 20 October 1961.)

In

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 350, 29 Aug 61.

29 Aug 61 In response to a request for information by the Department of State, the Laos Country Team reviewed the progress and costs of FAL military civil action activities.

According to FAL reports, 414 civil affairs teams had been organized prior to August 1960 for the purpose of providing psychological indoctrination and civil assistance to villagers. Of this total, however, the Country Team estimates that only 10 to 15 per cent were actually employed by the FAL. Following the Kong Le coup, all of the ill-trained civil affairs teams were disbanded and the personnel recalled to combat units.

On 28 July 1961, Phoumi approved the re-establishment of military civil affairs teams capable of operating in areas denied to civilian teams by Pathet Lao activities. A school, supervised by the MAAG Civil Affairs Officer, was to be set up to train 20 operational 8-man teams by April 1962.

The RLG Director of National Coordination, to whom Phoumi had assigned responsibility for the program, agreed to organize a psychological services battalion with psychological warfare, troop information, and civil affairs companies. During August, a US civil affairs mobile training team arrived to establish the training school. The first Lao civil affairs team leaders were scheduled to complete their training by October.

According to the concept approved by the Director of National Coordination, the military civil affairs teams would follow combat units during clearing operations and, in addition to making surveys of public safety conditions, would provide the villagers with medical, agricultural, and educational

educational support and advice. Thus, the military civil affairs teams would complement the work of several other US and RLG civilian and paramilitary organizations which also were engaged in civil assistance activities.

These other organizations included: 1) the USOM, the primary US civil assistance group, which operated only in cleared areas; 2) the USIS, which offered a program of material assistance and psychological indoctrination, primarily to villagers dwelling in cleared areas; 3) Lao civil-military coordination committees, paramilitary organizations designed to offer, generally in cleared areas, both political indoctrination and some degree of civil assistance; and 4) White Star Mobile Training Teams, which would serve as contact points and overseers of civilian aid in the areas where they were operating. The Lao paramilitary program, however, was just getting underway, and the US program of utilizing White Star teams was still being prepared.

Turning to the cost of civil assistance activities, the Country Team stated that during FY 1961 the FAL had been given almost \$.3 million in defense support funds for "rural affairs." A portion of this sum was used; but, although the US continued its assistance, the FAL made no allocations for civil affairs activities after the Kong Le coup. A sum of about \$.1 million in defense support funds was budgeted for civil assistance during FY 1962. Because the re-establishment of military civil affairs teams was just beginning, the first budget requirements probably would not arise until September 1961.

No allocation of MAP funds was made for civil assistance during FY 1961, but funds had been requested for the establishment during FY 1962 of a psychological services battalion that

that contained a civil affairs company. The 1962 budget, however, had not yet been approved.

The defense support budget for FY 1962 included funds for 300 6-man teams and for the purchase of medical supplies to be used in the civil assistance program. Because far fewer than 300 military civil affairs teams would be trained, CHMAA had requested CINCPAC to reduce the civil affairs portion of the defense support budget by some \$73,000.

The Country Team now suggested a \$40,000 increase in MAP funds for the procurement of medical supplies for the civil affairs program, in order to give the MAAG much better control over expenditures for such supplies and to insure "better supply at less cost."

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 344, 29 Aug 61.

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Sep 61

On 29 August, CINCPAC requested that an additional 30 Filipino engineering equipment mechanics be authorized for Laos. These technicians would be in addition to the recently authorized augmentation of 76 (see item 24, 28 July 1961).

On 2 September, CINCPAC requested that 4 more Filipinos be authorized to operate the expanded radio transmissions that formed part of the growing RLG psychological warfare effort.

On 11 September, the Department of Defense approved both of these requests.

(C) Msgs, CINCPAC to JCS, 290023Z Aug 61; CINCPAC to JCS DA IN 146600, 2 Sep 61; OSD to CINCPAC, DEF 902367, 11 Sep 61

CINCPAC

30 Aug 61 CINCPAC suggested to the JCS that, against the contingency that the Communists resumed their offensive in Laos and the RLG appealed for US or SEATO intervention, four decisions were needed as guidance for the US or SEATO response, as follows:

1. The US and its Allies should decide "what plan of action" they would execute. The chosen plan should contain "an agreed concept for operations involving specific forces under a preplanned command arrangement"; SEATO Plan 5, CINCPAC noted, was the only plan that met these requirements.

2. A decision was needed on the military objectives to be attained by the intervention. CINCPAC suggested either a reaffirmation of the objectives as stated in Plan 5 or another statement of them. He hoped, however, that any new statement would call for more than restoration of the cease-fire line, for the achievement of such an objective would result in a de facto partition of Laos.

3. Rules of engagement or constraint should be developed. The military commander of the intervention should know the "level of violence" to be employed in carrying out his mission, and he should know what retaliation he could make against various possible DRV actions. Also, criteria should be established for possible use of nuclear weapons.

4. The US should ascertain which Allies would participate in the intervention, so that account could be taken of their attitudes and wishes in deciding the objectives and weaponry of the intervention force.

(TS) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 300410Z Aug 61.

31 Aug 61 The US Ambassador in Vientiane, in a message to the Secretary of State, offered the Laos Country Team's further considerations of the Ryan Plan (see item 21 August 1961) and

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his own views on the subject. The Country Team had concluded that the plan itself appeared both technically sound and capable of providing the kind of police force necessary to the kingdom. Specifically, the plan would create a provincial police force able to insure the security of rural settlements a task performed unsatisfactorily by military forces, and capable of maintaining the prestige and authority of the national government in the widest possible area of Laos.

Although in agreement concerning the plan, the Country Team could not agree on the timing of its implementation. Those who believed the plan should not go into effect at once argued that: 1) the cost, at a time when the Ministers of Defense and Finance were seeking additional US military and budgetary aid, might appear excessive; 2) since the army would have to provide men to augment the police force, competition for trained manpower would develop with possible harm to both organizations; 3) implementation of the Ryan Plan might provide a private army for Phoumi, who had made it clear that he intended to retain personal control over the police; 4) political uncertainties were too great; and 5) implementation of the plan would raise substantial administrative problems for USOM, would "tend to vitiate the USOM/Laos Task Force concept," and would subordinate the modest US program of economic aid to a program "frankly designed" to create a strong paramilitary force.

Those who favored implementing the plan at the present time maintained that: 1) however the admittedly vague political situation was resolved, the presence of a basically non-Communist police force would be to the advantage of the US; 2) a police force based on the Ryan Plan might survive the transition to a neutral government; 3) the proposed

program

program, since it was directed in part at halting subversion in rural areas, should appeal to Phoumi and win his complete support; and 4) waiting would only permit Phoumi to retain the police within the FAL until the police force ceased to exist as an effective organization.

The Ambassador himself believed that the Ryan Plan was intrinsically sound and capable of meeting a basic need. He further believed it important to restore to the kingdom an independent police force under civilian control. Thus, the Ambassador recommended that the plan be speedily and favorably considered so that it could be presented to Phoumi and, provided he accepted the necessary conditions, put into effect (see item 8 October 1961).

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 371, 31 Aug 61.

31 Aug 61 The Secretary of State sent instructions to guide Ambassador Harriman in his forthcoming talks with Souvanna (see item 15-17 September 1961). These instructions dealt with the problem of integrating the various Laotian armed forces, the proposed line of discussion with Souvanna, and a list of issues considered crucial by the three foreign ministers at their Paris meeting (see item 7 August 1961). In addition, Ambassador Harriman was informed that Souvanna would raise no objection to the continued French presence and instructed to define and interpret for Souvanna any areas of disagreement between the US and the Prince.

The integration of Lao forces. Ambassador Harriman was informed that, because of differences of opinion among the US, UK, and France, he should seek "approval in substance" from the British and French of that portion of his instructions dealing with the integration of Lao forces. Subject to
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this condition, Ambassador Harriman was to seek agreement among the Laotian factions on a formula for the proportional integration of forces. There were, according to the Secretary of State, three possible methods of integrating the FAL, Kong Le, and Pathet Lao contingents. The troops presently under arms might: 1) remain in their present locations while agreed numbers were integrated and the remainder demobilized; 2) regroup in certain specified regions for integration and demobilization; or 3) assemble for these purposes at selected points in the various provinces. With respect to the integration machinery, the Secretary of State desired to know what system of regional administration was envisioned under the vague terms of the Zurich communique (see item 22 June 1961). Specifically, he wanted to know whether the Prime Minister would "run the whole country" or whether there would be "two sets of organs of administration that would each be in charge of a particular segment of the country."

Proposed line of discussion. The Secretary of State instructed Ambassador Harriman to emphasize that Souvanna was "one man who could, if he chose, bring about the transformation of the situation from dangerous and explosive stalemate to a condition where reunification of the country and progress toward stability were possible." Should Souvanna break with the Pathet Lao and seek the true neutrality and independence of Laos, the US would give him full support "including assistance for economic and social development." At this point, Ambassador Harriman was to warn that freedom from outside interference was the key to neutrality and that to maintain such freedom Laos would have to prevent the infiltration of Viet Minh troops through the kingdom. Since Souvanna would need all the "friendly international backing" he could get in sealing the borders, an "adequate"

"adequate" ICC was "vitally important." Finally, Souvanna was to be reminded of the disastrous results which would follow a Pathet Lao take-over and of the fact that the US would "have nothing to do" with a government that "knowingly or unwittingly" yielded to Communist domination.

Issues raised by the Foreign Ministers. Secretary Rusk observed that the three foreign ministers had agreed that, if a Souvanna coalition was to preserve the neutrality of Laos, the Prince would have to commit himself to satisfactory positions on certain crucial issues. Because of Souvanna's disappointing response to French questioning on these issues (see item 28 August 1961), Ambassador Harriman was to discuss with him: 1) the creation within the cabinet of a neutral center group made up of political moderates from throughout the kingdom; 2) the need to integrate Pathet Lao military forces and to organize a non-Communist political party before holding elections; 3) assurance that the Lao government would never interfere with ICC investigations; and 4) Souvanna's views on the integration and demobilization of factional armies.

(On 3 September, Ambassador Harriman obtained British consent to that portion of his instructions which dealt with the integration of factional armies. The French agreed on the next day.

During his conversation with the British, the question of contingency planning arose, and various military aspects of the Laotian situation were mentioned. Ambassador Harriman, on the basis of this brief discussion, reported to the Secretary of State that the UK was "agreeable without commitment to discuss contingency planning for expanding [SEATO] Plan 5." The subject of contingency planning was not mentioned to the French.)

(S)

(S) Msg, State to London, DEPTTEL 1094, 31 Aug 61; (C)
Msg, London to SecState, 916, 5 Sep 61.

Thai

1 Sep 61 Thai Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman described, in a long discussion with Ambassador Young, the "malaise" that various Thai officials had exhibited during recent months. The Thai were gravely concerned that a Communist Laos would come into being and were persuaded that SEATO as now constituted did not provide Thailand the "requisite assurances" against the consequent threat to Thai borders. Thanat saw three possible courses of action: 1) Thailand would leave SEATO and "seek security through other means"; 2) those SEATO members "unwilling to take the necessary commitments" to assure the security of Southeast Asia should withdraw from SEATO; or 3) the Manila Treaty should be amended so that a country "not in the Pacific area could not veto a SEATO security action."

(S) Msg, Bangkok to SecState, 327, 1 Sep 61.

2 Sep 61 Ambassador Young was instructed to approach Sarit, and Ambassador Nolting was instructed to approach Diem, to explain the impending Harriman-Souvanna talks (see item 15-17 September 1961) and to explore the possibility of expanding the concept of SEATO Plan 5. Although the US was keenly aware of the reservations Sarit and Diem entertained with respect to Souvanna, the Ambassadors were to say that a direct approach to Souvanna by Ambassador Harriman was regarded as an essential step in determining whether he could be Prime Minister of the RLG under terms acceptable to the US. Sarit should be asked, furthermore, to give the US his support in urging Phoumi to cooperate should Souvanna prove acceptable; Sarit should also be informed in this regard that Phoumi had been told he would not receive US support if he initiated the resumption of hostilities.

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The Ambassadors were instructed to explore an expanded concept for SEATO Plan 5 only in "general terms," emphasizing that the US undertook no commitment by reason of the exploration. The enlarged concept envisioned securing not only the Mekong valley centers, but also Luang Prabang and Sayaboury provinces, and southern Laos adjoining the South Vietnamese border. Put another way, the Plan would, while not threatening the PL-held positions in northeastern Laos, contemplate clearing the rest of Laos. The Plan would be undertaken only in response to a "clear Communist breach of the ceasefire and renewal of major offensive." It would be practicable only if the Thai were prepared to commit more forces than presently assigned to SEATO Plan 5 - probably a total of 10,000 men, and if South Viet Nam would contribute 5,000 men.

[In keeping with the redesignation of the Forces Armees du Laos (FAL) to Forces Armees du Royaume (FAR), hereafter the abbreviation FAR will be used to describe the armed forces of the RLG.]

(Both Ambassadors made their presentations on 5 September. See item 8 September 1961 for Diem's response; see items 5 September and 4 October 1961 for the Thai response.)

(TS) Msg, SecState to Bangkok, 283; to Saigon, 269; 2 Sep 61.

2 Sep 61 The JCS, acting upon the recommendation of CINCPAC (see item 6 August 1961) and a request by the Director of Military Assistance

Assistance, OASD(ISA), instructed CNO to provide three helicopters for loan to the RLG and for use by the ICC. At the same time, CINCPAC was informed that he could use these helicopters for such operations as he might desire until the ICC accepted the RLG offer.

(S) Msg, JCS to CNO et al., JCS 1360, 2 Sep 61, derived from JCS 2344/9, 25 Aug 61; (S) JCS 2344/6, 16 Aug 61; both in JMF 9155.2/4129 (6 Jun 61).

2 Sep 61 CHMAAG Laos reported to CINCPAC that Phoumi had provided him with additional information on the "clandestine operations" that the Lao leader planned to initiate (see item 1 July 1961). The clandestine force, commanded by Brigadier General Sing, would consist of some Meo units and elements of the 34th Volunteer Battalion. The "zone of control" for this force would be the present "enemy area of operation," plus the Lao-South Viet Nam borders. The mission of the force was twofold: 1) to conduct, in conjunction with South Vietnamese clandestine forces (see item 26 August 1961), counter-guerrilla operations in the border area; and 2) to create a "stay-behind" guerrilla force in the enemy-controlled areas. Initial operations would commence in the "near future" in the areas north and east of Kham Keut.

(S) Msg, CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC, DA IN 147003, 5 Sep 61.

5 Sep 61 Ambassador Young, acting as instructed (see item 2 September 1961), presented to Sarit and Thanat the rationale behind the impending approach to Souvanna (see item 15-17 September 1961), and sounded out the Thai leaders on enlargement of SEATO Plan 5 and encadrement of the FAR.

Fearful

Fearful that Sarit might pass on information to Phoumi before Ambassador Brown had approached Souvanna, Ambassador Young did not inform Sarit that Harriman would make the approach to Souvanna. Sarit's response to a direct approach to Souvanna by an unnamed US official was "not negative even though unenthusiastic." Souvanna could not be trusted, Sarit said, and his intentions would be difficult to ascertain. However, Sarit would assist the US in whatever way possible to determine these intentions.


Sarit's reaction to the enlargement of SEATO Plan 5 "as a concept without commitment" was "satisfactory," Ambassador Young reported. When queried about enlargement of the Thai force contribution, however, Sarit asked, as usual, whether US forces would also be increased. In view of this questioning attitude, Ambassador Young did not advance the specific figure of 10,000 troops mentioned in his instructions.

Neither did Ambassador Young mention specific figures in discussing encadrement, because he and CHJUSMAG doubted the wisdom of removing so many as the suggested 500 specialists (see item 29 August 1961) from the RTA. The RTA was already understrength in many specialties, Young reported; the withdrawal of too many officers and NCOs from combat units would hinder the Thai training effort and thus might work against the current US exploration of an increased Thai contribution to SEATO Plan 5. Ambassador Young requested, therefore, further instructions on how to proceed in exploring the encadrement concept with the RTG (see item 8 September 1961).

(TS) Msg, Bangkok to SecState, 352, 7 Sep 61.

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5 Sep 61 The CJCS, in a memorandum for General Taylor, declared that the authorization for reconnaissance over Laos, as worded in NSAM No. 80 (see item 29 August 1961), did not satisfy the operational requirement. Thus, the Chairman, acting upon recommendations by CINCPAC (see item 27 August 1961), sought specific authorization for the use of RT-33 aircraft backed up by RB-26s [REDACTED]. Both types of planes were based in Thailand. The CJCS also recommended that these reconnaissance missions "be conducted under the operational control and as directed by CHMAAG Laos."



The JCS on 20 September informed CINCPAC that reconnaissance by RT-33 aircraft had been approved subject to final coordination by CHJUSMAG Thailand and the US Ambassador in Bangkok. The missions were to be directed by CHMAAG Laos, who was informed on 22 September by CINCPAC that the RT-33 project had been approved.)

(S) CM-353-61 to Gen. Taylor, 5 Sep 61, OCJCS Files 091 Laos (3); [REDACTED] 14 Sep 61; (S) Msg, JCS to CINCPAC, JCS 1595, 20 Sep 61; (S) Msg CINCPAC to CHMAAG Laos, DA IN 153500, 22 Sep 61.

In a

5 Sep 61 In a message to Souvanna, Prince Boun Oum, referring to the agreements reached at Zurich (see item 22 June 1961) and the conversations at Phnom Penh (see item 5 August 1961), expressed the hope that Souvanna would come to Luang Prabang as soon as possible for a three-Prince meeting.

(C) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 407, 7 Sep 61.

6 Sep 61 The Secretary of State informed US diplomatic posts that, in accordance with the policy decisions of NSAM 80 (see item 29 August 1961), the Department of State had recently called upon the Washington representatives of the SEATO powers to explore the possibility of enlarging the concept of SEATO Plan 5. Each nation was informed of the rationale for Harriman's approach to Souvanna, the increase in US advisors, and the increase in the supported strength of the Meo. Each was also told that the US saw three possible developments in the Laotian situation: 1) success in forming a truly neutral Lao Government; 2) continuation of the present "ambiguous state"; and 3) resumption of hostilities by the Communists. The US held that, if the last possibility occurred, the most important military and political objective of the Free World would be the protection of that portion of Laos bordering on Thailand and South Viet Nam. These objectives were greater than those of SEATO Plan 5, and the US was therefore asking the other SEATO powers whether they would be "willing to consider additional commitments of forces" for an operation that, tentatively, would attempt to hold Sayaboury province (up to and including Luang Prabang city) and Vientiane province, to clear Route 9 and the Tchepone area, and to expel the Communists from northern Laos.

Only

Only the French Ambassador responded immediately for his government. He "reacted negatively," indicating that de Gaulle opposed a military solution in Laos; furthermore, he said, the increase in US advisors would probably provoke an equivalent increase in Viet Minh assistance to the PL and adversely affect the Geneva negotiations.

(Concurrent approaches were made to the Thai and South Vietnamese Governments; see item 2 September 1961.)

(S) Msg, SecState CIRC, 407, 6 Sep 61.

6 Sep 61 Secretary Rusk informed the American Embassy in Vientiane that (according to a report received from "other" channels in Vientiane) Prince Souvanna, in replying to Ambassador Brown's proposal to meet in Paris (see item 28, 29 August 1961), had presented three counterproposals. The third proposal--that he would meet Harriman in New Delhi, or preferably Rangoon, was acceptable to State.

Secretary Rusk instructed Brown to advise Souvanna that Harriman would meet him in Rangoon on 15 September, or as soon thereafter as possible. Ambassador Brown was to accompany Harriman. In the same message Rusk suggested to Harriman that, since it was highly desirable that Phoumi and Sarit be kept informed, he should plan brief stops in Vientiane and Bangkok after his interview with Souvanna (see items 19 and 22 September 1961).

(S) Msg, SecState to Vientiane, 233, 6 Sep 61.

6 Sep 61 The JCS, in furtherance of the program suggested by the Secretary of Defense (see item 28 July 1961), requested CINCPAC to prepare a plan for the transfer of responsibility
for

for Meo operations [REDACTED] to the Department of Defense. The JCS requested that CINCPAC coordinate his planning [REDACTED] and that he consider the following two alternatives: 1) the Meo would become part of the "bonafide" forces of the RLG; and 2) the Meo would not become part of the RLG and would thus require separate channels of support. (See items 29 September and 15 November 1961.)

(S) Msg, JCS to CINCPAC, JCS 1374, 6 Sep 61; JMF 9155.2/3100 (28 Jul 61).

6 Sep 61 The Director, Joint Staff, replied to the ISA memorandum of 12 August (see item) concerning reconstitution of the FAR. Rather than presenting formal Joint Staff views, however, the Director merely informed the ASD(ISA) that the Joint Staff was "in general agreement" with the 29 August proposals of US officials in Laos (see item). The Director also took this occasion to reaffirm as valid the 22 June sentiments of the JCS (see item): that the MAP BY 63-67 FAR force objective should be maintained for the reconstituted FAR if the US advisory group remained; and that, otherwise, the force objectives should not be decided until the political situation prevailing under the envisioned coalition government had been analyzed.

(S) DJSM-1072-61 to ASD(ISA), 6 Sep 61; JMF 9155.2/3100 (12 Aug 61).

6 Sep 61 General Phoumi told a US Embassy officer he had informed Souvanna that the new RLG delegation would not go to Ban Namone until Souvanna and Souphanouvong, as had been agreed at Phnom Penh (see item 5 August 1961), raised the level of their respective delegations.

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 397, 6 Sep 61.

7 Sep 61 [

(TS) Msg, CINCPAC to CHJUSMAG Thailand, 070029Z Sep 61.

7 Sep 61 During a discussion of the Falaize trip to Xieng Khouang, Ambassador Brown told General Phoumi that: 1) Souvanna's replies regarding the composition of the "'center'" group had been unsatisfactory, and 2) his ideas about elections and ICC had been too vague as had been his replies about the "highly important" question of disbanding and integrating the Pathet Lao. The problem of integration was particularly important,

Brown

Brown said. Agreement, at least in principle, should be reached with respect to it before the government was formed, because if the subject were left entirely open the US would be faced with demands for the withdrawal of US advisors while the PL still remained in existence as an independent powerful force.

In reply, Phoumi said this matter should be dealt with by the new government. It was his opinion that PL forces should not be disbanded immediately because PL personnel would be "infiltrated" into the countryside where they could exert an effective and dangerous influence on the elections. It would be better, he declared, to have them remain in units where they could be observed, and after the new army had been formed, disbanded.

In reviewing the military situation with the US Ambassador, Phoumi displayed great satisfaction with his FAR "consolidation campaign." Although Ambassador Brown complimented Phoumi on this campaign, at the same time he urged him to keep operations at a "low key" and avoid well known or controversial points.

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState 406, 7 Sep 61.

7 Sep 61

In a conversation with Ambassador Brown, Phoumi confirmed reports that three companies of Chinese, commanded by KMT officers, were operating as regular FAR troops north of Luang Prabang (see item 18 May 1961). Ambassador Brown, pointing out the obvious political and diplomatic difficulties raised by these units, urged that these units be withdrawn or, if possible, disbanded. Phoumi replied that he recognized the political dangers involved, and that these units were
being

being removed from the combat area. They could, Phoumi said, be disbanded at any time.

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 402, 7 Sep 61.

7 Sep 61

The JCS informed the Secretary of Defense that upon review of the recent happenings regarding Laos--the continual build-up by the PL and DRV forces and lack of progress at Geneva--they had concluded that the "resumption of overt hostilities in Laos is most probable at the end of the rainy season." The current preoccupation with the Berlin crisis had tended to obscure the issues in Southeast Asia. It was the belief of the JCS that the situation in Laos had so deteriorated that the US must take immediate and positive action to prevent "a complete Communist takeover of Laos and the ultimate loss of all Southeast Asia, to include Indonesia.

SEATO Plan 5 could be implemented, the JCS said, without adverse effect upon US capabilities for planned operations in Europe relating to Berlin. The JCS requested the Secretary to inform the President the JCS were agreed that, if an acceptable political solution was not attained prior to the resumption of overt hostilities in Laos, Plan 5 or a variation thereof should be implemented. The preparatory political and military actions should be undertaken at once.

(TS) JCSM-611-61 to SEcDef, 7 Sep 61, derived from JCS 2344/10, 1 Sep 61; JMF 9155.2/3100 (9 May 61) (2).

7-13
Sep 61

The Secretary of State on 7 September forwarded to Ambassador Brown the proposed text of a cease-fire agreement and expressed the hope of the US Government that Phoumi could be persuaded to introduce this draft at Ban Namone on the earliest date possible.

possible. The proposed text was based on Souvanna's draft agreement (see item 10 July 1961) and on the RLG text as amended (see item 28 July-16 August 1961). Ambassador Brown was invited to comment, prior to submitting the draft to Phoumi, upon the advisability of integrating Laotian units at the battalion level, a policy which might enable the Pathet Lao to retain control over areas where those Pathet Lao troops selected for integration were concentrated.

According to the US proposal, all troops and equipment would remain in the positions occupied on 25 April 1961. After the cease-fire agreement was signed, there could be no concentration of troops near the areas held by the opposition, no reinforcement beyond the strength existing when the agreement was signed, and no supply activities except for deliveries to specified supply points in specially marked vehicles. Each supply operation was to be reported to the ICC. The US proposal also called for the separation of opposing troops in areas where truce violations were likely to occur.

Under Article 11 of the proposed plan, the RLG, Souvanna and Pathet Lao delegations would form a Joint Committee, including a Central Joint Committee and subcommittees, to put the truce into effect and carry out the integration of the military forces of all parties.

In addition, the plan provided for the regroupment of all forces in assembly areas designated by the Central Joint Committee acting in cooperation with the ICC. Once this regroupment had been completed, a subcommittee of the Joint Committee and an ICC inspection team would verify the declared strength, armament, and equipment of the troops located in each assembly area.

After

After this verification, the various factions were to cooperate with the ICC in the phased integration of their military forces into a unified army of 20,000 men. All troops in excess of this number would be demobilized.

Other features of the US plan were a program for the release and repatriation of prisoners of war and interned civilians, and a prohibition against reprisals or acts of discrimination directed at former enemies.

The ICC, along with the Joint Committee, bore the responsibility for enforcing the truce and controlling the reconstitution of the Lao armed forces. The Joint Committee was to assist the three parties in resolving disputes and in the routine implementation of the cease-fire agreement. The three factions would have equal representation throughout the committee hierarchy, and a representative of the ICC would be present at every level to engender mutual confidence and trust among the factions.

The ICC, according to the US proposal, would supervise and control the Laotian peace settlement according to conditions set forth by the Geneva Conference. In order to carry out its tasks, the ICC would enjoy freedom of movement throughout the kingdom and would be invited to establish such operating centers and mobile teams as it might consider necessary. The ICC was to receive copies of the periodic reports made to the Central Committee by the subcommittees, and the parties to the agreement also were obliged to give the ICC whatever information and assistance it might desire.

On 13 September, Ambassador Brown commented on the draft text. He admitted that the integration program would allow the Pathet Lao to retain control in the areas where that faction was strongest, but he pointed out that the RLG would
be able

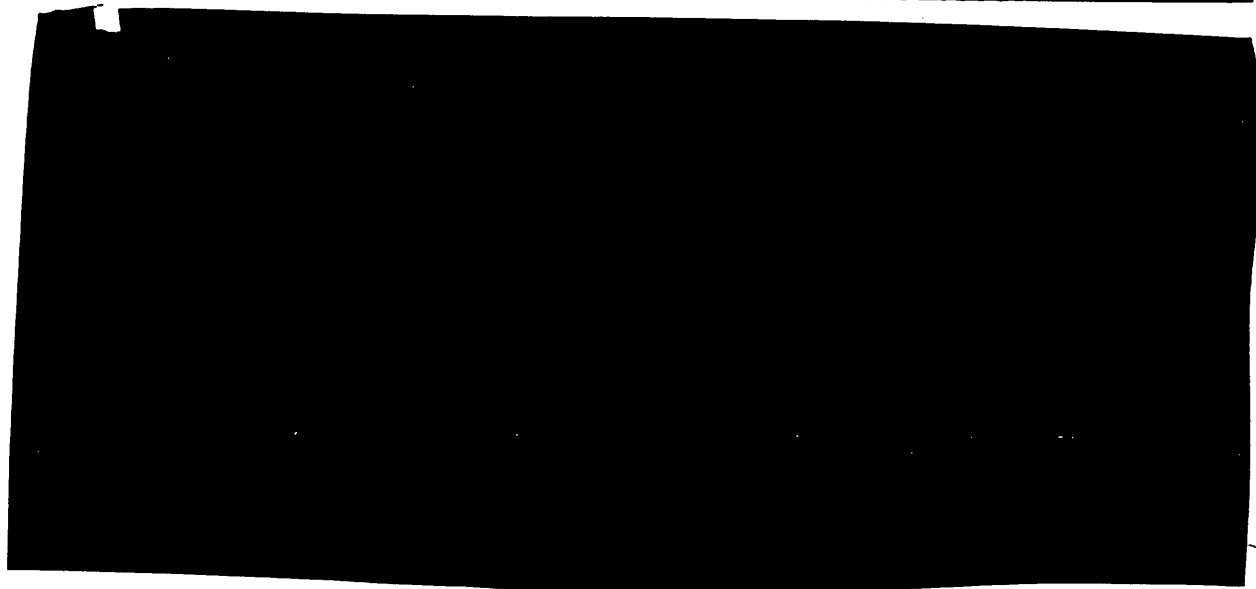
be able to hold the areas it currently controlled. In any case, the Ambassador could see no alternative to integrating most combat units at the battalion level.

Turning to other aspects of the proposal, Ambassador Brown noted that, perhaps intentionally, no procedure had been set forth by which disputes among the factions could be arbitrated.

Finally, the Ambassador suggested that 3 May, rather than 25 April, be selected as the date the cease-fire was ordered. The RLG, he believed, was not on "firm legal ground" in claiming 25 April, since all three sides had not actually issued their cease-fire orders until 3 May. Although the change in date would acknowledge the capture by the Pathet Lao of two villages, Ambassador Brown did not consider this a concession, since the Pathet Lao undoubtedly would hold the towns unless driven out by military force or deprived of them in a general peace settlement. In the Ambassador's opinion, Phoumi would probably object to the change in date as well as to the details of the integration plan.

(S) Msgs, State to Vientiane, PRIORITY 248, 8 Sep 61; PRIORITY 249, 7 Sep 61; (S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 458, 13 Sep 61.

8 Sep 61





(See item 22 September 1961).

(TS) Msg, SecState to Bangkok, 321, 8 Sep 61.

8 Sep 61 President Diem stated the views of his government on the projected Harriman-Souvanna talks and the possibility of expanding the concept of SEATO Plan 5 (see item 2 September 1961). Regarding the impending US approach to Souvanna (see item 15-17 September 1961), Diem said that "frankly he had no confidence in either the desire or the power of Souvanna phouma to remain neutral, whatever assurances or clarification he might give." Diem was becoming increasingly convinced, moreover, that "a political settlement of the type being sought at Geneva could only be, or rapidly become, a cloak for the domination of Laos by the Communists." In summary, Ambassador Nolting said, the US approach had "opened a floodgate of doubts, misgivings and real fears on Diem's part."

On the other hand, Diem strongly favored contingency planning for military operations to secure southern and western Laos. He could not, however, spare any troops for the contemplated operations. Small South Vietnamese units

might

might be able to operate on Laotian soil near the South Vietnamese border, but substantial forces could not possibly be sent "far away from GVN territory" under existing circumstances.

(TS) Msgs, Saigon to SecState, 320, 5 Sep 61, 343, 9 Sep 61. (S) Msgs, Saigon to SecState, 344, 9 Sep 61; 361, 14 Sep 61.

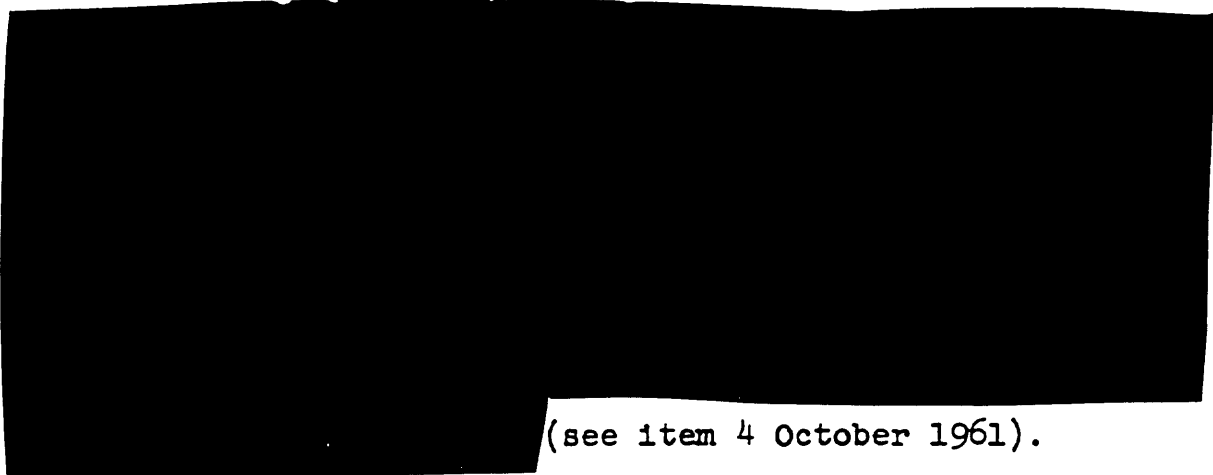
9 Sep 61 Sopsaisanna, Laotian Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, informed Ambassador Brown that on the previous day Souvanna had replied to Boun Oum's proposal for a three-Princes meeting in Luang Prabang by suggesting Ban Hin Heup as a "preparatory" meeting place for the three Princes before a "final" meeting at the royal capital.

(On 12 September Boun Oum, in reply to Souvanna's proposal, referred to the Phnom Penh conference (see item 5 August 1961) at which the RLG had agreed to send a "high level" government delegation, equipped with "wide powers," to Ban Namone to discuss the formation of a coalition government. This question had been continually delayed, Boun Oum said, and could not be settled because Souvanna's delegation and that of the NLHX were composed only of "very secondary" figures without any power to make decisions. Boun Oum requested Souvanna to send an "acceptable" delegation so that the question of a government of national union could be seriously studied. A meeting of the three Princes at Luang Prabang could be prepared for after preliminary conversations of their respective delegations at Namone or Hin Heup.

(C) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 431, 9 Sep 61; (S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 447, 12 Sep 61.

CHJUSMAG

9 Sep 61



(see item 4 October 1961).

(TS) Msg, CHJUSMAG Thailand to CINCPAC, DA IN 148608, 9 Sep 61.

9 Sep 61 CINCPAC commented to the JCS on the FAR force augmentation requested by Phoumi on 19 August (see item). CINCPAC concurred in the elimination of the 16,000 ADO, but he did not believe that the ADO could be considered a source of trained personnel for combat units. Therefore Phoumi was actually requesting a strength increase of 19,000 rather than the 3,000 indicated. While CINCPAC did not doubt the military requirement for a force of the size requested, he believed that the FAR, with its paucity of trained personnel, could not support such an increase at this time. Consequently, CINCPAC recommended that the FAR force structure be augmented as follows:

	CINCPAC Recommendation	Current Authorization	RLG Request
Regular Army	46,921	(38,478)	(55,934)
ADC	15,400	(13,800)	(15,400)
ADO	--	(16,000)	--
Total	62,321	(68,278)	(71,334)

(See item 4 October 1961.)

(S) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, DA IN 148603, 9 Sep 61.

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12 Sep 61 In a private conversation, Soviet Geneva co-Chairman Pushkin assured Ambassador Harriman that the USSR wanted a truly neutral Laos and was ready to come to an agreement that would establish and maintain a government headed by Souvanna. The Soviet Union, Pushkin continued, could and would control North Viet Nam and support Souvanna against Pathet Lao political or military aggression.

Turning to the role of the Geneva co-Chairmen, he admitted that the Soviet draft would have to be altered to avoid US complaints that the co-Chairmen could veto actions by the ICC. Pushkin also remarked that the US views on the integration of factional armies, as outlined by Ambassador Harriman, conformed to Soviet policy.

(S) Msg, JCS to CINCPAC, JCS 1521, 14 Sep 61.

12 Sep 61 Ambassador Brown reported to the Secretary of State the highlights of Ambassador Addis' 11 September meeting with Souvanna in Xieng Khouang. After stressing the urgency of an early decision on a coalition government and emphasizing the primary necessity of respect by the new government for the constitution and the monarchy, the British diplomat reviewed the points covered in the tripartite agreement in Paris (see item 7 August 1961).

1. Composition of Government

The British Ambassador told Souvanna that the three Western ministers considered it essential that the Pathet Lao should not be given the portfolios for Foreign Affairs, Defense, or Interior. After a moment's reflection Souvanna replied that this was "possible." In fact, he intended to keep the Defense and Interior posts for his center group.

Referring

Referring to Souvanna's proposed list for the center group, Addis said that the Western ministers had found the list very disappointing. They believed it should be drawn from a wider group of greater competence and administrative experience otherwise there was a danger of its being swamped by the extremes. The ministers hoped, Addis told Souvanna, that he would review the list to include people who had been with him in the past and were now in Vientiane. Souvanna immediately replied that this would be very difficult. He did not agree that the correct criteria was competence and administrative experience. The main role of the provisional government, he declared, would be to prepare for elections. Therefore, it was essential to have men in the government who had the confidence of the people and who could influence them in the "right" direction. This was why he had chosen his present list.

2. Elections

Souvanna agreed completely with Addis' presentation on the reasons the three ministers had given for postponement of elections. Souvanna went on to say, however, that new elections were needed as soon as possible because the NLHX were continually gaining ground. Addis expressed the opinion that "we" felt it was very important that the PL forces be demobilized before elections to prevent this faction from being able to influence them and this demobilization would take a long time. Souvanna replied that demobilization could not take long, because as soon as the new government was formed there would be no one to pay or maintain PL forces. Addis observed that although Souvanna and the Western ministers appeared to be in agreement on the "central" issue of postponement of elections until the danger of military pressure had

had been removed, and the non-Communists were organized and tranquility restored, there was a point of difference on the matter of timing.

3. ICC

Souvanna agreed that the present composition of the Commission was acceptable and that it should control the cease-fire and the withdrawal of foreign military personnel and equipment. He added, however, that any investigation by the Commission must always be at the request and with the consent of the government.

4. Army

Ambassador Addis, expressing Western opinion, told Souvanna that the question of the formation of a new Lao army and the disbanding of PL forces was perhaps even more important now than the role of the ICC. How this was to be handled, Addis stated, was "vital" since there was danger that procedures for disbanding might be such as to encourage the division of the kingdom, plus the risk that the new army might be "too much infiltrated" by the Pathet Lao. Addis then repeated twice that the Western ministers considered it essential that the Lao groups must agree on a formula that would, before the new government was formed, provide for the establishment of the new army and the demobilization of the old. In response to Addis' question as to "what sort of new force" Souvanna contemplated, the Laotian leader replied immediately 12 battalions that would provide a police-type security for each of the 12 provinces.

Going on to Point 6 of "Immediate Tasks" contained in the Zurich communique (see item 22 June 1961), the British Ambassador expressed the concern of the Western ministers that this item might be interpreted to sanction a "state
within

within a state." Souvanna replied that this was not the intention at all. In some areas there were PL officials operating "in parallel" with his officers, and the meaning of this point was that these PL officials would stay in office, but their allegiance, of course, would be to him.

On the subject of Souvanna's relations with the King, Addis recommended that a reconciliation between the two Laotians might perhaps be the thing that would have the most beneficial influence on a settlement. In response to Addis' suggestion that Prince Souvanna go to Luang Prabang to see the King, the Prince replied that he could not do this until there had been agreement on details of the new government; -otherwise, it would appear that he was "asking a favor" of the King and requesting that the King appoint him as Prime Minister.

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 444, 12 Sep 61.

13 Sep 61 Ambassador Addis informed Ambassador Brown that, during his meeting with Souphanouvong at Xieng Khouang on 11 September, the Pathet Lao leader had agreed with Addis' expressions of disappointment in the delay and lack of results at Ban Namone and, the need for new effort. This was why, said Souphanouvong, he had suggested a meeting of the three Princes at Ban Hin Heup. He emphasized that this was really the last offer he and Souvanna could make.

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 452, 13 Sep 61.

13 Sep 61 The US Ambassador at Vientiane reported to the Secretary of State on the progress of talks among the US, UK, French, Australian, and Canadian military attaches concerning the regroupment of factional forces, the disbandment of excess troops,

troops, and the formation of a unified Lao Army. Since both he and British Ambassador Addis believed that further conversations at Vientiane would accomplish nothing, Ambassador Brown recommended that the talks be continued at a higher level.

The Vientiane discussions, Ambassador Brown revealed, had disclosed differences among the Allies regarding the order of the program, the level of integration, and the phasing of integration.

1. The order of the program. The UK and French attaches who originally had maintained that excess troops should be disbanded before the new army was formed, now believed that "disbandment and formation could move forward simultaneously," provided that a gendarmerie was first established. The US attache, however, adhered to the position that, because of the inherent weakness of the scattered gendarmerie, "the new army should be available to assist in the disbandment process" and should be sufficiently strong to "guard against the risk of military action by uncontrolled and disbanded personnel."

2. The level of integration. The major point of disagreement, according to Ambassador Brown, concerned the level at which integration should take place. The French and British attaches, supported by their Australian counterpart, sought individual integration. They believed that integration by unit would leave the existing forces intact, at least insofar as their political identity was concerned, and thus fail to reduce the "unhealthy competition" among the factions. The US attache, however, maintained that "integration on a proportional basis" would insure that a sufficient number of RLG battalions would be integrated to deal with the smaller number of Pathet Lao battalions.

3. The

3. The phasing of integration. Whereas the British and French believed that all three factions should be "treated equally," the US proposed that first the Kong Le contingent and then the Pathet Lao forces should be integrated into a combined army, the basis for which would be the existing FAR. The Australian attache took a slightly different position from that of either his US, British, or French colleagues. He believed that the Kong Le force should serve as the basis of the new army and that the other forces should be integrated into it.

(On 15 September, the Secretary of State replied by requesting Ambassador Brown to hold further discussions during Ambassador Harriman's visit to Vientiane, "trying again to produce an agreed formula" (see item 20 October 1961). If these talks failed, the Ambassador was to "request Harriman's comment whether such can be worked out in Geneva.")

(S) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState, 460, 13 Sep 61; State to Vientiane, NIACT 270, 15 Sep 61.

15 Sep 61

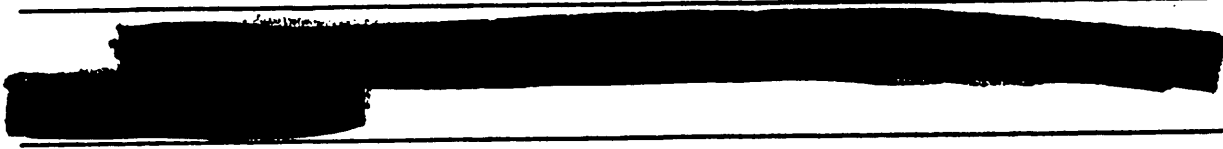
~~TOP SECRET~~ the JCS an evaluation, prepared by Embassy, ~~TOP SECRET~~ in Laos, of the relative strength of Lao political factions.

Within the enemy camp, the report read, the Souvanna-Kong Le faction had lost strength. The Kong Le military forces were almost entirely dependent upon the Pathet Lao. Politically, the neutralists had made little progress in their attempt to create a new political party, despite the "considerable public disenchantment" with the Pathet Lao and Viet Minh in enemy-controlled territory.

Within the RLG on the other hand, the report continued, there had been a "general gathering together of disparate non-Communist

non-Communist political leaders in Laos," because of their growing conviction that Souvanna was not truly neutral and was not a real alternative to Communist domination.

Souvanna, the report concluded, could contain and control the Pathet Lao only if he shifted his "major reliance" from them to the non-Communist elements in Laos. If Ambassador Harriman could not persuade him to do this (see item 15-17 September 1961), and if the US nonetheless accepted him as the "new leader of Laos," the destruction of both anti-Communist and neutral forces in Laos would probably result.



15, 16
Sep 61

Two messages from CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC indicated that the FAR, while in many respects making an "earnest and aggressive attempt" to overcome its weakness in leadership, remained reluctant to send individual trainees to foreign schools.

In a message of 15 September, CHMAAG listed the various "corrective actions" being taken in Laos:

1. A class of 110 would graduate from the Lao Military Academy in October.
2. Also in October, an OCS would be established with an initial class of 400.
3. The Directorate of National Security was establishing an officer school for police personnel.
4. The FAR was recalling all reserve officers and "functionaries" for refresher training.
5. Two NCO schools had been established.

All of these schools, CHMAAG stated, were in addition to the on-site leadership schools being conducted by WSMTTs.

On 16

~~TOP SECRET~~

On 16 September, however, CHMAAG reported that, of 405 overseas school spaces allotted the FAR for FY 1962, only 37 had been filled. The FAR was reluctant to release what leaders they had under the present unsettled conditions. The Lao could not even be brought to request the 178 slots for training in Thailand, the Philippines, and South Viet Nam, for which the US had programmed supporting funds.

Regarding the 190 vacant positions in US schools, CHMAAG doubted the value of the many "short courses" programmed for these positions. The Lao trainee underwent 6 months of full-time English language training preparing for a US course; probably no course of less than 15-20 weeks was worth the expenditure of Lao time and US money. CHMAAG planned to review the FY 1962 training program with a view to eliminating some of these short courses.

(S) Msgs, CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC, DA IN 151719, DA IN 151729, 17 Sep 61.

15-17
Sep 61

A series of five conversations involving US Ambassadors Harriman and Brown and Prince Souvanna took place in Rangoon between 15 and 17 September. Immediately following the final meeting, Souvanna announced to the press that he would preside over a new Lao government, that the three Western foreign ministers in their meeting at Paris (see item 7 August 1961) had agreed to a coalition government under his leadership, and that the US had unofficially accepted him as Prime Minister. Ambassador Harriman, however, denied that he had given any such assurances to Souvanna. On the contrary, the Ambassador informed the Secretary of State that he had merely told Souvanna that the President would like to support the Prince, but that before a decision could be made, "it was essential

essential that there be a clear understanding between us on all relevant and important points" The points discussed at Rangoon were: US aid to a government headed by Souvanna, the election of a government to succeed the proposed coalition, the cease-fire, the meetings of the Princes, the formation by Souvanna of a coalition cabinet, the ICC, the integration of factional forces, the prevention of Viet Minh infiltration through Laos, the future Laos-SEATO relationship, and the continuation of the French presence in Laos.

US aid to a neutral Laos. When asked if, as Prime Minister, he would "rely" on the US, Souvanna answered that he would welcome effective US aid. If it appeared, he continued, that he had turned to the Communists, this was because the US had abandoned him.

Laotian elections. Souvanna stressed the importance of electing a truly neutral government to succeed the provisional coalition. Unless Souvanna won this election, his followers would have to fight to save Laos from Communism. So vital was the election that Souvanna was organizing a political party to compete with the NLHX, and Souphanouvong was reportedly thinking of refusing a post in the coalition cabinet so that he could concentrate on winning the election. No elections, however, could be held until the Pathet Lao forces had been demobilized.

The cease-fire. Ambassador Harriman agreed with Souvanna's statement that the Ban Namone talks were a waste of time. Souvanna attributed this lack of progress to Phoumi and his followers. There would, however, be no resumption of hostilities on Souvanna's part if the FAR did not attack. In regard to possible FAR aggression, Souvanna protested the

RLG's

RLG's dropping of supplies behind the lines held by his troops. Ambassador Brown denied that any such incidents had taken place since the reinforcement of Ban Padong (see item 27 May 1961).

The meeting of the Princes. Souvanna, alluding to the failure of the Princes to carry out the terms of the Zurich communique (see item 22 June 1961), again blamed Phoumi, who allegedly desired a purely military solution to the Laotian problem. In commenting upon Souvanna's remarks on this subject and on the cease-fire, Ambassador Harriman noted that the Prince was "clearly suspicious and bitter toward the Vientiane group" and determined "not to go to Luang Prabang until it had been agreed that he should be Prime Minister."

The formation of a coalition cabinet. Souvanna indicated that his cabinet would include 12 ministers and four secretaries of state. Eight of the ministers were to be neutrals, preferably from among his followers. He tentatively planned to retain for his group the key portfolios of Defense (army) and Interior (police), while the Pathet Lao had agreed to accept such lesser posts as Public Works, Justice, Finance, or Foreign Affairs. When asked about Phoumi's role in the government, Souvanna replied that if Phoumi renounced his military rank he could serve as a minister. Ambassadors Harriman and Brown pointed out that neutral groups not affiliated with Souvanna's Xieng Khouang government deserved representation in the cabinet. The Prince, though he agreed to consider the inclusion of one or two Vientiane neutrals, said that the inclusion of representatives from these other neutral groups would be very difficult because of the few cabinet posts available. Ambassador Harriman then stated that the creation of a neutral center group representative of
the

the entire kingdom was the most important issue separating the US and Souvanna.

The ICC. Souvanna professed to be in general agreement with the US position concerning the ICC. The major difference of opinion concerned the relationship between the ICC and the Lao Government. Souvanna, jealous of Laotian sovereignty, desired that the ICC seek the agreement of the Government before carrying out investigations, while the US sought a more independent commission. Under the US proposal, the ICC would "cooperate" with the Government, and thus be able to undertake investigations as incidents occurred. There would be no need to obtain agreement from the Lao Government. After listening to the US case for automatic investigations, Souvanna indicated that he was willing to reconsider his views. Other minor differences arose from Souvanna's desire that ICC personnel be concentrated at Vientiane rather than located at numerous control posts and his belief that weapons in excess of the needs of the unified army be stored in Laos rather than transported from the country.

The integration of factional armies. Souvanna sketched his plans for a national army of about 8,000 men. After a census of forces had been taken, he would form the new army by integrating into it individuals from each of the factions. He felt that he could thus lessen Communist influence by dismembering the Pathet Lao battalions. The excess forces, perhaps nine-tenths of the total presently under arms, would have to be demobilized before elections could safely be held. To offset this reduction in the army, he intended to increase the strength of the police threefold to about 10,000 men. In connection with this program, Souvanna said it would be desirable to obtain, prior to the establishment of a coalition

coalition government, agreement by all parties on the formula for proportional integration. He would not, however, insist upon such an agreement at the risk of seriously delaying the formation of the coalition.

Infiltration through Laos. When questioned about the passage of Viet Minh troops through Laos, Souvanna responded that "no one will cross Laos from north to south. We will not allow any country to violate our borders."

Laos-SEATO relations. Souvanna reasoned that since the Geneva Conference recognized the neutrality of Laos, it would be better if the SEATO treaty no longer contained any reference to the kingdom. In the event of an attack, Laos as a member of the UN, could call upon friendly nations for help.

The continued French presence. Souvanna said that at Zurich, in spite of Phoumi's objections, he and Souphanouvong had urged the continuation of the French presence as prescribed in the 1954 accord. Thus, although the status of the Seno base would have to be changed, Souvanna believed that this aspect of the 1954 accord could be preserved with some modifications.

In commenting upon the Rangoon talks, Ambassador Harriman told the Secretary of State that "except for Souvanna's utterly unacceptable position" on the selection for six or seven out of the eight positions scheduled to make up the neutral center of the cabinet from his Xieng Khouang followers, "talks with him on other matters were on the whole more satisfactory than I had expected." Ambassador Harriman also pointed out that he had told Souvanna "on several occasions" that the US could not support him unless he took three or four of his ministers from "moderates outside Xieng Khouang."

CINCPAC

(S) Msgs, Rangoon to SecState, 256, 17 Sep 61; 257, 17 Sep 61; 258, 18 Sep 61; 259, 18 Sep 61; 253, 17 Sep 61. (S) Msgs Vientiane to SecState, 478, 18 Sep 61; 479, 18 Sep 61. (C) Msg, Rangoon to SecState, 254, 17 Sep 61.

16 Sep 61 CINCPAC assessed for the JCS the supply situation of the Communist forces in Laos. Since the cease-fire, CHMAAG said, the Communists had improved and consolidated their supply system; they had, for instance, converted Route 7 (from Xieng Khouang to North Viet Nam) into an all-weather road. Additionally, the Communists had maintained an adequate "stock position" and distribution of supplies. The Communists could therefore, CINCPAC concluded, launch an "important offensive" without giving warning in the form of "a noticeable flurry of logistical activity."

(S) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, DA IN 151578, 17 Sep 61.

16, 18
Sep 61

The US delegation at Geneva reported to the Secretary of State that Soviet co-Chairman Pushkin had proposed a list of nine items, which, he believed, should be discussed and resolved by the co-Chairmen. Such a procedural maneuver could save time, since the two negotiators would have consulted with their respective allies and formulated positions prior to discussing the issues. The nine items, all of which Pushkin believed readily amenable to agreement, were:

1. The question of whether there should be one or two declarations of Laotian neutrality. On this point, Pushkin indicated that he was prepared to concede that there should be a Lao declaration followed by a response from the other 13 nations attending the Conference.

2. A general undertaking to withdraw all foreign military personnel from Laos. Pushkin would now agree to include this

this provision in the protocol rather than in the declaration of neutrality.

3. A reply by the Conference to the Laotian declaration of neutrality. This point was covered by item 1.

4. General undertakings not to import armaments into Laos and to limit the acquisition of war materials to the quantity needed by an integrated Lao Army. Pushkin believed that this should appear only in the protocol.

5. General undertakings to prevent the use of Laotian territory or resources for purposes of direct or indirect aggression. Pushkin hoped that the US would agree that no formal Lao pledge on this subject would be necessary until after the formation of a coalition government. In addition, he hoped that the US would further agree that certain unspecified provisions in the declaration of neutrality would prevent foreign countries from using Laos as a base.

6. A proposed statement to be issued upon signing the protocol. Pushkin wished to reserve until later a discussion of references to the 1954 accord. He desired, however, to resolve the question of the relationship between the protocol and the declaration of neutrality.

7. Questions relating to the cessation of hostilities in Laos. Pushkin indicated his intention to present a draft article which he believed would satisfy US views on the repatriation of prisoners and the prohibition of reprisals.

8. Logistical support of the ICC and its control over personnel, equipment, and maintenance facilities. On this item, too, Pushkin thought he could prepare a draft acceptable to the US.

9. The role of the co-Chairmen. Pushkin suggested that MacDonalld, UK co-Chairman, prepare a draft dealing with the relationship

relationship of the co-chairmen to both the Conference and the ICC.

On 18 September, Martin, the Consul General in Geneva, informed the Secretary of State that, after some discussion, the Western and allied Asian delegations had decided that co-Chairman MacDonald should agree with Pushkin's proposals for the discussion of items 1, 2, and 3 and accept the drafts which the Soviet co-Chairman had indicated he was preparing in connection with items 7 and 8. The Soviet proposals concerning items 4, 5, and 6 had been rejected by the delegations but MacDonald had decided to discuss them with Pushkin in order to determine whether or not they might be solved easily. Although MacDonald had completed the draft mentioned in item 9, it had been decided that additional time was needed to study the text before determining whether or not to submit it to the co-Chairmen as Pushkin desired.

(By 22 September, agreement had been reached on the first three items, with the Soviets accepting the Western positions. As for item 7, the draft offered by Pushkin prohibited reprisals and provided that prisoners of war be returned to national control and then repatriated to the destinations of their choice. Thus, the US delegation believed, the principle of freedom of choice had been preserved. Some progress had been made on item 9, but scant headway had been made toward resolving the issues contained in items 4, 5, 6, and 8. MacDonald, however, had obtained Pushkin's consent to removing from the hands of the co-Chairmen those items which could not be resolved easily.)

(S) Msgs, Geneva to SecState, CONFE 630, 16 Sep 61; 637, 18 Sep 61; 657, 23 Sep 61.

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18 Sep 61 In a memorandum to Ambassador Young, Prime Minister Sarit commented, inter alia, upon the Laotian policy agreed upon by the US, UK, and French foreign ministers on 7 August (see item). The Free World could not trust Souvanna, Sarit said; Souvanna had never done, and could not do, anything the Souphanouvong opposed. Moreover, Souvanna, although he had a "good appearance," had no ability and had not been successful as a prime minister. The Western desire for a strong ICC and a small Lao army were sound, Sarit continued. However, the West should recognize that Souvanna's weakness and ineptitude would allow the Pathet Lao to interfere with the ICC and dominate the army.

(TS) Msg, Bangkok to SecState, 422, 19 Sep 61.

18 Sep 61 In connection with the JCS consideration of the State-Defense plan for intervention in Laos (see item 29 September 1961) the Director of Intelligence, Joint Staff (J-2), answered a series of questions by the Vice Director of the Joint Staff as follows:

1. What is the current situation of the Viet Cong in South Viet Nam?

The Viet Cong were estimated to have 14,500 troops in South Viet Nam, but reinforcement from North Viet Nam was proceeding rapidly. Until recently, the Viet Cong had operated principally in the extreme southern portions of South Viet Nam. Lately, however, they had instituted a serious build-up and recruiting program in the Central Viet Nam plateau region. Supplies and personnel for this build-up were flowing from North Viet Nam through southern Laos. This build-up could be expected, in time to force the South

Vietnamese

Vietnamese to divert troops from the South where, as a consequence, Viet Cong attacks could be expected to increase.

2. What will happen in Laos when the rainy season ends and the US and/or SEATO have still taken no action to introduce forces?

There would probably be a continuation of the present "official cease-fire," but a considerable increase in military activity by both sides. The Pathet Lao would almost certainly initiate operations to eliminate Meo resistance in the Xieng Khouang area, and Phoumi would probably try to recapture ground lost since the cease-fire. The Pathet Lao would probably not, however, initiate large-scale operations to seize the remainder of Laos. They had probably already achieved their minimum military objectives, and the Communists would not jeopardize their Laotian base for actions in South Viet Nam by risking Western intervention in Laos. Phoumi, on the other hand, might be the initiator of large-scale operations. He might attempt to shore up his currently weak position by deliberately drawing the US into the conflict. But if there was not US or SEATO intervention in Laos, in this or other circumstances, the Director concluded, the outlook was for a continued weakening of the RLG and the ultimate passage of all of Laos into the Communist orbit.

(TS) J2DM-333-61 to Vice Director, Joint Staff, 18 Sep 61; JMF 9155.2/3100 (9 May 61) (2).

18 Sep 61 The Southeast Asia Study Group, formed by the JCS to provide information requested by the Deputy Secretary of Defense on force requirements in Southeast Asia (see item 1 August 1961) submitted a preliminary report of some 350 pages. The preliminary report comprised nine sections, as follows:

1. Introduction

1. Introduction
2. Historical factors in current perspective
3. Power appraisal of Southeast Asia and friendly external countries.
4. Communist intentions and capabilities
5. Concepts for operations and force requirements
6. Research and development
7. Logistics
8. Communications
9. Options.

In its final section, "Options," the Study Group listed its findings. First, the Deputy Secretary's directive was "limiting in nature." It "apparently" visualized a de facto division of Southeast Asia and did not allow for actions directed at a "long-term solution to the problems of the area." For this reason the Study Group had broadened the scope of the problem posed in the directive, to include a statement of those "military and collaborative actions" that could overcome, rather than merely react to, Communist aggression in the area.

The Study Group had found that the Communists "apparently" had clearly stated objectives for Southeast Asia, and were attaining them. On the other hand, US objectives for Southeast Asia were included within the broad context of policy statements and were not being attained. The US must develop clearly defined objectives for Southeast Asia; this meant the abandonment, with respect to Southeast Asia, of the policy of "containment." If the US did not define its objectives and abandon the policy of containment, "creeping aggression" by the Communists would continue.

The

The Study Group also agreed that Communist China did not wish to become involved in a major war in Southeast Asia now or during the time span of the study (1962-1966) - particularly if its objectives could be attained by the lesser actions that had been effective to date. (And the USSR, although it obviously approved the current Communist endeavor in Laos and South Viet Nam, would have its own second thoughts about overt Chinese aggression.) Moreover the Chinese Communists did not have and would not soon have nuclear weapons suitable for strategic and tactical uses.

The Group presented four military options available for the application of varying degrees and forms of US and SEATO power. These options, which were treated more fully as "concepts of operations" in section 5 of the report, were the following:

1. Establishment of a permanent SEATO Field Forces headquarters in mainland Southeast Asia. This option should be adopted immediately, the Study Group said, as an earnest of US intentions.
2. Establishment of a covert activities program in Southeast Asia. It was "high time," the Study Group said, "that the Free World create some active consternation in the Communists' back yard." Friendly military resources in the area should be utilized for this program. The basic objective would be disruption of the enemy's base of operations and lines of communication in Laos; an additional objective would be the sealing of the Laos-North Viet Nam border.
3. Military actions against insurgency operations, in substantially the same manner as envisioned in SEATO Plan 5.
4. Prosecution of nuclear or nonnuclear war in Southeast Asia. The Study Group visualized a four-phase operation
capable

capable of holding Southeast Asia against overt attack by the Communist Bloc. The assumption made in developing the concept of operations for this option was that, if the USSR provided nuclear weapons to the Chinese Communists, a general war situation would exist. Therefore, the conditions studied were not, as the Deputy Secretary had requested (see item 1 August 1961), "either side or neither side" initiating nuclear warfare, but rather "the US or neither side" initiating nuclear warfare. The phases were: 1) withdrawal and delay; 2) build-up; 3) cohesive defense, and offensive action, to recapture lost areas; and 4) offensive operations designed to crush North Viet Nam. Among the judgments of the Study Group concerning the use of this option were the following:

a. The Communist Chinese could not support massive troop concentrations in Southeast Asia. Moreover, since they would not (the study assumed) possess nuclear weapons, they, not the US, would have the worry of escalation.

b. It would be unrealistic to think of warfare in Southeast Asia as either nuclear or nonnuclear. Rather, the US should provide a balanced force authorized, from the outset of overt Chinese Communist intervention, to employ nuclear weapons selectively. (In fact, the Study Group had commented in the introduction to their report, Southeast Asia might be one of the few places in the world where a delimited nuclear war could be fought.)

c. The selective use of tactical weapons would quickly and significantly reduce the Communist offensive capability, and could thus bring the war to an earlier conclusion without the serious attrition of US forces that could result from a nonnuclear war.

If Communist

d. If Communist China escalated military operations by air and naval actions, the US should respond immediately with selective nuclear strikes against the source of these threats (In this connection, the State Department should, the Study Group suggested, undertake a study of the political feasibility of employing nuclear weapons in support of SEATO operations in Southeast Asia.)

e. US forces for nonnuclear operations would be of significant magnitude because: (1) friendly native forces would suffer heavy attrition in the first phase of operations and (2) many US support forces would be necessary to build up logistic facilities in the area.

f. Should military operations in the area be required by 1962, the total force required for this option could not be logistically supported.

The Study Group also reached some specific conclusions concerning Laos, such as:

1. Routes into Laos from China and North Viet Nam could readily support the Communist forces there as well as any additional forces covertly introduced from North Viet Nam

2. In overt operations, the Chinese Communists and North Vietnamese could support, by road, 10 divisions up to the Laos border and 8 divisions within Laos, under optimum dry-weather conditions. During the monsoon season, however, resupply activities would be reduced 25 per cent and operations greatly curtailed.

3. If the Communists should decide to intervene overtly in Laos, the 8 divisions would be deployed as follows:

a. Within 4 days, 1 DRV division each into Phong Saly, Sam Neua, Xieng Khouang, and either Khammuane or Savannakhet provinces;

b. within

- b. within 8 days, 1 additional DRV division into Xieng Khouang; within 12 days, another;
- c. within 15 days, 1 additional DRV division into Savannakhet;
- d. in 15 to 30 days, 1 lightly armed Chinese Communist division into northern Laos.

4. In the field of logistics, the Study Group examined in detail, for Laos as for the other Southeast Asian countries, the transportation capacity of all ports, railroads, highways, airfields, ferries, inland waterways, etc.

(See item 5, 6, 7, 10 October 1961; and item 15 November 1961.)

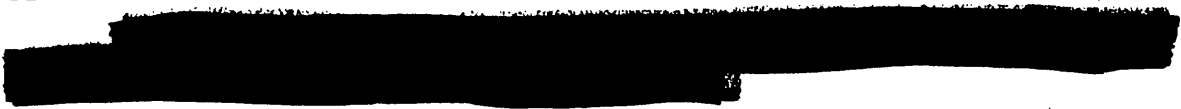
(TS) "Preliminary Report of the Southeast Asia Study Group," 18 Sep 61, JMF 9150/3410 (1 Aug 61) sec 1-A. (TS) Msg, JCS to CINCPAC, JCS 1612, 21 Sep 61.

19 Sep 61 [REDACTED] analysis, prepared at CINCPAC's request, of the relationship of Meo units to the FAR, and of Vang Pao to Phoumi and other FAR commanders. All Meo units, [REDACTED] had ostensibly been formed in the same administrative fashion as ADC units. Thorough scrutiny of FAR records, however, would reveal that the Meo units were almost entirely supported and paid by non-FAR sources. The unorthodox treatment of the Meo had been adopted to permit two distinct eventual uses of the Meo: 1) as legal units of the FAR, for purposes of diplomatic negotiations at Geneva or dealings with the ICC; and 2) as entirely irregular forces whose activities the RLG could, if necessary, disown.

Vang Pao was a lieutenant colonel in the FAR. His relationship with the chain of command between him and Phoumi was "confused," [REDACTED] but thus far the operational control of the Meo had been left "pretty much" to him

by

by Phoumi. Vang Pao received his policy and tactical guidance from US agencies. (See item 29 September 1961.)



19 Sep 61 Ambassador Harriman, after briefing King Savang on his meeting in Rangoon with Souvanna, stated that the last time he had talked with the King, His Majesty had indicated that he did not feel he should be Prime Minister. If this were still the case, Harriman said, there would be no alternative candidate who could be agreed upon as Prime Minister except Souvanna. The King evasively replied that if he, as a convinced anti-Communist, were to become Prime Minister this would mean a direct confrontation between Communist and anti-Communist forces. As a constitutional monarch he was obliged to approve any candidate for Prime Minister who had been properly presented to him. Therefore, if the three Princes agreed and proposed, with the approval of the "country", that Souvanna be Prime Minister, the King would accept him. However, King Savang stated that to accept a government under Souvanna would be only a palliative - a "capitulation to Communists."

Ambassador Harriman told the King that the US felt there were only two alternatives - to find a peaceful solution through a coalition government, or to resume hostilities. There would not be enough force available to expel the Communists from northern Laos. The "Communists, ChiComs, and Viet Minh," continued Harriman, would undoubtedly put in hundreds of thousands of men, and in such a situation all that could be salvaged and protected would probably be a divided Laos. In response to this, Savang stated that, if Laos were partitioned, he would abdicate.

Later

Later in the day, Harriman briefed Boun Oum, Phoumi, and Sopsaisana on the Rangoon meeting. After telling the Laotian officials that he had urged Souvanna to negotiate with the RLG in good faith, Harriman expressed the hope that the RLG could also demonstrate by its actions that it was prepared to get down to "brass tacks" to work out a peaceful solution and allay the growing impression that the RLG was "dragging its feet."

During the two-hour talk, Harriman repeatedly emphasized the importance of an early meeting of the three Princes, and Phoumi repeatedly insisted that, first, Souvanna must demonstrate his loyalty to the King by going to Luang Prabang to see him. If Souvanna did so, Phoumi declared, there would be no difficulty on other points, such as the composition of the government. Harriman agreed that Souvanna's loyalty to the King and constitution was very important. However, the US Ambassador stated that he felt it was essential that there be agreement on composition of the government and on the general principles of the integration and disbanding of forces before a decision was made on accepting Souvanna as Prime Minister.

Ambassador Harriman repeated the two alternatives he had expressed to King Savang - a peaceful negotiated solution (the US preferred course) - or a resumption of hostilities. The US was not prepared to support the RLG in any military initiative to move north to recapture lost areas, in view of the danger of bringing Chinese Communist forces into Laos and thus precipitating a large-scale war. The President, declared Harriman, had asked him to make this position "perfectly clear."

(S) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState, 486, 487, 20 Sep 61.

Ambassador

22 Sep 61 Ambassador Harriman, in a message to the Secretary of State, advised that his recent conversations with Boun Oum and Phoumi (see item 19 September 1961) had convinced him that "Phoumi obviously has no intention to negotiate and intends to let the fighting start again in which event he thinks he will force us to participate." For this reason, Ambassador Harriman recommended that the US Ambassador at Vientiane "be instructed promptly to express again in the most forceful terms that the US insists Phoumi negotiate in good faith Otherwise we will be abdicating policy-making to Phoumi."

(S) Msg, New Delhi to SecState, 885, 22 Sep 61.

22 Sep 61 Following his visit to Laos, Ambassador Harriman stopped in Bangkok to call on Prime Minister Sarit. After explaining the reasons why President Kennedy had sent him on the South-east Asia trip, he briefed the Thai Prime Minister on his conversations with King Savang and Prince Souvanna (see items 15-17 September and 19 September 1961).

The US Ambassador expressed his conviction that Souvanna did not want Laos communized, but at the same time Harriman acknowledged that the Laotian Prince probably could not hold out against the Communists unless Phoumi or other strong elements on the RLG side supported him.

Harriman informed Sarit that King Savang was very discouraged and had expressed opposition to a partition of Laos. Although Savang did not want Souvanna as Prime Minister the King did not want to assume the office himself. His Majesty had mentioned Phoui as perhaps the best choice for the post, but, said Harriman, Savang "knows this is impossible." Prime Minister Sarit thought that Phoui certainly would

would be better than Souvanna but, he said, it seemed to be "acknowledged" that there was "no chance of agreement on him now."

President Kennedy, said Harriman, felt that there should be no breakdown in either peaceful negotiations or the cease-fire. At the same time, however, preparations must be made for the contingency of a possible breach by the Communists.

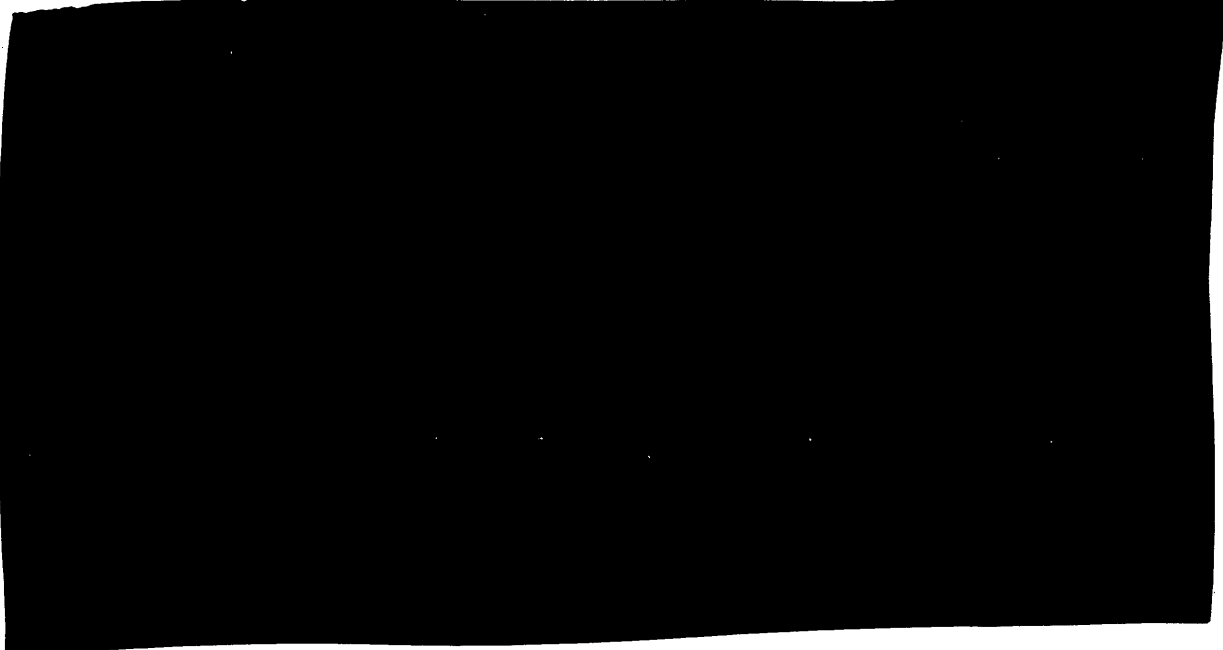
Referring to a previous conversation with Sarit (see item 5 May 1961) Harriman again brought up the question of a partition of Laos. Sarit, affirming that Thailand did not want to see the kingdom divided, commented that the Pathet Lao had, however, seized so many key places in Laos that the kingdom was, in fact, now partitioned. It was a situation that might have to be accepted, the Prime Minister continued, but he felt it would be a mistake to "legalize" it, for that might "tie our hands" in the future. Both Sarit and Harriman agreed that any initiative to divide Laos, "to say nothing of any resumption of hostilities," must come from the Communists. Sarit confirmed that his government had "no intention" of using force to try to push the Communists out of Laos.

The Thai Prime Minister then raised the question of possible intervention by Red China. The US Ambassador replied that it was quite possible that at this point the Russians didn't want the Chinese to move southward. It was also possible that for the time being Communist China's many internal problems would "divert her from Laos which is after all a not particularly attractive prize." The US Ambassador voiced the opinion that Russia and China would be able to keep the Viet Minh from taking any action. However, such restraints would not be applied to the Pathet Lao, whose actions would be passed off as an "internal Lao matter."

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(S) Msg, Bangkok to SecState, 444, 22 Sep 61.

22 Sep 61 In answer to a query from the Department of State, Ambassador Young stated that in his opinion the RTG would be "willing and able" to commit up to 10,000 troops to an expanded SEATO Plan 5. However, Young said, the diversion of these additional Thai troops might necessitate new measures to provide manpower and training for the RTA. Additional US logistical and financial support might also be necessary, as might the presence of US ground forces in Thailand. And, Young added, the actual movement of Thai units into Laos would, as always, be dependent upon the concurrent commitment of US combat troops. Sarit had wondered when this question was first raised (see item 5 September 1961), Young reminded the Department, if the US troops commitment would also be increased. Young requested further guidance on how to answer this "sensitive question." (Young was informed by the State Department on 27 September that the expanded Plan 5 "would involve US forces, including sizeable US air and logistic forces in Thailand, being committed at the initiation of the Plan and fighting in Laos alongside other SEATO forces.")



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(TS) Msgs, SecState to Bangkok, 386, 21 Sep 61; 423, 27 Sep 61; Bangkok to SecState, 446, 22 Sep 61.

22, 25
Sep 61

The Secretary of State instructed Ambassador Brown to again tell Phoumi in the "strongest terms" that the US wanted him to negotiate "sincerely" with Souvanna, and that Phoumi should agree to, and participate in, an early meeting with Souvanna Souphanouvong. In addition Brown was authorized to tell Phoumi that it was the "unequivocal USG position decided at highest level not to support him if further hostilities result from his failure to do so."

Three days later, the US Ambassador in acknowledging the Secretary's message asked what was meant by "if further hostilities result from Phoumi's failure to negotiate we will not support him?" Did it mean that if Phoumi's refusal to meet at Ban Hin Heup resulted in a stalemate broken by an enemy attack, the US would not support him, or only if it was broken by an attack from the RLG? What did refusal of US support mean? Did it simply mean refusal to introduce US troops, or did it mean something more? For example, if, by injudicious sweeps near Thakhek, Phoumi should provoke a major attack on Thakhek and Savannakhet, would the US withdraw its MAAG advisers and stop munitions supplies, thereby leaving the enemy in a position to capture these key places on the Mekong? Phoumi would never believe that the US meant this, and Brown was not quite sure that he himself did. Moreover, added the US Ambassador, it was going to be very difficult to ascertain just who was responsible for any major attack.

Ambassador Brown emphasized that it was essential "we clearly think through what we mean by the phrase 'refuse to support,'

support, ' before we use it too much." The US must not, declared Brown, take a position with Phoumi that it was not "fully prepared to maintain."

(On 26 September, Brown reported to Secretary Rusk that he had called on Phoumi. Since the General had given every impression of a sincere desire to reach agreement with Souvanna for a government under the latter's leadership, Ambassador Brown had felt that, rather than talk to Phoumi in terms authorized by the Secretary's 22 September message, it was better to applaud and encourage him.)

(S) Msg, SecState to Vientiane, 287, 22 Sep 61; (S) Msgs. Vientiane to SecState, 507, 25 Sep 61; 517, 26 Sep 61.

23 Sep 61 In a message to CINCPAC, CHMAAG estimated enemy strength in Laos at 20,000 Lao troops (15,000 organized and 5,000 guerilla), 5,400 Viet Minh troops, and an unspecified number of Viet Minh advisers and technicians. (CHMAAG's report differed significantly from an "analysis of all-source intelligence" noted by the Joint Staff Intelligence Brief on 11 September. The figures quoted by the JSIB were: 15,900 Pathet Lao; 12,000 Kong Le; and 3,200 North Vietnamese: a total of 31,100 enemy troops.)

61. (S) Msg, CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC, DA IN 154191, 23 Sep 61. (S) JSIB, 11 Sep 61.

26 Sep 61 The Secretary of State, having learned from Vientiane that Souvanna had expressed a willingness to enlarge his projected cabinet and increase its political base, informed Ambassador Brown that the problem of forming a satisfactory cabinet went "far beyond the mere numerical formula."

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In the Secretary's opinion, the "crucial question" was whether or not the US would accept Souvanna as Prime Minister. In this regard, Secretary Rusk warned that lengthy discussion with Souvanna, whom the French and British favored, would strengthen his position in the eyes of these Allies, lessen the likelihood of his making concessions, and thus hamper US freedom of action in supporting a candidate for Prime Minister.

The Secretary of State also posed two questions, the answers to which would enable the Department to make a more thorough analysis of Souvanna's proposal. First, who would control the government? Second, who would hold the key portfolios?

(S) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState, 502, 22 Sep 61; 506, 23 Sep 61; 512, 25 Sep 61; (S) Msg, State to Vientiane, PRIORITY 296, 26 Sep 61.

26 Sep 61 The US Ambassador in Paris, in a message to the Secretary of State, summarized a "general review of Laotian developments" given by the Director, Asian Affairs, of the French Foreign Office. Among the salient points of this review were the following:

1. The French Foreign Office would support the distribution of cabinet portfolios in approximately the same proportion agreed upon by the factions in Laos. Although aware of the need to "dilute the Xieng Khouang clique," the Foreign Office believed that "haggling over individual candidates" would accomplish nothing, provoke charges of meddling in Lao affairs, and waste valuable time. If any cabinet members should prove unsatisfactory, Souvanna, "after weathering the first storms," could remove them.

2. No

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2. No decisions regarding the reconstitution of the Lao Army had yet been reached by the Foreign Ministers meeting in Paris. France, however, continued to support individual integration, in the belief that integration by unit would tend to create "areas of divergent political color thus producing internal dissension and de facto partition of the country."

3. The French did not want their future military aid program restricted to the Lao Army, since the gendarmerie "would in an internationally guaranteed Laos have the most important role in internal security."

4. The Foreign Office, having been informed that the US intended to exert pressure on Phoumi, requested that he be "pressed to realize" that "rapprochement" between the rightist and center wings was essential and that, because of Pathet Lao infiltration and bickering among the Princes, "time was wasting."

(C) Msg, Paris to SecState, 1662, 26 Sep 61.

28 Sep 61 CHMAAG Laos reported to CINCPAC that the recent increases in the size and scope of US advisory and assistance efforts in Laos had increased the need for administrative airlift, particularly for logistical support missions. CHMAAG requested that seven L-28 "helio couriers" (STOL, short-take off and-landing aircraft) be provided the MAAG for its administrative use.

(On 6 November, CHMAAG told CINCPAC that, if the helio couriers were not currently available, L-20 aircraft would be suitable as interim replacements. See item 30 November 1961.)

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(S) Msgs, CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC, DA IN 156655, 28 Sep 61; DA IN 174802, 6 Nov 61.

29 Sep 61 The Joint Chiefs of Staff of the UK informed the JCS of their "preliminary views" on expansion of the concept of SEATO Plan 5, as proposed for comment by the US (see item 6 September 1961). The views of the UK military leaders were presented as follows:

1. There would be military advantage to increasing the size of a SEATO force in an intervention in Laos: the flanks of task forces deployed under Plan 5 would be secured; and the security of Thailand and therefore of the SEATO forces and their lines of communication would be better guarded.

2. The increased forces would, however, increase the risks of Chinese or DRV intervention and of escalation.

3. The increased SEATO forces might still prove inadequate to the planned tasks; there might be a subsequent requirement for considerable reinforcements.

4. Occupation of the Luang Prabang area did not appear necessary for sealing the Thai border. Moreover, logistical support for such an operation would be difficult.

5. Even with the deployment of the proposed South Vietnamese forces, there was some doubt, in the minds of the UK JCS, that the Pathet Lao could be cleared from southern Laos.

(TS) Memo, Exec Off to Air Chief Marshal Sir George Mil. to Dir JS, 29 Sep 61, encl to JCS 2344/15, 30 Sep 61; JMF 9155.2/3100 (29 Sep 61).

29 Sep 61 The JCS forwarded to the Secretary of Defense their "consideration" of a State-Defense-JCS "Proposed Concept for Military Intervention in Laos."

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The preface to the concept of operations, drafted by the Department of State, stated that the US was continuing to seek an agreement with Souvanna, and at Geneva, that would at best give only limited assurance of a neutral Laos. Meanwhile, the US must plan against the contingency of a major resumption of hostilities by the Communists that would confront the US with the choice of conceding full control of Laos to them or of committing military forces to oppose them.

To reduce the possibility of a military confrontation with the Chinese Communists, the preface continued, the political objective of intervention by US or SEATO military forces in Laos would be limited to the restoration to RLG control of all Laos except Sam Neua, Phong Saly, northern Xieng Khouang and eastern Luang Prabang provinces. This political objective would, however, permit air strikes, clandestine operations, and support of the FAR and Meos in these provinces.

Such a political objective represented the de facto partition of Laos, for the purpose of: 1) preventing Laos from becoming an avenue into South Viet Nam; 2) preventing Communist advance to the border of Thailand; and 3) establishing a stronger military position from which to negotiate. However, to preclude giving moral and legal sanction to a "split Laos" there should be no public reference to tacit recognition by the US of "'a divided Laos,' military demarcations lines, demilitarized zones, regroupment areas, and provisional boundaries or sites."

The preface envisioned two possible circumstances for intervention:

1. "Resumption of obvious and determined Communist offensive actions above the scale of violation of the current
cease

cease fire." In this circumstance, the RLG would appeal to SEATO; the US would seek to control the timing of this appeal.

2. A large scale Communist buildup that clearly indicated the imminent resumption of hostilities.

In either of these events, the US would request an urgent meeting of the UN Security Council in order to apply pressure upon the USSR to bring about an effective cease-fire. A resolution would be introduced containing: 1) Security Council endorsement of Laotian neutrality and territorial integrity; 2) a call to establish an effective cease-fire; 3) the establishment of small UN teams positioned at strategic points throughout Laos; and 4) a statement that SEATO forces would be withdrawn if the UN agreed upon the appropriate measures for an effective cease-fire. If the USSR vetoed such a resolution, "a move into the [General Assembly] would promptly be made."

v. Simultaneously with this UN action, SEATO would proceed to intervene, as the US had done in the Lebanon crisis. If unanimous SEATO agreement could not be obtained, the intervention would nonetheless be initiated by those members willing to participate.

The JCS "consideration" provided the concept of military actions in support of the political objective established by the Department of State. The JCS conceived of implementing a "SEATO Plan 5 Plus," involving 104,700 combat troops (5,500 US; 11,400 Thai; 4,400 Commonwealth; 1,400 Pakistani; 2,700 South Vietnamese; and 79,300 Laotian forces) and 18,300 reserve and support forces in Thailand (11,000 US and 7,300 non-US). This force represented an augmentation of SEATO Plan 5 by 10,800 men. The above forces might, moreover, be supplemented

supplemented by US Naval Task Forces and by a SEATO "general reserve" of 6,000 troops retained in the parent countries. All US combat forces included in this concept were presently assigned within PACOM and could, depending upon the preparatory measures undertaken, be deployed into Laos in from 12 to 96 hours. The Thai and Vietnamese forces would deploy at the same time as US forces. The Commonwealth and Pakistani forces would be deployed in from 72 hours to 2 weeks, depending upon the amount of advance notice, the condition of SEATO alert, and the availability of transportation; but the initiation of the operation would not need to be delayed pending their arrival. If any of the expected forces should not participate, they would be replaced by US forces.

The initial intervention would secure the key points along the Mekong River, including Vientiane, Paksane, Thakhek, Seno, Savannakhet, and Pakse. The SEATO forces would not attempt to occupy or retake Xieng Khouang or the Plaine des Jarres. If, after the SEATO forces had thus initially deployed, the UN action did not yield a favorable result, then the military actions would be expanded, as follows:

1. Thai forces would occupy Sayaboury province (west of Luang Prabang) to destroy the PL there and assist the FAR in defending Luang Prabang.

2. South Vietnamese forces - at least one RCT - would operate in Laos along the common border.

3. The FAR and other Laotian forces would conduct conventional and guerrilla operations to defeat the PL through the area defined by the political objective (see above).

4. The

4. The SEATO force would also participate in offensive ground and air operations against the enemy. They would support the FAR and South Vietnamese forces with combat air support within the air space of Laos. In addition they would provide support in logistics, communications, clandestine operations, and psychological warfare.

5. Finally, the US would seek to prevent major DRV intervention by demonstrations, perhaps over DRV territory, of "massive deterrent" US air power positioned in the area. The foregoing concept was sufficiently flexible, the JCS said, to be implemented under various circumstances and on short notice.

The general guidance for reaction to the contingencies that might arise, the JCS continued, would be "a response adequate to fulfill the stated military objective." Enemy military actions would not alter this objective, but could compel appropriate responses that would not necessarily be confined to Laos.

Against the Communist forces already in Laos, the SEATO forces deployed under this concept could accomplish the objectives stated, although the operation might require a "period of years." Despite this, the operation would net an immediate gain by forcing the PL from offensive to defensive operations and by raising the morale and effectiveness of the FAR and the Asian Allies.

If major DRV forces were introduced into Laos, SEATO and other friendly forces would strike at them without waiting for actual engagement, but would seek to confine the conflict to Laos. If DRV forces attacked the friendly forces, the allied forces would respond with air strikes at installations and lines of communication in North Viet Nam.

Without

Without prior warning it was likely that only US, Thai, and South Vietnamese forces could react in time to confront such DRV intervention. However, RLG forces would be able to offer at least "harassing, guerrilla, stay-behind" resistance, and the other allied forces could be expected to be forthcoming. In any event, the SEATO forces, assisted by the FAR, would oppose the enemy as far forward as possible. At the minimum, they would hold Vientiane, Thakhek, Savannakhet, and Pakse. South Vietnamese and Thai forces would move into the Bolovens plateau, and additional Thai forces would assist in the defense of Mekong River crossing points and would reinforce their own northern defenses against the possibility of Chinese Communist intervention.

In addition to intervening in Laos, the DRV could further expand the conflict by attacking South Viet Nam. To counter such an invasion, to which it was estimated the DRV could commit five divisions, the SEATO force would have to be increased to approximately 226,000 men, and the US contribution to 129,000 men, not including naval forces. The SEATO force would have naval and air superiority and should prevail. Its mission would be to defend Laos and South Viet Nam against the DRV and to inflict a quick and decisive defeat upon the DRV. Again the enemy would be engaged as far forward as possible, and his military installations and lines of communication attacked. SEATO forces would, when appropriate, mount a general offensive against the enemy and would, if the military situation dictated, have the capability to conduct amphibious assault operations in North Viet Nam.

If the Chinese Communists intervened in Laos whether with regular or "volunteer" forces, the JCS continued, "political authorization for essential military actions must be anticipated

be anticipated, since prompt counteractions would be required." Questions at issue would be whether to attack selected targets in South China with conventional weapons and whether to initiate use of nuclear weapons against installations in direct support of Chinese operations in Laos.

To face this joint Chinese-DRV invasion, the SEATO force would be expanded to 15 divisions and 8 RCTs - 278,000 men. The US would contribute three divisions deployed in Thailand and South Viet Nam and one Marine Division/Wing Team prepared for amphibious assault operations against North Viet Nam. The mission of the SEATO force would become the defense of Southeast Asia. The general concept of operations would be: 1) to delay the enemy's advance with local forces and restrict his lines of communications with air and naval forces; 2) to reinforce rapidly and establish ground defenses well forward of the vital areas in South Viet Nam and Thailand; and 3) to conduct an unremitting air and ground offensive against the enemy's war-making capacity.

(See items 3 and 5 October 1961.)

(TS) JSCM-688-61 to SecDef, w/encls, 29 Sep 61, derived from JCS 2344/14, 29 Sep 61; JMP, 9155.2/3100 (9 May 61) (2).

29 Sep 61 In a cable to the JCS, CINCPAC argued against the transfer of responsibility for Meo operations [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
CINCPAC presented in some detail the relationship between the Meo and FAR, and between Phoumi and Vang Pao (see item 19 September 1961); the distinction between the "pure bonafide FAR" [REDACTED] and the training, logistical and financial arrangements used in support of the Meo. Among the advantages CINCPAC saw for the present modus operandi were
1) the

1) the Meo were not subject to the "peculiarities" of FAR logistics; 2) the hazardous logistic support [REDACTED] was conducted by highly experienced personnel; and 3) the "flexibility" [REDACTED] of financing enabled the quick exploitation of opportunities, such as influencing village chiefs and providing immediate pay to new units. For these reasons, CINCPAC believed that the [REDACTED] operations, which had been developed over an extended period of time and under actual operating conditions, were specifically applicable to the existing situation, were highly effective, and should not be disrupted "at this stage of the game" by a premature change of command. Further, CINCPAC said he had intended to continue the present mode of action even when a US or SEATO counter-insurgency plan had been executed.

(On 4 October the JCS told CINCPAC they concurred in his conclusion that there should be no premature change of command. Nonetheless, the Joint Staff was required to develop a contingency plan involving such a change, and CINCPAC should submit the requested plan (see item 15 November 1961). CINCPAC's position that the plan should not be implemented would be considered by the JCS in connection with any recommendation they might make on its execution.) (See item 14 February 1962).

(TS) Msgs, CINCPAC to JCS, DA IN 156147, 29 Sep 61; JCS to CINCPAC, JCS 1757, 4 Oct 61; both in JMF 9155.2/3100 (28 Jul 61).

29 Sep 61 The three delegations negotiating in Ban Namone agreed that Princes Boun Oum, Souvanna and Souphanouvong would meet the first week in October at Ban Hin Heup (see item 6-8 October 1961).

From

(S-NOFORN), JSIB, vol 12, 2 Oct 61, p. 1.

30 Sep 61 From Geneva, Ambassador Harriman, in a message to the Secretary of State, suggested two critical objectives which the RLG should strive to attain during the forthcoming meeting of the Princes (see items 3 October and 6-8 October 1961). These objectives were the satisfactory composition of a coalition government and agreement among the Princes on the reconstitution of the Lao Army. Regarding the former, Ambassador Harriman believed that Ambassador Brown should be authorized "to agree with Phoumi" on the best of the various possible combinations. Regarding the latter, he stated that, as a "minimum understanding," the Princes should agree on the integration of forces, a census of forces, the formation on a proportional basis of a smaller army, and on the demobilization of excess troops and the storage of surplus armaments.

(S) Msg, Geneva to SecState, CONF 680, 30 Sep 61.

CINCPAC

1 Oct 61 CINCPAC conferred at Vientiane with Phoumi and Boun Oum.

During the conference, Phoumi briefed Admiral Felt on the military situation, stating among other things that:

1. The FAR, by the end of the rainy season, would have complete control of the Phou Kha Khouai mountain range north-east of Vientiane.

2. While holding the Mekong, Nam Tha, Luang Prabang, Vientiane, and Savannakhet in spite of considerable enemy activity, the FAR and Meo units had engaged in operations north of Muong Beng, east and south of Sam Neua, north of the Plaine des Jarres, north and west of Xieng Khouang, and to the south toward Kham Keut.

3. The enemy remained capable of threatening Vientiane and Paksane.

4. The enemy seemed to have reduced his forces in the South and was directing his efforts toward threatening the cities of the Mekong valley and toward infiltrating through southern Laos into South Viet Nam.

5. Past fighting had left RLG forces in a favorable position from which to take the offensive.

6. A continuation of the cease-fire could permit the refitting and retraining of all FAR units.

7. Phoumi's forces were even now capable of seizing Xieng Khouang and threatening Ban Ban.

8. He had devised a contingency plan based on the existence of a firm defense and a striking force capable of either blocking enemy thrusts or taking the offensive. The plan was divided into three phases: a) Phase I, mop-up of the area controlled by the RLG, together with the refitting and retraining of all units; b) Phase II, which had been partially initiated, the reinforcement of FAR units in

enemy-controlled

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enemy controlled territory, along with the harassment of the enemy, and guerrilla activity; and c) Phase III, the re-occupation of enemy territory.

Following the briefing, Admiral Felt raised the question of the presence of US advisers at the battalion level. Phoumi replied that he had authorized US advisers at the company level and had agreed to a US adviser for every FAR armored vehicle.

Ambassador Brown took this opportunity to warn Phoumi against taking offensive action in defiance of the cease-fire. According to Admiral Felt, Phoumi replied that since the enemy did not respect FAR positions in the Sam Neua and Xieng Khouang areas, he did not feel obliged to respect enemy positions in Attapeu province.

Admiral Felt then told Phoumi that it would be wise to continue negotiations, since the additional time thus gained could be used to improve the effectiveness of the FAR. Phoumi responded by pointing out certain shortages of individual equipment, but General Boyle interjected that at the crux of the problem was the FAR's distribution of equipment to more units than were authorized under the MAP program.

Phoumi later told Admiral Felt that he had no confidence in Souvanna, whom he considered a tool of the Communists.

(On 28 September, Ambassador Harriman had objected to Admiral Felt's visiting Vientiane because of the danger that such a visit would raise doubts as to American sincerity in negotiating toward a settlement and also undermine the effect of previous US efforts to impress Phoumi with the need to negotiate in good faith. The Department of State, however, informed Ambassador Harriman that it did not consider the visit "a provocation in any sense," and that it believed

Admiral

Admiral Felt might use his "considerable influence" to encourage Phoumi to negotiate in good faith. Ambassador Harriman thereupon told the Secretary of State that, since Admiral Felt planned to encourage Phoumi in this way, the visit might be most helpful. _

(S) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 04254, 10 Oct 61; (S) Msgs, Geneva to SecState, CONFE 667, 28 Sep 61; CONFE 673, 29 Sep 61; (S) Msg, State to Geneva, FECON NIACT 461, 28 Sep 61.

2 Oct 61 While in Bangkok for the SEATO Military Advisers conference (see item 3-5 October 1961), CINCPAC conferred with Sarit concerning inter alia, a rotational training center in Thailand for US troops (see item 7 August 1961). Sarit thought such a center a "very good idea."

(S) Msg, Bangkok to SecState, 2186, 2 Oct 61.

3 Oct 61 The JCS forwarded to the Secretary of Defense a proposed State-Defense-Joint Staff outline program for limited holding actions in Southeast Asia. The plan was based on assumptions established by the Department of State. These assumptions were that: 1) there would be no political solution in Laos; 2) SEATO Plan 5 or a suitable variation would not be carried out; and 3) the Communists would continue to increase the scale of their military support and attacks. The program had as its objectives (also established by the State Department) to:

1. Delay further expansion and advance of Communist controlled areas toward the Thai, Cambodian, and Vietnamese frontiers; maintain current fluidity of military situation to hinder further hardening of Communist area and positions.

2. Maintain a fluid political situation in Laos to buy time for limited holding actions. Do not recognize a political division in Laos.

3. Make

3. Make the Communists understand that the scope of our action is limited.

The program envisioned the immediate implementation of step-by-step increases in the scope and tempo of current actions in Laos, "as determined in the field with no prior warning to the enemy." Operations would be conducted "at least through the dry season (May 1962)" by "existing US agencies in the field"; the US contribution would continue to be "advisory personnel" to Asian forces, and logistics support, including, if necessary, airlift.

The actions suggested in the program were:

1. 

3. Exploration of the possibility of stationing one US combat battalion in South Viet Nam for training purposes.

4. Rotation of battalion-size US elements into Thailand for combined SEATO training or as school troops.

5. Continued rotation of PACAF aircraft to Thailand and continued development of air defense facilities in Thailand and South Viet Nam.

6. A step up in the employment of US aircraft for tactical troop and logistic support.

7. Intensification of actions against Communist aerial resupply efforts.

8. Increase in Meo forces.

9. Use of defoliants and mines against Viet Cong access routes along the Laos-Viet Nam border, and exploration with the Thai of the use of defoliants.

10. Continued emphasis upon counter-insurgency programs in South Viet Nam.

11. Increase

11. Increase as feasible of covert activities in Communist-held areas, including North Viet Nam.

12. Accelerated provision of jet aircraft to the South Vietnamese Air Force.

These programs would, if approved, be worked out in consultation with Sarit, Diem, and Phoumi. To preserve secrecy and speed of action, however, SEATO would have no responsibilities in the program; the SEATO Allies would only be "informed generally" as the program unfolded.

In their memorandum forwarding this program to the Secretary, the JCS stated that they did not endorse it as a desirable course of action. In the situation postulated by the assumption of the program the objectives would be self-defeating. Although the program did not explicitly "recognize" the political division of Laos, it "accepted" it. It assured the Communists that the US intended only to delay their final victory; it conceded the initiative to the enemy; and it gave "our friends no hope." The actions suggested in the program would, the JCS opined, "seriously undermine" the US military effort in the Far East and would place US forces and equipment in unnecessary jeopardy. Although they did not object to the use of the program for briefing the President, the JCS recommended strongly that the President be advised of their views.

(TS) JCSM-690-61 to SecDef, w/encl, 3 Oct 61, derived from JCS 2344/16, 2 Oct 61, JMF 9150/3100 (1 Oct 61).

3 Oct 61 The Deputy Secretary of Defense informed the JCS that he had reviewed the concept for intervention in Laos submitted by them on 29 September (see item). The Deputy Secretary raised a "fundamental question" regarding the concept - the feasibility

feasibility and desirability of undertaking an operation that might involve the use of one, two, or more divisions from CONUS reserves at a time of "great uncertainty" over possible developments in the Berlin crisis. The President's decision on the proposed plan might well hinge, the Deputy Secretary said, on "the risks of getting into a serious two-front situation."

The Deputy Secretary also requested clarification on two "lesser questions":

1. What would be the scale of the proposed naval forces to support the operations?

2. What would be the source of the "massive deterrent" US air power that the concept proposed to display to prevent DRV intervention in Laos?

(See item 5 October 1961,)

(TS) Memo, DepSecDef to CJCS, 3 Oct 61, att to JCS 2344/17, 3 Oct 61; JMF 9155.2/3100 (9 May 61) (2).

3, 8
Oct 61

The US Ambassador in Vientiane, in a message to the Secretary of State, offered suggestions concerning the objectives which Phoumi, as spokesman for the Boun Oum faction, should seek during forthcoming meetings of the Princes. The choice of tactics by which to gain these ends would be left to the RLG negotiators. Ambassador Brown, after discussions with Phoumi, now sought the comments of the Secretary of State on suggested objectives related to the composition of the provisional government, the integration of the armed forces, the halting of Viet Minh infiltration, and the location of the administrative capital.

In the opinion of Ambassador Brown, the objective of the US regarding the composition of a provisional government

was

was to insure "a sufficiently strong non-Communist presence" within the cabinet and army to give "reasonable assurance" that Laos would remain truly neutral in spite of Communist pressures. Essential to the fulfillment of this goal was the presence of a strong and balanced center group within the government. Ideally, such strength and balance could be obtained by dividing the 16-man cabinet so that the Pathet Lao-Souvanna group held eight posts, while the remainder were filled by non-Xieng Khouang neutrals and followers of Boun Oum and Phoumi. The Ambassador believed Phoumi should seek this equal division but be prepared to accept nine members of the Pathet Lao-Souvanna group. In exchange for key posts or for the appointment of strong personalities from within the RLG or from among the non-Xieng Khouang neutrals, Phoumi might agree to 11 Pathet Lao-Souvanna cabinet members.

The Ambassador, however, considered the appointment of strong non-Communists to key posts to be more important than the establishment of an apparently equitable numerical ratio among the various political factions. Because of Souvanna's "autocratic tendencies" and the certain presence in the cabinet of a disciplined leftist group, the non-Communists would have to be "vigorous, competent, and courageous," if they were to make their presence felt. For these reasons, Ambassador Brown suggested that Phoumi be urged to hold out for either the post of Minister of Defense, with control over the army, or Minister of Interior, with control over the police.

In making these suggestions regarding the composition of the government, the Ambassador admitted that it would be difficult, though worthwhile, to obtain a key position for Phoumi. Whatever his personal political fate, Phoumi should

be urged

be urged to take into account the strength of personalities and the importance of the various portfolios rather than be allowed to accept a mere mathematical distribution of cabinet posts among the different factions.

Turning to the integration of the armed forces into a single national army, the Ambassador advised that Phoumi insist upon the adoption of an integration program before the coalition government actually took office. The integration would be completed and the excess troops demobilized before an election was held to choose a government to succeed the provisional coalition. The Ambassador also suggested that major staff and command positions be allocated according to the formula by which the army was integrated. Unless this were done, a political settlement might be undermined by the subsequent distribution of military positions in a manner unfavorable to the West. In addition, Ambassador Brown suggested that ranks in the new army be adjusted to compensate for the rate of promotion in the existing FAR, a rate believed to be slower than in the dissident armed forces.

In order to prevent Viet Minh infiltration, the US Ambassador believed that Phoumi should insist upon an explanation of how Souvanna intended to carry out his expressed intention of halting the passage of Viet Minh troops through Laos into South Viet Nam. Phoumi also was to insist that the provisional government declare at the very outset its intention to support the efforts of the ICC to prevent the infiltration of the Lao frontiers by foreign troops.

Finally, the Ambassador warned that Souvanna's desire to move the Laotian administrative capital to Xieng Khouang from Vientiane could adversely affect the political orientation of the nation. Souvanna felt that Vientiane was too close to Western influences in Thailand, but Ambassador Brown considered Xieng Khouang

too

too near the borders of Communist North Viet Nam. Phoumi, it was suggested, should argue for the retention of Vientiane but be willing to propose that the more centrally located royal capital, Luang Prabang, serve also as administrative capital.

On 8 October, the Secretary of State forwarded to Ambassador Brown his comments on the suggested objectives outlined above. Regarding the composition of the provisional government, the Secretary of State agreed with the Ambassador's analysis of the various formulae for representation and with his emphasis upon the need for vigorous non-Communist cabinet members. Preferably, Phoumi would remain Minister of Defense, and "someone like Phoui Sananikone" would become Minister of Foreign Affairs. As a "partial fallback," Phoumi might serve as Minister of Interior and Phoui as Minister of Foreign Affairs. None of the key portfolios of Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Interior was to be given to members of the Communist NLHX or to members of Souvanna's group who were closely associated with that faction.

The Secretary of State, while expressing general agreement with the suggested objectives concerning the integration of forces, observed that more "concrete advice on details" might be forthcoming after Ambassador Brown had completed discussions with the representatives of the Western Allies in Vientiane and made his final recommendations (see item 20 October 1961).

Finally, the Secretary of State concurred in the suggested objectives for negotiations dealing with the prevention of Communist infiltration and the location of the administrative capital.

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(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 543, 3 Oct 61; (S) Msg, State to Vientiane, DEPTTEL 322, 8 Oct 61.

3-5
Oct 61

The SEATO Military Advisers (MILADs) met in Bangkok, with CINCPAC acting as US MILAD. The MILADs discussed and reached general agreement on SEATO Plan 4 (providing for defense of Southeast Asia against overt Chinese Communist and DRV attack) and SEATO Plan 6 (providing for defense of the Protocol States against DRV attack). In both cases, the US agreed (as the JCS had authorized CINCPAC to do on 24 August 1961) to serve as "appointed nation." Additionally, the MILADs, with a view toward easing any transitions from Plan 6 to Plan 4, agreed that the command structures for the two Plans should be similar. Thus, the US would provide the SEATO Force Commander for both Plans, and the Field Force Commander for Plan 6. For Plan 4, the larger concept, three regional Field Force commanders would serve under the Force Commander. The Central region, i.e., the principal region in which Plan 6 would be activated, would be commanded by a US officer with a Thai deputy; Pakistan and the Philippines would provide commanders for Western and Eastern regions respectively.

Having reached the above agreements, the MILADs further decided that the SEATO Council should be asked to approve them, and that each nation should declare its force commitments to the plans.

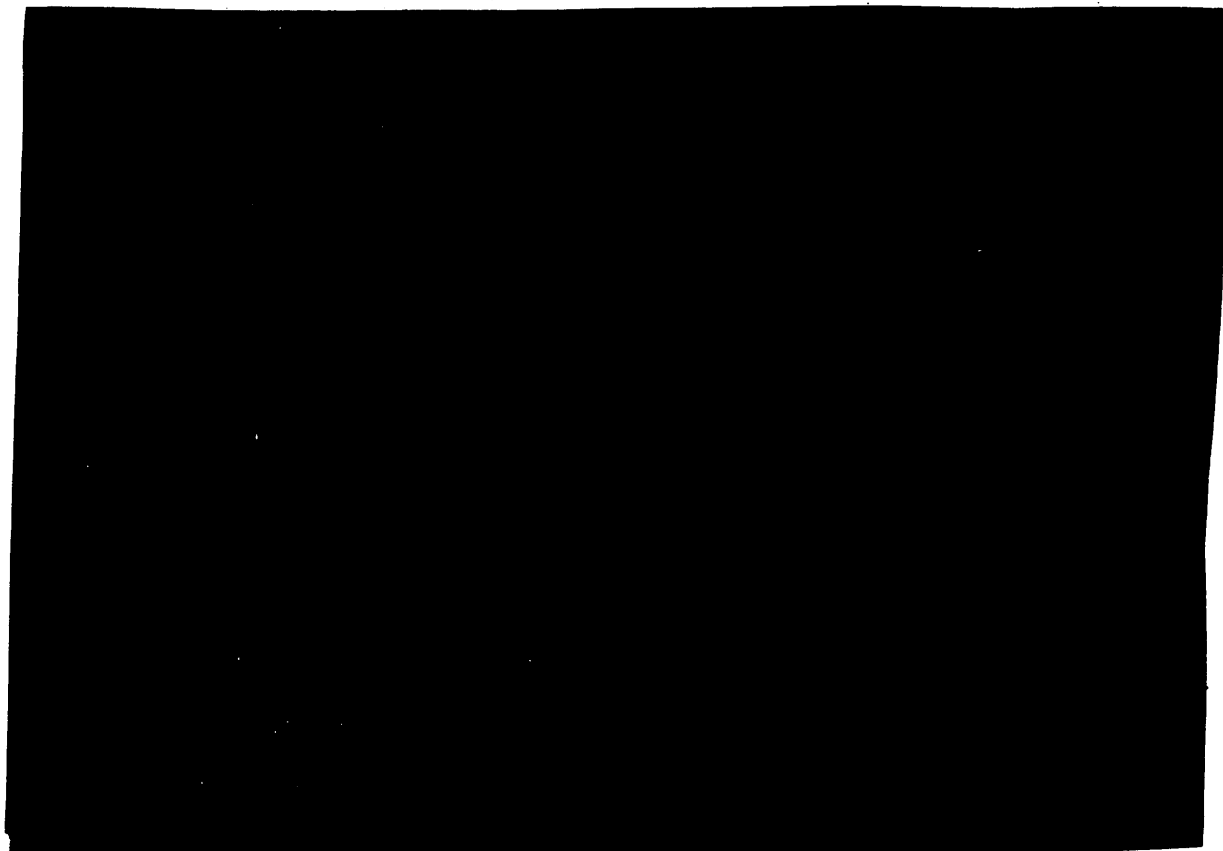
(TS) Msg, Bangkok to SecState, 519, 9 Oct 61. (TS)
JCS 2339/15, 22 Aug 61; JMF 9060/3100 (24 Aug 61).

4 Oct 61 The JCS recommended to the Secretary of Defense that the FAR wartime force levels be raised, as recommended by CINCPAC (see item 9 September 1961), to a total strength of 62,321 (see item 19 October 1961).

CHJUSMAG

(S) JCSM-693-61 to SecDef, 4 Oct 61, derived from JCS 2344/13, 26 Sep 61; JMF 9155.2/3100 (9 Sep 61).

4 Oct 61



(S) Msg, CHJUSMAG Thailand to CINCPAC, DA IN 163778, 20 Oct 61.

5 Oct 61 Reviewing probable Bloc support of the Communist effort against South Viet Nam, Special National Intelligence Estimate 53-2-61 concluded, inter alia, that the Viet Cong probably intended, during the approaching dry season, to intensify its activities in the plateau areas of northern and central South Viet Nam. "To a considerable extent," the SNIE stated, the ability of the Viet Cong to maintain the expanded effort would depend upon improved logistical support from the outside. It was probable, for this reason, that the Bloc intended to build up the eastern sector of southern Laos as a "major supply channel" for this new Viet Cong campaign.

The

(S) SNIE 53-2-61, 5 Oct 61, J-2 Sect.

5 Oct 61 The JCS replied to the questions of the Deputy Secretary of Defense (see item 3 October 1961) regarding the proposed concept for military intervention in Laos (see item 29 September 1961). Addressing the Deputy Secretary's basic question concerning the dangers of simultaneous flare-ups in Berlin and Laos, the JCS stated that over a period of time they had examined various alternatives with regard to Laos and Southeast Asia and had recommended certain military actions short of US intervention that might have retrieved the situation. However, the JCS continued, "the time was now past when action short of intervention by outside forces could reverse the rapidly worsening situation." Execution of SEATO Plan 5, or a suitable variation thereof, was now "the military minimum commensurate with the situation." Without an acceptable political settlement prior to the resumption of overt hostilities, there was "no feasible military alternative of lesser magnitude which will prevent the loss of Laos, South Vietnam and ultimately Southeast Asia." If the execution of SEATO Plan 5 caused escalation, additional mobilization would be required. Nonetheless, as the JCS had previously stated (see item 7 September 1961), the US could not afford to become "preoccupied with Berlin to the extent that we close our eyes to the [critical] situation in Southeast Asia." In fact, the JCS had agreed in connection with Berlin planning that the execution of SEATO Plan 5 would be an effective counter to any Soviet denial of access to Berlin. It was not a question, the JCS concluded, of the desirability of prosecuting two limited wars at the same time. Rather, they said, "the

"the fact of the matter is that we may be faced with such a contingency."

The JCS also replied to the Deputy Secretary's two "lesser questions" (see item 3 October 1961), as follows:

1. The naval forces in support of SEATO Plan 5 operations would consist of one or two attack carrier strike groups with supporting forces, the employment of which would not unacceptably reduce Seventh Fleet capabilities in the remainder of WESTPAC. In the event of Chinese Communist intervention and the resulting additional naval deployments, elements of the First Fleet would deploy from EASTPAC to replace the WESTPAC striking power diverted to Southeast Asia.

2. The "massive deterrent" US air power that would put on a "show of force" over North Viet Nam could be "displayed" by the air forces assigned to SEATO Plan 5, by other PACOM aircraft, or by SAC training flights. Such an exercise would not "dilute" other deployments and would moreover serve the secondary purpose of providing useful reconnaissance.

(TS) JCSM-704-61 to SecDef, 5 Oct 61, derived from JCS 2344/18, 4 Oct 61; JMF 9155.2/3100 (9 May 61) (2).

5, 6, 7,
10 Oct 61

The Service Chiefs submitted to the JCS their respective comments on the preliminary report of the Southeast Asia Study Group (see item 18 September 1961). The CSA and the CMC both considered the assumption of the report, that the Chinese Communists would not be provided nuclear weapons by the USSR, to be "unrealistic." The CNO considered the report's statement that escalation would be the worry of the Chinese "not entirely valid." CSAF stated his similar worry differently: "the proposed force requirements would," he said, "be invalidated in the event of participation, even of a

covert

covert nature, by the USSR."

CSA had several more basic objections to register. The Study Group proposal that the US employ nuclear weapons from the outset of any war in Southeast Asia appeared, CSA said, to be based on the assumption, inter alia, that the Chinese would not have a retaliatory capability - this, as stated above, he considered an unrealistic assumption.

The logistics section of the study was "misleading," CSA continued. It failed to take into consideration the logistic capabilities of the Army forces that would support the four-phased military operations. Also, the conclusion that the use of nuclear weapons would be accepted by the Southeast Asia Allies was unproven, and the possible calamitous effect of such employment on world opinion was ignored.

The CSA then reminded the JCS that their approved revision of Basic National Security Policy had emphasized a change in policy for the employment of nuclear weapons in limited war, as follows:

- a. Make every feasible effort to keep the war at a non-nuclear level but be prepared to use nuclear weapons when required; and
- b. meet non-nuclear attacks with a nuclear response when vital interests cannot be defended at the non-nuclear level.

The implication of the study was that a Chinese nonnuclear attack on SEATO forces and bases would be considered as escalation and US use of nuclear weapons would be considered mandatory. This need not necessarily be true, CSA said, and again he cited chapter and verse of the JCS-approved Basic National Security Policy:

1. A limited war should be conducted in a manner which "controls the scope and intensity of the conflict to minimize the risk of escalation to general war."

2. Should

2. Should limited war occur, the US would "prevent undesired escalation of the war and prevent the accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons."

With US escalation mandatory and directed at a decisive defeat of Communist China, the result would be general war - a situation CSA believed " could be avoided by actions less drastic than those visualized by the study group."

There was, CSA said finally, no justification for concluding that a nonnuclear war in Southeast Asia would be unsuccessful for the US and its Allies. In accordance with national policy and military planning, therefore, the US should not predetermine a reliance on nuclear weapons. Rather, the US should use nuclear weapons only if the enemy initiated their use or if their use was necessary to defend the vital interests of the US.

(See items 12 October 1961 and 15 November 1961.)

(TS) JCS 2339/25, JCS 2339/26, JCS 2339/27, all 10 Oct 61, and JCS 2339/28, 11 Oct 61; all in JMF 9150/3410 (1 Aug 61).

6 Oct 61 Concerned by reports of increased Viet Cong infiltration through southern Laos into South Viet Nam, CINCPAC, in a message to PACAF, noted that the RT-33 and RB-26 aircraft were incapable of providing photographic coverage of Laos in the "space and time frame required," and expressed his belief that an RF-101 unit with its supporting photo processing center should be moved to Viet Nam or perhaps to Thailand in order to provide the necessary coverage. CINCPAC then requested the opinions of CHJUSMAG Thailand and CHMAAG Laos on the possible use of RF-101s.

(On 15 October, CHMAAG Laos stated his own and Ambassador Brown's endorsement of the proposed employment of

RF-101s

RF-101s over Laos. In addition, he recommended that consideration be given to establishing an air courier service to fly prints from the airfield at Don Muang, Thailand, to Bangkok. CHJUSMAG Thailand reported on 17 October that the US Ambassador at Bangkok approved basing the RF-101s at Don Muang but believed that, pending further discussions with the RTG, the reconnaissance coverage should be confined to Laos. (See item 17 October 1961.)

(S) Msg, CHMAAG Viet Nam to CINCPAC, 100909Z Sep 61; (S) Msg CINCPAC to PACAF, DA IN 158822, 6 Oct 61; (S) Msg, CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC, DA IN 163053, 15 Oct 61; (S) Msg, CHJUSMAG Thailand to CINCPAC, DA IN 162368, 17 Oct 61.

6 Oct 61 The JCS, responding to a 3 July 1961 request by the Secretary of Defense (see item), forwarded to the Secretary detailed data on logistic, airfield, and lines of communication improvements required for Southeast Asia. The requirements listed had an estimated cost of \$626.81 million and included the following projects for Laos:

1. Improvement of Wattay airfield (Vientiane).
2. Construction of two roads from Attopeu, Laos: one to Ban Het, Viet Nam, and one to Ubon, Thailand.
3. Prepositioning of 8 mechanized landing craft (LCM) at four Mekong River crossing points between Laos and Thailand.
4. Increased air terminal facilities at Seno.
5. Negotiation for entry and base rights in Laos, as required.
6. Provision for "support of combat attrition . . . in the event of resumption of hostilities."
7. Various communications improvements.

(On 22

(On 22 October, CINCPAC, who had been asked to designate his priority needs from among the total requirements, classed the improvement to Wattay airfield as "urgently required.")

(TS) JCSM-694-61 to SecDef, w/att, 6 Oct 61, derived from JCS 2118/161, 22 Sep 61; JMF 9150/4000 (3 Jul 61).
(TS) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 222318Z Oct 61.

6 Oct 61 The views of the Australian Chiefs of Staff Committee on the US suggestion for an expanded SEATO Plan 5 (see item 6 September 1961) were forwarded to the JCS. The Australians stated that they had already recognized that SEATO Plan 5 would be unlikely to achieve its objectives in the existing situation. The expanded plan proposed by the US was militarily more realistic. It was the opinion of the Australian Chiefs that SEATO forces of the order provided by the current Plan 5, together with the FAR and the additional Thai and South Vietnamese contingents envisaged by the US concept, could secure southern Laos up to the 17th parallel against Pathet Lao opposition at the current levels; the SEATO forces deployed north of the parallel would be able to hold their positions against the PL.

Even this larger SEATO force could not, however, withstand what the Australians termed "the assessed threat of four Communist [presumably Chinese or DRV] divisions in Laos." Intervention in Laos should not therefore be undertaken, the Australians concluded, unless the participating nations were "willing and able to meet also the heavier burdens that would be involved in substantial commitments over and above the forces now proposed to be deployed."

(On 13 October, the JCS decided that they were in general agreement with the Australian views. They authorized the Director, Joint Staff, to so inform the

Australian

Australian Chiefs.)

(TS) Memos, Head, Australian JSS to Dir, JS, 6 Oct 61, att to JCS 2344/20, 12 Oct 61; JMF 9155.2/3100 (9 May 61) (2)

6-8
Oct 61

Princes Souvanna, Boun Oum, and Souphanouvong conferred on 6 October at Ban Hin Heup concerning the establishment of a coalition government.

At the conclusion of the day's talks, the Princes issued a communique which stated that they had formed a joint committee to summarize the differences of opinion among the factions in order that these conflicts could be resolved by the Princes themselves. The newly-created committee immediately began discussing the selection of a Prime Minister, the size of the cabinet, and the distribution of portfolios.

On 8 October, the three Princes sought to resolve some of the differences that had come to light during the committee sessions. The Princes approved the creation of a 16-man cabinet, agreed that the Prime Minister and Vice President of Council would hold portfolios, and decided to present Souvanna to the King for designation as head of the coalition government (see item 18 October 1961). In addition, they directed the committee to continue its discussions and made Souvanna responsible for choosing the time and site of the next meeting of the Princes.

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 554, 6 Oct 61; (C) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 563, 8 Oct 61; (OUO) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 555, 6 Oct 61; (U) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState 562, 8 Oct 61; 566, 9 Oct 61.

8 Oct 61 In the course of his response to Ambassador Brown's list of suggested objectives which the RLG should seek at the meeting of the Princes at Ban Hin Heup (see item 3 October 1961), Secretary of State Rusk commented upon the Laos Country

Teams's views of the Ryan Plan (see item 31 August 1961).

The Secretary of State, although aware of the need for "maximizing" Western influence in Souvanna's expanded police force, did not believe that the Ryan Plan should be put into effect at this time. In addition to those arguments previously conveyed to the Secretary of State by Ambassador Brown, the major reasons for delaying implementation were that: 1) the French, who were likely to have the primary training mission within the Lao Ministry of Defense, would desire and would receive the task of training the gendarmerie as well; and 2) Souvanna appeared unwilling or unable to accept the Ryan Plan.

The subject of the Lao national police, the Secretary of State added, would be considered further after talks with the French (see item 30 October 1961).

(On 15 October, Ambassador Brown, who continued to believe that the Ryan Plan should be put into effect at this time, informed the Secretary of State that, if the plan were not adopted in its entirety, the Ambassador hoped that the French could be persuaded to modify their proposed gendarmerie program to include a provincial police force and to assign the US a role in training and advising as well as in financing the police organization. (For the French plan, see item 21 October 1961.))

(S) Msg, State to Vientiane, 322, 8 Oct 61; (S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 592, 15 Oct 61.

11 Oct 61 The President directed several courses of action with regard to Viet Nam, among which were:

1. The initiation of guerrilla actions, including the use of US advisers if necessary, against Viet Cong aerial resupply missions in the Tchepone area in Laos.

2. A mission by General Taylor to South Viet Nam to explore ways in which US assistance could be more effective (see item 3 November 1961).

(TS) NSAM 104, 13 Oct 61, att to JCS 2339/30, 18 Oct 61.

11 Oct 61 The JCS informed the Secretary of Defense that, subject to his approval, they had authorized CINCPAC (the implementing message to CINCPAC was actually dispatched on 12 October 1961) to "program for" the increase in WSMTT personnel in Laos (from 330 to 500 personnel) directed by the President on 29 August (see item).

(On 25 October, the Director of Military Assistance, OASD(ISA), informed the JCS that OSD programming and funding actions for support of the increased WSMTTs had been initiated.)

(TS) JCSM-722-61 to SecDef, 11 Oct 61; (S) Msg, JCS to CSA and CINCPAC, JCS 1850, 12 Oct 61; both derived from JCS 2344/19, 6 Oct 61. (S) Memo, Dir Mil Asst, OASD (ISA) to CJCS, 25 Oct 61, att to JCS 2344/22, 27 Oct 61. All in JMF 9155.2/5191 (17 Aug 61).

12 Oct 61 The Deputy Secretary of Defense commented to the JCS upon the preliminary report of the Southeast Asia Study Group (see item 18 September 1961). The report provided considerable information on the problem of combating Communist activities in Southeast Asia, the Deputy Secretary said; especially useful was the material assembled on logistics. Final judgment and approval of the concepts and options set forth in the study were reserved, however, pending the submission of a final report. The Deputy Secretary suggested that, in the next phase of the study, emphasis be given to the following subjects:

1. The analysis of the pattern of military operations that might develop following the intervention of US and other external forces in the area

2. The possibility of combating some types of Chinese Communist/DRV aggression in the area with a relatively small number of US ground forces aided by sizeable US air and naval forces. This investigation should identify the threshold at which large scale US intervention on the ground would be necessary.

3. The

3. The implications for our position in Southeast Asia if limited, selective use of nuclear weapons by the US is met by comparable use of nuclear weapons by the Soviet Union.

4. The development of alternative logistics proposals for the area to include not only infrastructure but also prestocking of materiel and other related measures.

(See item 15 November 1961.)

(TS) Memo, DepSecDef to CJCS, 12 Oct 61, att to JCS 2339/29, 13 Oct 61.

13 Oct 61 The Vice Director, Joint Staff, furnished to CJCS a report by Brigadier General William H. Craig, senior member of a Joint Survey Team that had visited Laos, Thailand, and South Viet Nam during August 1961. The missions of the Survey Team had been, General Craig reported, the following:

1. To determine the situation in Laos.
2. To develop a library of information to augment that available in Washington.
3. To explore the possible resumption of full-scale hostilities in Laos.
4. To visit specified areas where US supported operations are or may be carried out.
5. To note UW capabilities, to include Meo operations.

The "observations" of the team were as follows:

1. Leadership: Despite extensive US training efforts, FAR combat capabilities "vis-a-vis the Viet Minh" had not appreciably increased, inasmuch as the rebels had also been preparing for resumption of hostilities.

Lack of leadership was the major FAR deficiency. At the top there was Phoumi--"a real driving force, the only one . . . observed in Laos," but "a poor organizer who does not know how to delegate." Phoumi's criterion for

selection

selection of key subordinates was loyalty, not ability, and in consequence incompetent senior officers were retained in major command positions (most notably one Kam Khong, whose reward for losing five battles had been promotion to general and a prize new command assignment). Moreover, Phoumi was unpredictable and often ignored US advice. However, there was no one in sight qualified to succeed him. Other specific deficiencies in FAR leadership were that: 1) junior officers were poorly schooled and received no guidance from their superiors; 2) the officer corps was "badly shaken" by what it considered the failure of the West to support Laos against "an overwhelming intervention" from North Viet Nam; and 3) there were serious shortages of officers and NCOs generally. Even US fighting men could not be expected to win, the team said, with such poor leadership and support as the Lao enlisted man received.

2. Logistics. The FAR logistics system was "totally ineffective," principally, again, because of the serious lack of qualified leaders. A "US directed" logistics system down to battalion level was urgently required; the necessary equipment was in the FAR depots, but it did not reach the troops.

3. Training. The US training program was beginning to pay dividends, but it was a "long-term investment." Training problems included: 1) the unwillingness of the FAR to fill school quotas, because of the shortage of officers and NCOs at the front; 2) illiteracy; 3) lack of facilities; and 4) the change-over from French to US systems. It might take three to five years to develop effective Lao armed forces.

4. Current

4. Current Operations. The period since the cease-fire had not been one of stalemate and inactivity. The FAR had been training, regrouping, reorganizing, and engaging in small-unit combat activity against PL/VM limited offensives and other cease-fire violations. Moreover, Phoumi had been in consultation with Thai and South Vietnamese military officials.

Neither had the PL/VM been idle since the cease-fire. They were consolidating their control of Phong Saly, Sam Neua, and Xieng Khouang provinces, attempting to suppress the Meo, infiltrating southern Laos, recruiting, resupplying, and conducting patrols, probes, and hit-and-run raids. On balance, and owing primarily to the extensive Viet Minh encadrement of the PL and to Communist logistical support, the enemy had retained superiority over the FAR and could initiate offensive operations on all major fronts at times and places of its own choosing. It was, however, the consensus of the Survey Team and of most US advisers in Laos that the Lao soldier would fight; with necessary leadership, training, and time, he could be used to form units effective by US standards.

5. Possible Future Operations. The Survey Team agreed that there was a strong possibility that large-scale combat would be resumed at the end of the rainy season, with special effort devoted by the Communists to securing and expanding the route through Laos into South Viet Nam. (Both Phoumi and Diem believed that the Communists now planned to split Laos on a North-South, rather than an East-West line. The Communists would in this way, the Survey Team pointed out, be able to place Viet Cong troops in force along the Lao-South Viet Nam border.)

If hostilities

If hostilities were resumed, the FAR could conduct limited defensive and rear area security operations. In the face of enemy "attack-in-force," the FAR could conduct only delaying actions for two or three weeks. If, however, Phoumi were supported at once by multinational forces as in SEATO Plan 5, he should be able to hold present positions, implement extensive guerrilla operations in northeast Laos, clear his rear areas, and continue to improve the combat effectiveness of the FAR.

Phoumi appeared to the Survey Team to be "quietly desperate, but cagy and determined." He would accept any help in the form of US advisers, [REDACTED] What he really wanted, the Survey Team thought, was a US commitment to resist actively Communist intervention in Laos; and what the US "really needed" in Laos was a "'MAAG-Embassy'" team such as Van Fleet and Puerifoy had formed in Greece.

The Survey Team then presented its conclusions and recommendations, as follows:

A. With the end of the rainy season in sight, the situation in Laos is now critical.

B. The future of the US in Southeast Asia is at stake.

C. It may be too late unless we act now one way or another.

D. An immediate decision is urgently required, therefore, as to future US policy in Southeast Asia.

E. If it is in the best interest of the United States to continue to defend Southeast Asia against communism we must take urgent action now.

F. It would be impossible to hold against the communists in Laos with only the FAR forces currently available.

G. Therefore, the following should be done if we are to remain in Southeast Asia:

1. Take the initial steps, right now, to implement SEATO Plan 5, or a suitable

variation

variation thereof, to permit the multinational forces concerned to be in the desired positions before the end of the rainy season.

2. Simultaneously, get tough with Phoumi, with the objective of developing adequate leadership and an effective logistic support system within the FAR.

3. Be prepared to provide General Phoumi with tactical air support in the event that hostilities are resumed.

Finally, the Team reported "a pronounced apprehension expressed by all US military and civilian ranks consulted in Southeast Asia that Washington's preoccupation with Berlin will result in the loss of Southeast Asia to communism."

The remainder of the Survey Team's report consisted of detailed assessments of: 1) environment, operational facilities, logistical support systems, airlift and communication facilities in Laos, Thailand, and South Viet Nam; and 2) unconventional and psychological warfare operations and assets of all US and friendly forces in or near Southeast Asia.

(TS) DJSM-1259-61 to CJCS, W/encl, 13 Oct 61; JMF 9150/5420 (10 Aug 61).

13 Oct 61 The JCS informed CINCPAC that representation had been made to the Department of State on the need for insuring the availability of Seno airfield during SEATO operations (see item 29 August 1961). State had replied that the French were presently refusing the use of the base to the US and RLG in order both to maintain their relationship with Souvanna and not to jeopardize present negotiations. The Secretary of State had already expressed to the French strong disappointment in their position, but had had no success in altering it. The Department of State therefore

felt

felt that any approach to the French at the present time would be "counter-productive" and would merely add to French apprehension about US policy in Laos.

Nonetheless, the JCS told CINCPAC, both State and Defense fully appreciated that the use of Seno would be essential in the implementation of SEATO or unilateral plans for intervention in Laos; CINCPAC was authorized to plan accordingly.

(S) Msg, JCS to CINCPAC, JCS 1875, 13 Oct 61.

14 Oct 61 The JCS informed CINCPAC that developments in Laos might bring on the concurrent implementation of SEATO Plan 5 Plus in Laos and a SEATO plan based on CINCPAC OPLAN 32-59 (Phase II-Viet Nam) in South Viet Nam. CINCPAC was requested therefore to "refine" OPLAN 32-59 to accommodate "limited or token" SEATO forces in an operation designed to: 1) secure the border of South Viet Nam; and 2) assist the GVN in regaining full control of its own territory by freeing Vietnamese forces for offensive action against the Viet Cong.

(See item 21 October 1961.)

(TS) Msgs, JCS to CINCPAC, JCS 1853, 12 Oct 61; JCS 1886, 14 Oct 61.

17 Oct 61 In response to a request from the JCS for an evaluation of a recently directed photographic reconnaissance effort over Laos, CINCPAC stated that the required coverage could not be obtained in less than approximately 14 weeks. In making this estimate, CINCPAC took into account the range and limited photographic capability of the RT-33, the maintenance of cameras, the probable number of abortive

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missions, and the difficulty in locating the areas to be photographed. Adverse weather could further delay completion of the project, and the lack of photo processing equipment at Vientiane would slow the delivery of the photographs to Washington.

CINCPAC also called attention to the vulnerability of the RT-33 and the risk that one might be destroyed in operations close to the border of either Communist China or North Viet Nam.

In contrast, CINCPAC continued, the necessary coverage could be obtained in approximately one week by four RF-101s operating out of Don Muang, Thailand, assuming that a photo processing center also was located there. Besides speeding coverage, the use of RF-101s would reduce the risk of losses during operations.

(CINCPAC, in a further report of the progress of the reconnaissance effort, informed the JCS on 20 October that 90 per cent of the aerial photo coverage of the Laos-Viet Nam border had been completed and was available to the JCS through the CNO.)

(S) Msgs, CINCPAC to JCS, 170253Z Oct 61 and 200417Z Oct 61.

17 Oct 61 The Deputy Director for Operations outlined for the Director Joint Staff, his observations of the situation in Southeast Asia. These observations were based upon visits to Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and South Viet Nam, and on conversations with US and indigenous officials in these nations. In summarizing his impression of the Laotian situation, the Deputy Director for Operations stated that he was "heartened by what I saw and heard . . . -- they

(RLG)

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(RLG) are not ready to give up yet."

During his visit to Laos, the Deputy Director for Operations had talked with Colonel Vang Pao of the Meo, and with leaders of the FAR. He had asked FAR Generals Ouane and Bounleut what the US could do, in addition to its present efforts, to help them. Neither of the Lao officers asked for the participation of US troops. Instead, they sought weapons and communications equipment for additional auto defense companies that could be employed in northern and central Laos.

These two FAR generals told the Deputy Director for Operations that the Lao had come to realize what they were fighting for, and that villagers driven from their homes by the Pathet Lao sought weapons and a chance to fight. Although aware of the "very limited capabilities" of these refugees, the Deputy Director for Operations believed that "if we are going to turn Laos over to the Communists, as it appears we will end up doing, let us leave an armed camp behind, so our job will be that much easier if and when we go back."

(TS) Memo, DepDir, J-3, to Dir, JS, "Observations noted during trip through Southeast Asia, 1-11 Oct 61, 17 Oct 61, on file with DepDirOpns, J-3."

18 Oct 61 After calling upon King Savang at Luang Prabang, Souvanna, in a statement to the Laotian press, pointed out that, although his candidacy had been endorsed by all three political factions, he would not assume office as Prime Minister until he had succeeded in "setting up the coalition government in a definitive form." Instead, Boun Oum would remain in power until Souvanna's cabinet had been formed,

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thus preventing a possible "breakdown of the machinery of government." Once the coalition cabinet had been agreed upon Boun Oum would resign, and the King would call upon Souvanna to form a new government.

In a subsequent conversation at Vientiane with US Consul General Creel, Phoumi gave his interpretation of the significance of Souvanna's interview with the King. Phoumi maintained that Souvanna had conceded the legality of the Boun Oum government by agreeing to its remaining in power, had acknowledged the sovereignty of the King, and had recognized the authority of the Laotian constitution.

After the royal interview, Souvanna had discussed with Boun Oum and Phoumi the formation of both a unified Lao delegation to the Geneva Conference and a national coalition government. Regarding the latter, Phoumi maintained that Souvanna had expressed willingness to designate Phoumi as Deputy Prime Minister but not as Minister of Defense. It appeared that Souvanna desired the Defense post for himself and the Interior portfolio for Pheng Phongsavang, one of his followers.

Phoumi also reported that Souvanna had wanted to convene a meeting of the Princes at Khang Khay in the near future, possibly on 22 October (see item 21 October 1961). After telling the Consul General of Souvanna's proposal, Phoumi expressed his belief that he and Boun Oum might be in danger from Viet Minh troops in the vicinity of Khang Khay, should the meeting be held there. Phoumi added that he could see no need for another meeting at this time, since it was up to Souvanna to proceed with the formation of a government.

(C) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState, 600, 18 Oct 61; 610, 20 Oct 61; (U) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 602, 19 Oct 61.

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19 Oct 61 In a letter to the Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, the Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA), adopting without change the recommendations of CINCPA (see item 9 September 1961) and the JCS (see item 4 October 1961), urged that AID make a special allocation of \$4.5 million in order to support for the remainder of FY 1962 an increase in the FAR wartime force ceiling to 62,321. If the force structure increase was approved the Department of Defense was prepared, the Acting Assistant Secretary said, to provide the approximately \$5.0 million in additional military assistance that would be necessary.

The FAR by reason of accelerated training programs, the Defense official said, was now better able than formerly to accommodate this augmentation. Although any future political settlement would eliminate the necessity for such an augmentation, the Department of Defense believed that the current situation made it imperative that this increase be approved at this time. (See item 18 November 1961.)

(TS) 1st N/H of JCS 2344/13, 23 Oct 61; JMF 9155.2/3100 (9 Sep 61).

20 Oct 61 Ambassador Brown forwarded to the Secretary of State the text of a plan, agreed upon by the US, UK, and French Ambassadors at Vientiane, for the "regroupment, integration, and demobilization of Lao armed forces." This plan was based on several assumptions, the cardinal one of which was the establishment in Laos of an acceptable coalition government. The text, intended for use by the allied governments during the Geneva negotiations, contained a suggested program of three phases - the planning phase, the preparatory phase, and the execution phase. The program, however, was intended primarily

primarily as a guide for the negotiators and could therefore be modified as necessary.

During the planning phase, national, and regional or local, committees were to be formed. These committees, upon which all three political factions were to be represented, would aid the provisional government in selecting security units and in choosing officers for a reconstituted national army. Meanwhile, each of the factions would declare its military strength. Beginning with this phase, the ICC was to seek out any infringements by foreign powers of Laotian sovereignty or territory.

Phase II would see the positioning of previously selected security units, under control of the provisional government but drawn from the forces of all three factions according to the proportion agreed for the new national army. The ICC would then appoint observers to assist in verifying the strength of the factional armed contingents. Integration and demobilization centers would be established, and the integration of the headquarters staff and of service units into the new army would begin. The various centers, at which weapons were collected from the factional forces and where the reconstituted army underwent its training, were to be manned by personnel selected on a proportional basis from the three existing forces.

During the execution phase, the remaining military units would be demobilized. Troops representing each of the factions would then be integrated on a proportional basis into the Laotian national army. As soon as elements of the reconstituted force were trained, they would relieve the previously posted security units so that the latter might begin the process of demobilization. The demobilization of
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the factional units was to be under the close supervision of local or regional committees, which would work in cooperation with observers from the ICC.

(CHMAAG Laos, in commenting on 9 November concerning the Ambassadors' plan for the integration of Lao armed forces, stated both his personal opinion of the plan and what he believed were Phoumi's views on the general subject.

General Boyle's personal opinions were that: 1) the basic assumption that a satisfactory neutral government could be formed was "wishful thinking"; 2) since implementation of the plan depended upon the factions involved, drastic changes seemed inevitable; 3) Souvanna's ability to control the Communists while executing the plan seemed doubtful; 4) the unified Lao Army contemplated in the plan would be unable to stop Communist infiltration into Laos or through Laos into South Viet Nam; and 5) experience indicated that the ICC, upon whose effectiveness in policing the plan success depended, would prove inadequate to its tasks.

Phoumi, according to CHMAAG, would demand an integration agreement that would contain safeguards to protect the FAR against Communist duplicity. Such a plan, based as it would be on the premise that Communists could not be trusted, would therefore be "unpalatable to diplomats." Phoumi, moreover, had no confidence in the ICC. General Boyle also predicted that any plan adopted by Phoumi would be supported by his followers in the RLG.

In addition, CHMAAG expressed his doubt that Souvanna would implement an integration plan in a manner to the advantage of the US unless Phoumi were Minister of Defense. He also warned that Souvanna might be overthrown by either Phoumi or the Pathet Lao during the process of integration

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and that, if this should occur, the US would have to be prepared to take advantage of the situation.)

(S/NOFORN) Msg, CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC, DA IN 170993, 9 Nov 61. (S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 607, 20 Oct 61.

21 Oct 61 The US Ambassador at Paris forwarded to the Secretary of State a translation of a French paper dealing with the establishment, organization, training, and functioning of a Lao gendarmerie. According to the paper the purpose of the French plan was "to furnish Prince Souvanna Phouma with some trustworthy people."

In essence, the paper called for the creation by the future Lao government "outside the tripartite commissions and the ICC" of a 3,000-man gendarmerie to be trained by a French Mission of Instruction. The establishment of this force would have to begin prior to the time that demobilization of the factional armies got underway. The gendarmerie, however, was to be independent of the reconstituted Lao Army. Since it was considered unwise to recruit from all three factions, priority would be given to members of Kong Le's force. Also, the gendarmes would be well paid to "remove the need, if not the wish, to live off the land."

(S) Msg, Paris to SecState, A632, 21 Oct 61.

21 Oct 61 As requested by the JCS (see item 14 October 1961), CINCPAC presented his "refinement" of CINCPAC OPLAN 32-59 (Phase II-Viet Nam), giving it a "SEATO label" and providing for its implementation concurrent with SEATO Plan 5 in Laos. CINCPAC also detailed the additional personnel augmentation, logistic transportation, and communication requirements that the dual actions would generate.

Souvanna

(TS) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 210235Z Oct 61.

21 Oct 61 Souvanna and the Boun Oum government engaged in an exchange of messages concerning another meeting of the three Princes. Souvanna began by reminding Boun Oum of a message, alleged to have been sent on 18 October, which had postponed a meeting of the three Princes originally scheduled for that day until 20 October in order to give Souvanna an opportunity to visit the King. The meeting was to take place on the Plaine des Jarres, presumably at Khang Khay (see item 18 October 1961). After observing that Boun Oum had failed to reply to this invitation, Souvanna called upon the Princes to meet on the Plaine des Jarres on 23 October, or at the latest, on 25 October. The purpose of the meeting was to reach agreement on the rapid formation of a coalition government.

Boun Oum replied that he had not received the message of 18 October and that another meeting of the Princes was unnecessary at this time. According to the RLG, Souvanna had stated, in an earlier talk with Boun Oum, that the proposed meeting was to decide the composition of a unified delegation to the Geneva Conference - a point settled during the same conversation. Instead of summoning the other Princes to the Plaine des Jarres, Souvanna should discuss the composition of the provisional government with Souphanouvong, then visit Vientiane or Luang Prabang to receive Boun Oum's proposals, and finally submit an agreed slate to the King.

In commenting upon this exchange of messages, Consul General Creel observed that "matters thus now seem to rest in a typically Lao state of confusion." The Consul General believed that Phoumi and Boun Oum had reason to fear for their safety should they visit Khang Khay, but he also felt that Boun Oum had no great desire to "negotiate himself out of office."

CHMAAG

(C) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState, 615, 22 Oct 61; 617, 23 Oct 61; 624, 24 Oct 61.

23 Oct 61 CHMAAG Laos reported to CINCPAC that the FAR Northern Command, because of increased Pathet Lao activity in the Nam Tha area, had augmented its forces in the vicinity by moving two companies of the 3d Infantry Battalion from Luang Prabang and the battalion's heavy weapons section from Moung Houng.

The increased Pathet Lao activity which eventually prompted this reinforcement of Nam Tha began between 7 and 14 September when opposition developed to FAR clearing operations in the area, and certain FAR units were forced to withdraw and regroup. Reportedly planned as a 7-company show of force designed to cause the enemy to withdraw behind a new defensive line north of the village, the Nam Tha operation had encountered little opposition between 24 August and 7 September.

Pathet Lao resistance stiffened during September, and by the 28th the FAR forces in the Nam Tha area were reported to have "shifted to defensive activities." This shift was followed by a period of regroupment and consolidation, but after 12 October the FAR units engaged in limited clearing operations, "mostly of a reconnaissance nature." On the 17th, however, three days before the reinforcement of the Nam Tha garrison, four Pathet Lao companies, supported by mortars and recoilless rifles, drove an FAR company from Nam Ki, 15 miles northeast of Nam Tha. Ban Can, ten miles northeast of Nam Tha, was captured by the Pathet Lao on 18 October.

(S/NOFORN) Msg, CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC, DA IN 164673, 23 Oct 61; (S/NOFORN) JCS SitReps, 24 Aug 61-26 Oct 61.

By

23 Oct 61 By a joint State-Defense-ICA message, the US Ambassador in Laos, CHMAAG, and Chief, USOM Laos were queried regarding various fiscal inconsistencies revealed in Phoumi's request for FAR force augmentation (see item 19 August 1961), as follows:

1. What funds were released for the pay of ADO units from 1 January to 1 October 1961? If Phoumi was paid for ADO which were not in existence, what steps were being taken to adjust the FY 1962 Defense Support Budget to compensate for this overpayment?

2. Phoumi had indicated at one point in his request that the paid strength of the FAR was 43,763; yet the FY 1962 Defense Support Budget programmed for a paid strength of only 38,478. From what funds was Phoumi paying these additional 5,276 troops?

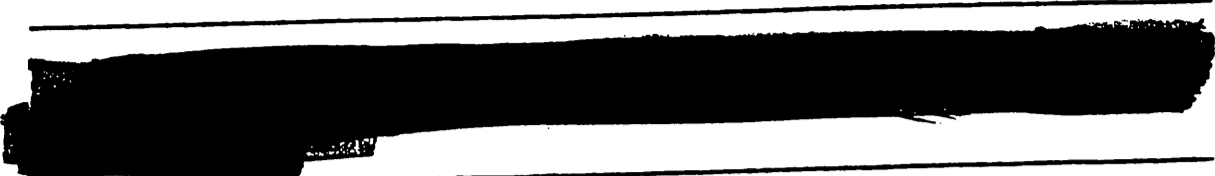
The Ambassador and CHMAAG should take "strongest measures," the Washington message continued, to emphasize to Phoumi that, if he expected US support for additional forces, he should consult with the US and obtain prior US approval.

(See item 29 November 1961.)

(S) Msg, OSD to AmEMB Vientiane, et al., DEF 904748,
23 Oct 61.

24 Oct 61 The US Government approved a Laos Country Team recommendation ~~_____~~ to arm an additional 1,000 Meo (bringing the total authorized force level to 12,000; see item 29 August 1961). The additional Meo would be recruited from and stationed among the tribesmen in the mountains between Nape and Ban Done (i.e., southeast of Xieng Khouang near the Laos-Viet Nam border). Their roles would be intelligence collection and the harassment of Viet Minh and Pathet Lao movements along Laotian Route No. 8.

Souvanna



25 Oct 61 Souvanna sent a telegram to Boun Oum reminding him that according to the Ban Hin Heup communique (see item 6-8 October 1961) Souvanna was responsible for selecting the time and place of the next meeting of the Princes and again inviting him to come to the Plaine des Jarres for tripartite discussion of national problems. Souvanna offered to meet with Phoumi, whose safety he guaranteed, if Boun Oum was unable to attend.

(On 26 October, Boun Oum, in a message to Souvanna, refused to visit the Plaine des Jarres because of his many obligations but suggested instead that Souvanna and Souphanouvong visit Vientiane. Boun Oum offered to guarantee the safety of the other Princes.)

(S) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState, 632, 26 Oct 61; 651, 31 Oct 61; (C) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 639, 27 Oct 61.

26 Oct-
4 Nov 61 Between 26 October and 4 November, Souvanna and Boun Oum exchanged a series of messages in a fruitless effort to form a unified delegation to the Geneva Conference. On the 26th, Boun Oum called upon Souvanna to submit a list of his proposed delegates and those acceptable to the NLHX. Souvanna replied on the 29th that he had not agreed to the formation of a unified delegation but had merely suggested such an action. Since he believed that the selection of a unified delegation was the responsibility of the yet-to-be-formed provisional government, Souvanna maintained that a meeting of

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of the Princes on this subject was imperative. The meeting would be held on the Plaine des Jarres.

On 30 October, Boun Oum, in another call for nominations, denied that a meeting of the Princes was necessary at the time. Souvanna responded on 3 November by reminding Boun Oum of the terms of the Ban Hin Heup agreement (see item 6-8 October 1961) and called a meeting of the Princes for 6 November on the Plaine des Jarres.

Souvanna's 3 November response apparently crossed in transmission a message sent him on 4 November by Boun Oum, who tersely suggested a meeting of the Princes at either Luang Prabang or Hin Heup. Thus, the exchange, which had begun with disagreement on the need for a meeting, ended in disagreement over the meeting place.

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 671, 4 Nov 61; (C) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState, 641, 28 Oct 61, 646, 30 Oct 61, and 650, 31 Oct 61.

27 Oct 61 The JCS informed CINCPAC that the stationing of four RF-101 aircraft and a photo processing unit at Don Muang, Thailand, was approved (see item 17 October 1961). Reconnaissance missions, however, were to be restricted to Laos and South Viet Nam. Violations of the Chinese Communist, Cambodian, and North Vietnamese borders would be avoided.

(On 10 November, because of the need of prior approval by the US Ambassador in Vientiane for jet flights over the Plaine des Jarres or over Xieng Khouang province, CINCPAC directed CHMAAG Laos to discuss with Ambassador Brown the requirement for systematic high-altitude coverage of these areas by RF-101 aircraft. The Ambassador also was to be notified that the RT-33s had been withdrawn from reconnaissance duties.

(CINCPAC

(CINCPAC on 11 November informed the JCS that the RF-101s and their supporting photo processing center were now operational at Don Muang and that the RT-33 aircraft were being modified to perform courier service and to deliver photos in support of the RF-101 reconnaissance task force.)

(S) Msg, JCS to CINCPAC, JCS 2025, 272318Z Oct 61; (S) Msg, CINCPAC to CHMAAG Laos, 100120Z Nov 61; (S) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 110011Z Nov 61.

27 Oct 61 CHMAAG Laos reported to CINCPAC his latest estimate of enemy troop strength in Laos. Revising somewhat his estimate of 23 September (see item), CHMAAG now reckoned enemy strength at 31,000 men: 5,400 Viet Minh, 20,600 men in organized PL/Kong Le units, and 3,000 to 5,000 guerrillas.

(S) Msg, CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC, DA IN 166366, 27 Oct 61.

30 Oct 61 In a message to CINCPAC, CHMAAG Laos reported the growth in strength of the FAR from July to September, 1961, as follows:

	<u>31 July</u>	<u>31 August</u>	<u>31 September</u>
Regular Army	47,011	49,668	53,981
ADC	12,150	12,750	12,950
Total	<u>59,161</u>	<u>62,418</u>	<u>66,931</u>

On the same day, a MAAG representative discussed with Phoumi the FAR overstrength and ensuing budgetary problems. Phoumi blamed the FAR comptroller - who was not, CHMAAG thought, at fault. Phoumi also, however, suggested that the MAAG representative to his comptroller exercise a "more direct advisory role." This action, CHMAAG said, would be a "healthy development" in progress toward "effective comptrollership of FAR expenditures." (See item 10 November 1961.

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(S) Msg, CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC, 301620Z Oct 61; (S) Msg CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC, DA IN 169242, 1 Nov 61.

30 Oct 61 The Secretary of State, in a message to the US Ambassadors in Vientiane and Paris, stated that the availability of the French paper on the Lao gendarmerie (see item 21 October 1961) would enable the US to seek a prompt, informal, and detailed understanding with the French on the various aspects of an over all police program. Thus, the Ambassador at Paris was to inform the French foreign office of the US views concerning a Lao police force and of the US desire to seek an informal understanding on matters dealing with the gendarmerie and the police. The actual discussions, however, were to be conducted at Vientiane.

The objective of this understanding between the US and France was to assure that the police force would be: 1) created as soon as possible after the formation of the Souvanna government; 2) loyal to Souvanna; 3) able to cope with internal subversion, especially in rural areas; 4) able to serve as an effective counterweight to an integrated Army; and 5) trained by France and the US.

The attainment of these objectives, the Secretary of State believed, would require: 1) a larger force than the 3,000 gendarmes proposed by the French, perhaps as many as the 10,000 suggested by Souvanna; 2) a force capable of exercising the functions outlined in the Ryan Plan (see item 21 August 1961), except for the duties of the provincial or rural police who would be replaced by gendarmes; 3) the grouping of all police under the Minister of Interior, provided that he was acceptable to the West; 4) a gendarmerie recruited from among Souvanna's loyal supporters and a police force

force reconstituted from the pro-Souvanna and US-trained elements of the RLG police; 5) adequate pay; and 6) an adequate number of capable instructors.

The discussions at Vientiane, the Secretary of State continued, would be based on the assumptions that: 1) the French would have the principal Western training mission in Laos; 2) French primacy would have to be recognized; and 3) Souvanna would be neither willing nor able to accept Phoumi's hand-picked police.

The Secretary of State also said that the most desirable solution was for the US to assume responsibility for the police, while France had the primary training and financial responsibility for the gendarmerie. The US, however, would help train the gendarmerie if France proved unwilling to shoulder the entire burden.

If AID was to help defray the cost of a police force of 10,000 men, said the Secretary, the US must consider the effect of such help on future AID support assistance to Laos. In this regard, he asked for the Laos Country Team's estimate of the cost to the US of supporting 7,000 police while France paid, trained, equipped, and supplied 3,000 gendarmes.

Throughout the Vientiane negotiations, Secretary Rusk continued, the US would attempt to convince France to assume the maximum possible share of the costs. The Department of State was to be kept informed of the financial aspects of the Vientiane discussions, and no financial commitments were to be made without prior approval from Washington.

(S) Msg, State to Vientiane, 435, 30 Oct 61.

The

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31 Oct 61 The Department of Defense forwarded to CINCPAC the "informal comments" of the ICA [AID] on actions underway within MAAG Laos to plan for the continued presence of Filipino technicians (ECCOIL) if the MAAG left Laos. The ICA saw many obstacles to the US attempting to plan this continued presence, among which were: 1) if the French were given the exclusive training responsibility for training when the MAAG departed, it would be up to them, in coordination with the Lao Government, to decide whether the Filipinos were retained, and then to negotiate any contract; and 2) if, as envisioned by MAAG Laos, control of the Filipinos reverted to USOM at MAAG's departure, this would be a return to the "PEO cover operation" since any technicians qualified to supervise the Filipinos would necessarily be either military or ex-military personnel (See item 10 November 1961.)

(S) Msgs, CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC, DA IN 160533, 10 Oct 61; OSD to CINCPAC, DEF 905057, 31 Oct 61.

The ICC

1 Nov 61 The ICC sent to each of the three Princes identical messages calling attention to "hostile activities" in the vicinity of Xieng Khouang, and urging the Princes to restrain their local commanders. The ICC also expressed the hope that the Princes would meet in the near future and that, in the meantime, they would use "moderate language" in their exchanges and "base their statements on facts."

(Prince Souphanouvong replied on 3 November to the ICC message. He denied that either Souvanna's troops or soldiers of the Pathet Lao had violated the cease-fire order. The blame, he continued, lay with Boun Oum's forces, whose flagrant violations of the truce had been instigated by "American warmongers.")

(C) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 682, 8 Nov 61; (OUO) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 662, 3 Nov 61.

3 Nov 61 Under Secretary of State Bowles informed Ambassador Brown that, after intensive discussions with the UK and France, the US Government had decided to have the Ambassador in Vientiane present to Phoumi and Souvanna a plan for the demobilization and integration of the Laotian armed forces (see item 20 October 1961). The Ambassador, however, because of French concern with certain aspects of the plan, was to find, without delaying the presentation of the over-all plan, a "better formula" for insuring that the tripartite national commissions would not lend themselves to Communist domination and that the existence of security battalions would not result in the de facto partition of the kingdom.

In presenting

In presenting the plan to Phoumi and Souvanna, Ambassador Brown was to stress certain principles on which the US, UK, and France were in general agreement. These principles were: 1) the formula for the integration of the armed forces was to be agreed upon by the Laotians; 2) no faction would gain military advantage during the period in which the Army was being reconstituted; 3) the rebuilding of the armed forces would be accomplished as rapidly as possible; and 4) the Army would be reconstituted and excess troops demobilized before elections were held.

The Under Secretary of State, although he did not wish the plan to be revised at present, also informed the Ambassador of some "desirable additions" to be included at an appropriate time. In brief, Ambassador Brown was to attempt to secure Phoumi's and Souvanna's agreement to:

- 1) a practical time limit for each phase of the integration program;
- 2) provision for the storage under ICC supervision of excess armaments;
- 3) acceptance by the various national committees of rule by majority vote; and
- 4) the stationing of security battalions in areas where their particular faction already held predominant influence.

(S) Msg, State to Vientiane, 422, 3 Nov 61.

3 Nov 61 General Maxwell D. Taylor reported to the President on his mission to South Viet Nam. Although he and his party "avoided" Laos on the recommendation of Ambassador Brown, his report reflected in several instances the interrelationships of the Laotian and Vietnamese situations. General Taylor stated, for instance, that the future needs of South Viet Nam would depend upon the kind of settlement obtained

in Laos

in Laos and the manner in which North Viet Nam adjusted its conduct to that settlement. Again, the military appendix to General Taylor's report stated that, if the current impasse continued in Laos, thus permitting the Viet Cong the unrestricted use of southern Laos as a route to South Viet Nam, the resultant threat would "rapidly far exceed" anything the Vietnamese armed forces could be expected to handle. In recognition of this, an entire appendix of Taylor's report was devoted to the proposed establishment of a Vietnamese Frontier Force to deny the northwest frontier bordering Laos to Communist infiltration.

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~~_____~~ to continue operations in harassment of Viet Cong lines of communication in southern Laos whatever the outcome of negotiations on Laos, and that, if the Meo tribesmen in Laos became threatened by extermination, they be persuaded to resettle on the Laos-Viet Nam border.

Finally, in the political appendix to General Taylor's report Mr. Sterling Cottrell wrote that past US policy in Laos had already had its effect in South Viet Nam. A political settlement in Laos, had been "largely discounted in advance" by the South Vietnamese Government. GVN officials stated frankly that the US had abandoned Laos; they were concerned that the US might also abandon South Viet Nam "when the going gets rough." They were keenly aware of the effects of the infiltration from Laos and were certain that it would not be stopped by a weak "neutral" RLG or by the ICC.

(TS) Gen. Taylor's Report, 3 Nov 61; JMF 9155.3/9105
(13 Oct 61) sec 2A.

CHMAAG

4 Nov 61

CHMAAG Laos reported to CINCPAC that Phoumi had ordered an intensification of FAR activities designed to: 1) further consolidate present front-line areas; 2) intensify guerrilla activity in the enemy rear; and 3) attempt to harass and interdict Viet Cong routes into South Viet Nam. The greater part of this FAR effort would take place in southern Laos, CHMAAG learned, where ADC units and CVs (compagnies volontaires) would attempt guerrilla actions near Lak Sao, Nhommarath, Mahaxsay, and Tchepone. If these guerrilla actions proved effective, then three GM would be committed to reducing enemy salients in those areas. In the north, the principal actions envisaged were enlargement of the area of FAR control around Luang Prabang, and raiding in the Muong Sai area.

In the opinion of CHMAAG, Phoumi would closely control the above actions to avoid overt cease-fire violations.

(See item 30 November 1961.)

(S) Msg, CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC, DA IN 169983, 4 Nov 61.

7 Nov 61

King Savang received Ambassador Brown at Vientiane. According to the Ambassador's report, their discussion touched upon, among other things, US policy toward Laos and the difficulties in establishing a coalition government.

Regarding US policy, the King expressed doubt that the Laotian situation could be resolved satisfactorily, since the Communists would never abandon their efforts to take over the country; the US in the meantime seemed to have abandoned the defense of the kingdom. Ambassador Brown sought to reassure the King by pointing out that US military support to the RLG actually had increased during past months.

months. The US, he continued, had not abandoned Laos but merely had discarded a purely military solution, that could at best lead to a partition, in favor of a more promising solution. The proper course of action was judged to be the establishment in a truly neutral Laos of a satisfactory coalition government with which the US could cooperate in combatting Communism.

Turning to the problems attendant upon the formation of a coalition government, the King stated that there were two rather than three political factions. There were those men who were pro-West and those who favored the Pathet Lao and Communism; in his opinion no completely neutral group existed. He could, moreover, see no real difference in the policies of Souvanna, Phoumi, and Phoui. The King further observed that the "non-Communist group were individuals and did not represent significant political groups." Concerning the deliberations of the three Princes, King Savang agreed with the Ambassador that Boun Oum should journey to the Plaine des Jarres. He did not, however, share the opinion that Phoumi should go there, for a visit by the leader of the Army to the territory of a rival faction could have adverse political effects.

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 678, 7 Nov 61.

7 Nov 61 The Director, Far East Region, OASD(ISA) forwarded to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA) a summary of what he considered were the concessions made both by the US and by Communists delegations at the Geneva Conference. Listed as "concessions" were all deviations from the original US/French and Russian drafts, even though not all such changes

changes had been agreed upon by the Conference as a whole. The Director, FER, also catalogued what, in his opinion, were significant issues remaining to be negotiated and characterized the current status of the Conference.

The US, he believed, had thus far made 27 concessions, the most significant of which were: 1) public announcement by SEATO members of their acceptance of and willingness to respect a Lao renunciation of SEATO protection; 2) acceptance of the principle that the ICC could operate only "with the concurrence" of the RLG; 3) acceptance of a somewhat ambiguous article dealing with logistical support for the ICC, an article which designated the RLG as the primary source of such support and made no provision for the maintenance of equipment; 4) deletion of prescribed entry and departure points for military personnel and equipment; 5) deletion of a requirement for ICC operations centers outside Vientiane; 6) elimination of permanent ICC teams; 7) acceptance of a requirement that a majority vote of the ICC or a request from the RLG would be required before investigations could begin; 8) acceptance of the position that a unanimous vote of the ICC was required on all conclusions and recommendations made by that body; this concession in effect gave the Polish ICC delegation a veto over the enforcement of the cease-fire; 9) deletion of the requirement that the ICC be provided a census of military forces and equipment; 10) deletion of the specific requirement for cooperation among the three ICCs in Southeast Asia.

The Communists, in contrast, had made no more than five concessions. They had yielded by accepting: 1) a provision requiring nations belonging to the ICC to have readily available substitute team and commission members; 2) a

provision

provision giving the ICC and its teams free access to all parts of Laos and the authority necessary for the work of investigation, inspection, and verification (this article, however, was circumscribed by others); 3) a provision that ICC logistical support not available from the RLG could be obtained elsewhere; 4) the principle that prisoners of war would be permitted to go, upon release from custody, to destinations of their choice (this principle was abridged by a requirement that freed prisoners first be turned over to their "national authorities"); and 5) a provision (so far accepted only orally) renouncing the use of Laotian territory for operations against neighboring states.

The significant issues remaining to be negotiated were: 1) inclusion of a provision giving the ICC some general responsibility for overseeing neutrality declarations made by Laos and by other nations; 2) length of tenure of the ICC and the procedure for its termination; 3) time at which the articles requiring the withdrawal of US military assistance and personnel would become effective; and 4) continuation of French presence or the establishment of a neutral military training mission.

In commenting upon the current status of the Geneva Conference, the Director, FER, stated that the "net result is nearly complete acceptance of the original Soviet draft and abandonment of nearly all the original US positions." He added, however, that the US delegation considered the agreements secured thus far to be the best that could have been obtained under the circumstances. In the opinion of the delegation, he continued, the US had gained certain advantages as a result of : 1) an article making the Conference co-Chairmen responsible for the observance of the agreement by the

by the two groups, i.e., co-Chairman Pushkin for the entire Soviet Bloc; 2) a specific reference permitting the statement of disagreement within an agreed ICC report; and 3) private assurance from the Indians and the Russians that ICC reports would not be obstructed or delayed.

(For a somewhat different report on the status of the Geneva negotiations concerned with the ICC, see the following item,)

(UNK) Dir, FER, OASD(ISA), Memo for Dep Assist SecDef (ISA), 7 Nov 61, OASD(ISA), FER/SEA Branch files.

8 Nov 61 The Director, Far East Region, OASD (ISA), forwarded to the Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA) a memorandum outlining the issues which, in his opinion, were still outstanding both at the Geneva Conference and in Laos.

The issues outstanding at the Geneva Conference were listed by the Director as: 1) ICC responsibilities for overseeing the implementation of a neutrality declaration; 2) the tenure of the ICC and the procedures for its termination; 3) the timing of the withdrawal from Laos of US military assistance and personnel; 4) the establishment of either a French or a neutral military mission in Laos; and 5) inclusion of a provision whereby the Conference participants would agree not to use Lao territory as a corridor for interference in the internal affairs of other nations.

The following were named as the outstanding issues in Laos: 1) the method of forming a national army, including the problems of integrating the factional armed forces and demobilizing excess personnel; 2) formation of a police force; 3) the composition of a coalition cabinet; 4) the scheduling of elections after the integration of existing forces

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forces into a national army; and 5) a detailed cease-fire agreement over which the ICC would have supervision.

The Director, FER, also noted an additional issue facing the US Government --the determination of a method by which the US could support the Lao Army during the period of integration, while at the same time withholding aid from the Pathet Lao.

During November, the OASD (ISA) arranged in order of importance those issues not yet agreed upon at Geneva. A total of 21 items were arranged as follows:

1st Category: 1) Announcement by the ICC that it had the equipment and authority to function effectively throughout the country -- a condition to be fulfilled before the withdrawal of US military aid and advisers. 2) Right of the ICC, without the threat of RLG veto, to establish teams and make investigations throughout the country. 3) Right of the ICC to possess and control adequate transportation and equipment. 4) Majority rule in ICC voting. 5) ICC control over the entry and departure of military personnel and equipment. 6) Authority for the ICC to operate with two-thirds of the membership present. 7) Authority for the ICC to make investigations at the request of one member. 8) A French or neutral "presence" or training mission in Laos.

2nd Category. 9) Responsibility of the ICC not to be limited to execution of a cease-fire agreement. 10) The ICC made responsible to the Geneva Conference rather than to the co-Chairmen of the Conference. 11) Operating centers for the ICC teams to be specified. 12) Provision for a census of factional armed forces and an inventory of their armaments. 13) Provision for regular and frequent

ICC reports

ICC reports, as well as for special reports to Conference members. 14) The ICC to remain in being for at least three years. 15) The armament of the reconstituted Lao Army to be appropriate to its type and functions.

3rd Category. 16) Fixing of the size of the Lao Army. 17) Provision for new documents to supersede certain articles of the 1954 Geneva Accords. 18) Prohibition of reprisals against persons involved in the war in Laos. 19) Provision for the disposition of excess armaments in Laos. 20) Provision for cooperation between the RLG and ICC. 21) Provision for the review of decisions made by the Geneva Conference.

(See item 12 January 1962 for the agreed protocol on the ICC.)

(S) Dir, FER, OASD(ISA) Memo for Assist SecDef (ISA), 8 Nov 61; (OUO) OASD(ISA), "US Priority on Disagreed Items," Nov 61, OASD(ISA), FER/SEA Branch files.

8-13
Nov 61

Prince Souvanna on 8 November called upon Boun Oum to meet with him and Souphanouvong on the Plaine des Jarres on 17 November.

On 9 November, Ambassador Brown met with Phoumi and suggested that Boun Oum agree to the meeting, provided that Souvanna would agree to conduct future negotiations at Luang Prabang. Phoumi, according to the Ambassador, replied that he was having difficulty in winning support for his "supple" policies and that not one of his colleagues in either the cabinet or the National Assembly would agree to Boun Oum's visiting the Plaine des Jarres. Ambassador Brown thereupon planned, and later carried out, a series of conversations with some of the individuals whom Phoumi said were opposing him. The Department of State on 12 November

approved

approved both the Ambassador's stand with Phoumi and his proposed conversations with Phoumi's more influential colleagues.

On 13 November, the RLG cabinet voted to reject Souvanna's offer. That same day, Boun Oum sent to Souvanna a polite message of refusal, which proposed instead that the Princes meet at Vientiane or Luang Prabang.

(S) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState, 692, 9 Nov 61, 706, 13 Nov 61, and 715, 15 Nov 61; State to Vientiane, DEPTTEL 450, 12 Nov 61; (C) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 688, 9 Nov 61.

13 Nov 61 British Ambassador Ormsby Gore, acting under instructions, called upon the Secretary of State to express British concern over recent developments in Laos. The UK was concerned by the failure of the three Princes to reach agreement -- a failure which the British attributed to Phoumi's unwillingness to negotiate in good faith. The British wondered if the time had not come to tell Phoumi that if hostilities occurred, he could expect no US or SEATO support.

The Secretary of State replied that the US was exerting pressure on Phoumi and cited examples of stubbornness on the part of Souvanna and Souphanouvong. The US, the Secretary of State continued, could not accept an agreement that it did not believe would result in a neutral Laos. If no satisfactory agreement could be reached, the US might prefer to "leave the party."

Ambassador Ormsby Gore asked several times whether Phoumi might not be seeking to have the negotiations fail so that, after the resumption of hostilities, he could maintain his position with US support. The Secretary of State, however, denied that Phoumi had any such choice and

pointed

pointed out that Phoumi should be aware that the US would not support his every course of action. In conclusion, the Secretary of State remarked that the US actually was doing all the UK desired to push Phoumi forward on the road toward fruitful negotiations.

(S) Msg, State to London, DEPTTEL 2601, 10 Nov 61.

10 Nov 61 CINCPCAC advised CHMAAG Laos that the procedures agreed to by Phoumi on 30 October (see item) for future operations of the FAR comptroller were "unsatisfactory." CINCPCAC suggested that CHMAAG inform Phoumi that CINCPCAC could not support the activation of FAR forces in excess of MAP authorization. Phoumi should also be told that his actions were dissipating and undermining CINCPCAC's efforts adequately to equip and advise the FAR. CINCPCAC has supported Phoumi's request for force augmentation "to the maximum extent feasible." CHMAAG should also advise the Laotian that if Phoumi continued to raise unauthorized forces, CINCPCAC would have no alternative but to recommend that actual US support for any US-approved increase in FAR forces be withheld until a "satisfactory mutual agreement" could be reached. (see item 17 November 1961.)

(S) Msg, CINCPCAC to CHMAAG Laos, 102341Z Nov 61.

10 Nov 61 CINCPCAC, commenting to the Department of Defense upon ICA's informal comments of 31 October (see item), stated that, desirable as the continued presence of Filipinos might be in a neutral Laos, he could see "no acceptable solution" if MAAG Laos was disestablished. CINCPCAC agreed with ICA that a return to the PEO concept would be unsatisfactory.

If, a:

If, as CINCPAC believed, the contractor (ECCOIL) would not accept any agreement which did not "commit the US" and provide for payment in US dollars, the only manner of support CINCPAC could visualize was the US foregoing all supervision, and paying the contractor in the Philippines from "Presidential determination funds."

(S) Msg, CINCPAC to OSD, 102254Z Nov 61.

11 Nov 61

In a memorandum for the President concerning South Viet Nam, the Department of State included an analysis of the relationship between US intervention in South Viet Nam and the situation in Laos. The introduction of US combat forces into South Viet Nam prior to a Laotian settlement, the State Department said, would run a considerable risk of stimulating a Communist breach of the cease-fire and a resumption of hostilities in Laos. The US would then be faced with a choice between sending combat troops to Laos or abandoning the country to full Communist control. At present, there was at least a chance that a settlement could be reached in Laos on the basis of a Souvanna Phouma government; this settlement would include, according to the prospective Geneva agreement, a provision that Laos would not be used as a base or transit area by any other power. After a settlement, therefore, the introduction of US forces into Viet Nam could serve to stabilize the situation in Laos, inasmuch as the US would thereby have served notice that the Laotian settlement was as far as the US was willing to see Communist influence in Southeast Asia develop.

(TS) Memo for Pres, 11 Nov 61, att to JCS 2343/40, 13 Nov 61; JMF 9155.3/9105 (13 Oct 61).

11-18
Nov 61

In the message approving Ambassador Brown's stand with Phoumi (see item 8-13 Nov 61), the Department of State also reviewed its policies concerning the position which the RLG should take during the forthcoming meeting of the Princes (see items 14 December and 27-30 December 1961). Ambassador Brown was reminded that: 1) the number of cabinet posts held by each faction was less important than the caliber of the individuals in key positions, but as many non-Xieng Khouang neutrals as possible should be included; 2) the US could not direct the negotiations concerning the distribution of cabinet posts, but the chief US objective remained to keep adherents of the Pathet Lao out of key positions while retaining Phoumi in the Government so that he could effectively rally the non-Communist forces; and 3) in selecting cabinet officers from the ranks of the non-Xieng Khouang neutrals and from the present RLG, the most competent available men should be chosen. The Department of State message also contained advice on matters which, it was believed, Boun Oum intended to discuss at the meeting of the Princes, along with a warning that renewed fighting, especially in the Xieng Khouang area, "could well be disastrous at this stage."

Finally, the Department of State advised approaching Souvanna through the British Ambassador in order to inform him of the conditions under which the US would support him. These conditions included: 1) Souvanna's entering into meaningful negotiations with Phoumi -- an essential condition; 2) Souvanna's entering into informal talks with Phoumi in order to see what could be accomplished in the absence of Souphanouvaong -- a desirable condition; and 3) the necessity of holding further meetings of the Princes

away

away from territory dominated by the Communists. The role of the British Ambassador would be discussed further at Washington.

On 16 November, Ambassador Brown commented upon the guidance contained in the message summarized above. Among other things, the Ambassador warned that it was "almost [a] sine qua non in Phoumi's eyes" that he be either Minister of Defense or Minister of Interior in the coalition government. If Souvanna and the Pathet Lao denied both positions to Phoumi, the US should urge Phoumi to take a lesser post rather than break off negotiations. The US, however, could not encourage Phoumi to accept a lesser portfolio unless it was reasonably certain that he could, in collaboration with other non-Communists, prevent the Pathet Lao from dominating the government. Ambassador Brown added that CHMAAG, [REDACTED] ARMA, and the Director of the USIS felt that the US would have to support Phoumi for Minister of Defense or for some other post which he agreed was an equal safeguard "for a conservative beachhead in [the] Souvanna government." Otherwise, these men believed the RLG, FAL, the Laotian bureaucracy, and the loose non-Communist confederation would undergo "rapid disintegration and demoralization."

In response to the Ambassador's comments, the Department of State on 18 November authorized him to advise Phoumi, at the appropriate time, to yield in his demands for the Ministries of Defense and Interior. The reply, after noting the sentiments of the other members of the Country Team in favor of stronger US support of Phoumi, concluded that it was more important to keep the Pathet Lao out of key cabinet posts than to obtain such

a post

a post for Phoumi. The Department of State also provided additional advice on the detailed composition of the cabinet and on dealing with the National Assembly. Finally, Ambassador Brown was told to work hard to convince Souvanna as well as Phoumi that the US would support "a government of genuine unification."

(S) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState, 718, 16 Nov 61, State to Vientiane, DEPTTEL 450, 12 Nov 61, and State to Vientiane, NIACT 481, 18 Nov 61.

13-14
Nov 61

The Secretary of State, because of the possibility that Phoumi was counting upon the support of Thailand in opposing a negotiated settlement in Laos, told the US Ambassador at Bangkok to urge Prime Minister Sarit to use his influence in convincing Phoumi that US policy was "precisely what Ambassador Brown has recently reiterated to him on numerous occasions and which was clearly set forth to him earlier by Ambassador Harriman and Admiral Felt" (see item 1 October 1961). The Ambassador was to impress upon Sarit the fact that the US could not back Phoumi if negotiations were to break down because of Phoumi's refusal to negotiate in good faith.

On 14 November, the US Ambassador to Bangkok reported that, before receiving the message summarized above, he had visited Sarit in an effort, among other things, to enlist his aid in convincing Boun Oum and Phoumi that one of them should confer with Souvanna on the Plaine des Jarres. Sarit, however, stated that he honestly could not do so and that he was about to withdraw the remainder of his delegation to the Geneva Conference. According to the Ambassador, Sarit believed that hostilities soon

would

would begin and that US and Thai troops would become involved. Sarit stated that the best solution would be a stalemate with neither negotiations nor fighting.

On the same day, the Secretary of State, while commending the US Ambassador for presenting the US viewpoint to Sarit, directed him to make another effort to enlist Sarit's assistance in exerting pressure on Phoumi (see item 17-20 November 1961). The Ambassador also was to inform Sarit of the adverse effect that his withdrawal of the remainder of the Thai delegation would have upon the Allied position at the Geneva Conference. Such an action on Sarit's part would lend credence to Communist charges that the US was impeding progress both at Geneva and in Laos.

(S) Msgs, State to Bangkok, DEPTTEL 692, 13 Nov 61; Bangkok to SecState, 734, 14 Nov 61; State to Bangkok, DEPTTEL 699, 14 Nov 61.

15 Nov 61 Ambassador Brown informed the Secretary of State that, according to one of its members, the ICC had urged Souvanna to call a meeting of the Princes at Ban Hin Heup rather than on the Plaine des Jarres. Both Souvanna and Souphanouvong were reported to have promised to give serious consideration to the ICC suggestion. According to this same account, Souvanna had promised the commission a prompt answer.

On the same day, the Secretary of State advised Ambassador Brown to await Souvanna's response to the ICC suggestion and to maintain pressure on the RLG by withholding funds for the FAR's November expenses until a site and date for the meeting of the Princes had been

explicitly

explicitly agreed upon.

(S) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState, 716, 15 Nov 61;
State to Vientiane, DEPTTEL 468, 15 Nov 61.

15 Nov 61 The Southeast Asia Study Group completed its final report on force requirements in Southeast Asia. The final report was identical to the preliminary report (see item 18 September 1961) except as follows:

1. In introducing the concepts of operation, the final report added the affirmation that a nonnuclear war of significant scope in Southeast Asia could be won by US and allied forces. (This statement had been strongly averred by CSA in his comments on the preliminary report; see item 5, 6, 7, 10 October 1961).

2. The report responded to the suggestions of the Deputy Secretary of Defense (see item 12 October 1961), on facets of the preliminary report that merited further study, by adding an appendix to the logistics section and a supplement to the study. The suggestions of the Deputy Secretary, (underlined below) were explored as indicated:

"a. The analysis of the patterns of military operations that might develop following the intervention by US and other external forces in the area.

. . .

b. The possibility of combating some types of Chinese Communist/DRV aggression in the area with a relatively small number of US ground forces aided by sizeable US air and naval forces. This study should identify the threshold at which large scale US intervention on the ground would be necessary."

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These suggestions were analyzed in "scenario" form, by the postulating of two situations - one with and one without a Laotian settlement - and modified "war gaming" of them.

"c. The implications for our position in Southeast Asia, if limited, selective use of nuclear weapons by the US is met by comparable use of nuclears by the Soviet Union."

The Study Group concluded that the Communists would have three nuclear options for response to the US' selective use of nuclear weapons in Southeast Asia:

1. To launch ICBM or air attack from the USSR against Allied forces in Southeast Asia. This course of action was "unlikely," the Group said. The Soviets would inaugurate such a course only if they were convinced that the US was "paralyzed by fear of escalation" and therefore effectively deterred from striking the Soviet launch bases.

2. To launch missile or air attack from Communist China against allied forces in Southeast Asia. This course too was "unlikely," as the Soviet and Chinese would have to be convinced of a similar US "paralysis."

3. To introduce battlefield nuclear weapons for employment within Laos and South Viet Nam. The Communists must, to inaugurate this course, conclude that the US would choose to ignore the source of the weapons and choose to fight locally. Moreover, the Communists must be sure that the US could not win decisively in such circumstances. That the Communists would reach such conclusions was "improbable," although "past and current failure of the US to attack the source of sizeable conventional forces in Southeast Asia could lead the Communists to conclude that

the

the same US attitude would prevail if battlefield nuclears are introduced."

The US actions that would be necessary if the Communist opted for one of the above courses of action would be, respectively: (1) to strike Soviet launch bases; (2) to strike Chinese Communist launch bases; or (3) to expand the conflict by selective nuclear attacks on North Viet Nam and, if necessary, China, to force the enemy to desist.

"d. The development of alternative logistics proposals for the area"

The Study drew up a program substantially similar to that submitted by the JCS to the Secretary of Defense on 6 October 1961 (see item). It differed significantly from that earlier program only by relocation of some Army airfields and reduction in the estimated need for rolling stock in Thailand.

(The final report was submitted to the Secretary of Defense on 22 November 1961. By JCS decisions of 2 November and 7 December, no JCS or Service comments, on either the preliminary or final reports, were forwarded to the Secretary of Defense.)

(TS) Final Report of the Southeast Asia Study Group, and Supplement I, both 15 Nov 61; (U) CM-440-61 to SecDef, 22 Nov 61, att to JCS 2339/40, 27 Nov 61; (TS) Dec on JCS 2339/32, 2 Nov 61; (TS) Dec on JCS 2339/45, 7 Dec 61; all in JMF 9150/3410 (1 Aug 61).

15 Nov 61 CINCPAC submitted his "thoughts," on procedures to be implemented if the support of Meo operations became a Department of Defense responsibility (see items 28 July, 6 and 29 September 1961).

In the case where hostilities between the RLG and

PL/Kong Le

PL/Kong Le forces had resumed, but US or SEATO counter-insurgency plans had not yet been implemented, the support of the Meo would be controlled by CHMAAG Laos, with [REDACTED] CHMAAG would continue all his other functions and would, in order to fulfill the additional task, activate a Joint Staff Section composed of permanently assigned personnel qualified in all phases of counter-insurgency support. Logistic support of the Meo would remain separate from support for the FAR [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] In essence, CHMAAG Laos would assume command control over Meo support operations [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] If a US or SEATO counter-insurgency plan were executed support of the Meo would be undertaken by CINCPAC through a designated US Operational Commander [REDACTED] [REDACTED] In operations beyond this scope, such as overt intervention by the DRV or Communist Chinese, CINCPAC would expect the activation of "[REDACTED] force Pacific."

(See item 14 February 1962.)

(TS) Msgs, CINCPAC to JCS, DA IN 172759, 15 Nov 61 and DA IN 156147, 29 Sep 61; JMF 9155.2/3100 (28 Jul 61).

15, 27
Nov 61

Ambassador Brown informed the Secretary of State that he was disturbed by the steady deterioration of the RLG financial position and the Lao Government's apparent inability or unwillingness to undertake effective remedial action. The situation, however, did not seem sufficiently grave to require drastic action, such as blocking foreign exchange accounts.

In reply

In reply to the Ambassador's message, the Secretary of State on 27 November noted that the Department of State had been unable to agree to a DOD request for \$4.5 million for the "revision of the FAR," because such a grant would have constituted approval of Phoumi's unilateral increase of FAR force levels (see items 19 October and 18 November 1961). Concerning the Laotian financial crisis, Ambassador Brown was told to use his own discretion on whether or not to inform Phoumi that the RLG must "live with [the] present \$23 million release rate." The Secretary of State agreed that drastic action was not desirable at present and expressed the belief that the US should accept the risk that the RLG would refuse to make the necessary reforms and continue to live beyond its means.

(S) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState, 714, 15 Nov 61; State to Vientiane, DEPTTEL 509, 27 Nov 61.

16 Nov 61 In response to Boun Oum's latest refusal to go to the Plaine des Jarres (see item 8-13 November 1961), Souvanna, with the concurrence of Souphanouvong, proposed that a meeting of the Princes be held at Vientiane from 24 to 27 November. The RLG was invited to send representatives to the Plaine des Jarres on 20 November to work out details of the meeting.

(Boun Oum replied on 18 November, expressing pleasure that Souvanna had agreed to come to Vientiane. On 20 November delegations from the RLG and from Souvanna's faction met on the Plaine des Jarres to make arrangements for the meeting.)

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 744, 22 Nov 61; (C) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 721, 17 Nov 61.

17 Nov 61 CHMAAG Laos informed CINCPAC that he and Phoumi had "come to grips" with the question of FAR strength levels (see items 23 and 30 October, 10 and 29 November 1961). CHMAAG had delivered CINCPAC's 10 November warning (see item), and had pointed out the budgetary, equipment, and leadership problems brought on by Phoumi's unauthorized enlargement of the FAR. Phoumi had been, CHMAAG said, "in complete agreement"; he was issuing an order to stop recruiting and he had agreed to work with the MAAG in designating units for deactivation (see item 2 December 1961).

(S) MSG, CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC, DA IN 174323,
17 Nov 61.

17-20
Nov 61

On 17 November, the US Ambassador in Bangkok handed to Foreign Minister Thanat, for forwarding to Prime Minister Sarit, a letter which stated that the US was unwilling to back Phoumi if hostilities were to result from his failure to negotiate, and which urged the Thai Government to help make sure that Phoumi understood this policy. The letter also expressed Secretary Rusk's hope that the Thai delegation would remain in Geneva. (See item 13-14 November 1961.)

Foreign Minister Thanat on the following day informed the US Ambassador that Thailand had no intention of withdrawing from the Geneva Conference. When the conversation turned to the question of Phoumi's willingness to negotiate, Thanat, the Ambassador reported, seemed to doubt the wisdom of pressuring Phoumi into negotiating with Souvanna.

In another interview on 20 November, Thanat expressed annoyance with the US for pressing the Thai Government to use its influence with Phoumi. Thanat also stated that the

RTG

RTG was annoyed by the inconsistent US policy, which was exemplified by, among other things, the abandonment of the position that Phoumi should hold a key cabinet post in favor of a position that would enable Souvanna to control the Ministries of Defense and Interior.

The Ambassador replied that the US had consistently followed a policy of being prepared to support a coalition only if satisfied that such a coalition offered a reasonable chance of keeping Laos independent, truly neutral, and "not an easy prey for Communists." Thanat, in the opinion of the Ambassador, remained annoyed with the US for exerting pressure on Phoumi while allegedly overlooking Communist outrages.

(S) Msgs, Bangkok to SecState, 756, 18 Nov 61, 758, 18 Nov 61, and 771, 21 Nov 61.

18 Nov 61 Deputy Under Secretary of State Johnson informed the Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA), Bundy, that the augmentation of the FAR proposed by the Department of Defense (see item 19 October 1961) had been disapproved. In addition to the obvious problem of obtaining additional AID funds, Johnson said, the Defense request raised a difficult political problem. Phoumi, he said, by integrating large numbers of poorly trained irregulars into the regular combat forces of the FAR, had unilaterally increased the FAR force level well beyond its present authorized strength. Approval of the Defense request for augmentation would constitute a belated US recognition of these unilateral changes. In view of Phoumi's recent reluctance to follow US advice "on matters of greatest urgency," the US could not afford to accede in this fait accompli.

However,

However, the Under Secretary concluded, if Phoumi evinced greater willingness to follow US advice, if he abolished the unauthorized forces, and if he demonstrated a willingness to consult with and obtain the approval of CHMAAG Laos on matters concerning the structure and organization of the FAR, then the Department of State would be willing to reconsider the Defense request.

(The Acting Assistant Secretary, in informing the JCS of the above action on 22 November, requested their views on the "present need" for such an augmentation so that, if necessary, the Department of State could be asked to reconsider the Defense request. See items 2 and 18 December 1961.)

(TS) Ltr, DepUSecState to ActgAsstSecDef (ISA), 18 Nov 61, att to Memo, OASD (ISA) to CJCS, 22 Nov 61. Both in JCS 2344/23, 27 Nov 61.

19 Nov 61 Ambassador Harriman, in a message from Geneva for the Secretary of State, said "emphatically" that in his judgment Phoumi should abandon his position of demanding for himself the posts of Minister of Defense and Interior and for the non-Xieng Khouang neutrals four of the eight cabinet posts reserved for the center group. Souvanna, the Ambassador continued, was determined to control Defense and Interior and also was intent upon having six of his Xieng Khouang faction in the government. Mr. Harriman then pointed out that Souvanna had suggested additions to the cabinet which could give up to four places to non-Xieng Khouang neutrals. The Ambassador suggested that this enlargement, as well as the over-all composition of the cabinet, "be made an area of trading, both in numbers and quality."

In conclusion

In conclusion, Ambassador Harriman stated that the only US hope for a neutral Laos lay in strengthening Souvanna and expressed his belief that Phoumi was an "inadequate instrument to further US policy in a government of national unity." Although aware of the obvious risks of supporting a Souvanna government, the Ambassador believed that these risks could be reduced if the US were to convince Souvanna of its intention to support him, provided he remained free from Communist domination.

(S) Msg, Geneva to SecState, CONFE 866, 19 Nov 61.

20 Nov 61

The Office of Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA) prepared for its own use another summary of the situation in Laos (see item 20 July 1961). After examining various facets of the Laotian problem, the summary concluded that:

1. The Communists had probably achieved most of their immediate objectives in Laos and could not be expected to give up, as a result of negotiations, the territory that they had seized.
2. The Soviets, although expressing a willingness to negotiate seriously at Geneva, had made few concessions, while the US had made many. The agreements reached, however, probably represented the best that could be obtained without resort to force.
3. Unless the US could convince the Communists that it was prepared to use force, it was doubtful that Phoumi could become Minister of Defense or of Interior in a government headed by Souvanna. Should the US force Phoumi to yield either of these posts, he might also yield on issues which the US considered vital to its interests.

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4. To achieve a political settlement that would insure a neutral Laos, the US should, at the least, obtain safeguards for a "conservative beachhead" in the Souvanna government, insist on a neutral center group representing all of Laos, and obtain for Phoumi a major cabinet post. In addition, the US would have to win acceptance of a Geneva accord embodying the following fundamental points:

- a) The US would not terminate its military assistance program until the ICC was fully effective.
- b) The ICC would have authority to make investigations throughout Laos at the request of any member and without being subjected to an RLG veto.
- c) The voting procedure within the ICC would be at least as favorable to the West as under the 1954 agreement.
- d) The ICC would be reorganized to assist the RLG in preventing the use of Laos as a military base or route of transit for purposes of aggression.
- e) The RLG would be allowed the services of either French or neutral military missions.

The conclusions were based upon a study of 1) negotiations among the three Princes, 2) the projected formation of a coalition cabinet, 3) the meetings at the Geneva Conference, 4) the expected reorganization of the FAR, 5) the unauthorized increase in the FAR and the resultant financial difficulties, and 6) the Lao clandestine army. These topics were summarized as follows:

Negotiations among the three Princes. Although the King had chosen Souvanna to head the coalition government, the Princes had been unable to agree on the site at which to discuss carrying out this royal mandate. At any such meeting, the US would have to try to convince both Phoumi and Souvanna that their survival depended upon mutual cooperation.

Formation

Formation of a coalition government. Although the Princes had agreed on a 4-8-4 distribution of cabinet posts there was no agreement on the assignment of portfolios or on the composition of the eight-man neutral center. Since Souvanna had indicated willingness to expand the size of the cabinet, thus affording representation to neutrals from outside his own camp, the US was urging Phoumi to hold out for a balanced center group rather than to demand a fixed numerical ratio. It remained imperative, however, that critical portfolios be denied to the Pathet Lao.

The Geneva Conference. The principal issues under discussion thus far were the powers and functions of the ICC, its voting procedures, the relationship between a neutral Laos and SEATO, and the continued French presence in Laos.

The US desired that the ICC have free access to all Laos, operate a network of permanent inspection posts, and possess its own supply centers. The USSR objected to or offered counterproposals to all these demands, and the US delegation had been authorized to abandon its position on ICC-controlled supply points. In addition, the West had accepted, in place of the ICC's right of free and unrestricted access, a provision stating that the ICC's rights of access would be determined in relation to the requirements of a particular investigation. (See item 12 Jan 62.)

On the subject of the ICC's internal procedures, the USSR, while agreeing that members might file minority reports, insisted that the commission's conclusions and recommendations have the unanimous endorsement of the membership. The Soviets also maintained that the ICC, when "in agreement

agreement with" the Lao government, could initiate investigations upon a majority vote.

The issue of the Laotian relationship to SEATO could best be settled, according to the Soviets, by the adoption of a resolution under the terms of which the SEATO powers would agree to respect a Laotian declaration renouncing the protection of military alliances. In return for this "satisfactory solution" of the SEATO question, the USSR would agree to the inclusion in the declaration of Lao neutrality of a clause prohibiting the use of Laos as an invasion corridor.

The Soviets, addressing the question of French presence in a neutral Laos, stated that the French could remain during a brief period of transition, after which they would have to abandon their installations.

The issues yet to be decided at Geneva were the time limit for the withdrawal of foreign military personnel, provision for ICC assistance in the implementation of the declaration of neutrality, and the elimination from Laos of private armies. The USSR, however, had stated that discussion by the conference of this last issue was "absolutely unacceptable."

Reorganization of the FAR. A general plan of integration had been agreed upon by the Allied Ambassadors at Vientiane (see item 20 October 1961). However, the Departments of State and Defense believed that the plan, when presented to Phoumi, would have to specify the following: 1) that the formula for the integration of factional armed forces into a new national Army would have to be decided upon before the process of integration began; 2) that no elections could be held until the armies had been integrated
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and the surplus personnel demobilized; 3) that the agreement of the three parties on the reconstitution of a Lao national Army should be included in the Geneva agreement; and 4) that an early agreement should be reached on the composition of the Army (preferably with the police under control of the Ministry of Interior rather than Defense), its relative strength, and the nation's military policy.

The UK and France, reluctant to present a detailed plan to Phoumi and Souvanna lest the over-all negotiations be further complicated, preferred that a "general plan" be presented to the two Laotian leaders.

Unauthorized FAR increase and resultant financial difficulties. The Department of Defense on 19 October had requested the Department of State to authorize an increase in FAR strength from 38,487 to 46,921. Phoumi, however, without US approval had already increased his force to 53,981, thus incurring a monthly deficit of \$360,000. It was feared that Phoumi would resort to borrowing from the National Bank of Laos, and he had been warned that such a course of action could lead to the collapse of the Laotian financial structure. The US also was concerned that RLG foreign exchange resources might be appropriated by officials of that government if it appeared that the US was withdrawing its support. As a result, the Department of State was considering closer controls over Lao finances.

The Lao clandestine army. Rather than an army, this was merely a grouping of auto defense companies, guerrilla units, and minority tribes. Phoumi intended to use these units in the event that hostilities were resumed or if, after the formation of a coalition government, Pathet Lao forces managed to evade the process of integration and demobilization

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(S) "Current Laotian Situation," 20 Nov 61, OASD,
FER/SEA Branch files.

27 Nov,
14 Dec 61

The US Ambassador in Vientiane on 27 November forwarded to the Secretary of State a series of comments on the various problems that had been raised concerning the re-establishment of a Lao national police force. Among the more important of these comments were the following:

1. It was necessary to reach, as soon as possible, a detailed but informal understanding with the French concerning the organization, strength, role, training, and equipment of a national police force.

2. The French former director of the Lao national police, a Major Deuve, had established good relations with the USOM and would be available for any discussion of police problems that might be held at Vientiane.

3. Although French primacy in both training and operations would have to be recognized, the US, if it was to contribute funds, should retain some influence over police policy and operations.

4. The Lao police, though it was understood that they must be loyal to Souvanna as Prime Minister, should be oriented to respect the kingdom, its government, and its laws, rather than to fix their allegiance upon any individual.

5. A goal of 6,000 men, including gendarmes, was more realistic than the 10,000 desired by Souvanna.

6. Police personnel should not be recruited from among all three factions. (It was hoped that the better elements of the existing RLQ police could be incorporated into the new organization.)

7. All

7. All civilian internal security forces should be grouped under one ministry, presumably that of Interior. If the French insisted upon military control of the gendarmerie, the US should maintain that the gendarmes were not properly police and could not, except under conditions of martial law, have police jurisdiction over civilians. In rural areas, the French-trained gendarmerie, with its heavier weapons, would support the US-trained police.

8. During discussions with the French, the US should strive for French acceptance of the maximum share possible of the costs of the police program. There seemed, however, to be no need for the US to set forth at this time the basic concepts, including the estimated costs, of the Ryan Plan.

On 14 December, the Department of State, in commenting upon the views of Ambassador Brown, agreed that the ideal solution, regarding which it was hoped the Ambassador could reach an understanding with the French, was a program jointly administered and organized by the US and France. The Department's message also expressed hope that the US Ambassador could establish a close working relationship with Major Deuve.

Several basic factors, however, were to be considered by Ambassador Brown in negotiating an understanding with the French. First, the Department of State warned that US position and influence under Souvanna's regime would be "vastly different" than in the past and that an attempt to re-establish this past position might result in a further weakening of Souvanna's undoubtedly fragile coalition. In addition, the police and gendarmes should be composed mainly of Souvanna's followers. Although the Department of State

had

had no objection to including elements of the RLG police loyal to Souvanna, elements opposed to him should not be recruited. Furthermore, the Department raised no objection to the use of a French-trained gendarmerie to support the US-trained provincial police, provided that both the gendarmerie and the police were separate organizations within the Ministry of Interior and provided also that Souvanna would accept such an arrangement. Finally, the Ambassador was informed that his proposed negotiating tactics were concurred in by the Department of State, although it was not considered necessary to withhold from the French the basic concept of the Ryan Plan.

(On 30 December, Ambassador Brown reported that Major Deuve, having studied the Ryan Plan in its entirety, was in full agreement with its basic concepts. The French officer did, however, believe that the force goals were slightly too high and that the large amount of automotive equipment was unrealistic. Revisions along these lines were already underway.

As for the French concept of the Lao gendarmerie, Ambassador Brown had received no indication that this organization would be other than a special force of military personnel, under the control of the Minister of Defense and charged with the task of supporting the police in maintaining internal security.

The British military attache, Ambassador Brown also reported, had studied the Ryan Plan, had expressed approval, and had stated his belief that the UK would be fully prepared to support such an undertaking.)

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 770, 27 Nov 61; (S) Msg State to Vientiane, 557, 14 Dec 61; (S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 904, 29 Dec 61.

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Nov 61

The meetings at which delegations from the Xieng Khouang and Vientiane factions were attempting to agree upon arrangements for the visit of Souvanna and Souphanouvong to Vientiane (See item 16 November 1961) came to an abrupt end on 28 November, when Souvanna's delegate broke off the negotiations. The principal differences that occasioned the break were the number of armed retainers for the visiting Princes and the demilitarization of the meeting site.

Later that day, Souvanna sent to Vientiane a message proposing that the meeting of the Princes be shifted to Hin Heup. On 29 November, however, the RLG refused Souvanna's latest offer and called instead for a meeting at Vientiane.

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 785, 1 Dec 61.

29 Nov 61

The Director, FER/SEA Branch, prepared for use by OASD (ISA) a comparison of currently agreed articles pertaining to the role of the ICC in Laos with those equivalent articles originally proposed in the US/French and Soviet drafts submitted to the Geneva Conference. This comparison showed that neither the conference co-chairmen, the drafting committee, nor restricted meetings of key delegations to the conference had been able to reach agreement on Laos-SEATO relations, the reconstitution of Lao forces, or the link between the declaration of neutrality and its accompanying protocol.

The drafting committee, however, had agreed upon: a preamble; a definition of the term "military personnel"; a method of controlling the withdrawal of foreign troops; controls over the introduction into Laos of foreign troops and arms; a method of repatriating prisoners; the role of the International Control Commission in controlling

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the cease-fire, the withdrawal of foreign troops, and the "non-entry" of foreign military personnel; the manner of RLG cooperation with the ICC; the duration of the ICC; and the date of entry into force of the agreement. (Although the drafting committee was agreed concerning the cooperation between RLG and ICC, the Lao representatives had expressed reservations on this issue.)

In addition, the drafting committee had reached provisional agreement concerning the costs of the ICC.

The co-chairmen had reached tentative agreement on the deadline for the withdrawal of foreign troops, the continued French presence, the role of the ICC in controlling the introduction of arms into Laos, ICC voting procedures, ICC machinery, ICC investigations, and the relationship between the co-chairmen and the ICC (Cf. item 16, 18 September 1961).

Finally, the co-chairmen and the principal delegations at the conference had agreed to the text of an article dealing with ICC equipment. (See items 8 November 1961 and 2 December 1961.)

(C) "14-Nation Agreement, Terms of Reference for ICC," 29 Nov 61, OASD (ISA), FER/SEA Br files.

29 Nov 61

Chairman Sen of the ICC sent Souvanna a message expressing concern over the breaking off of the talks dealing with arrangements for a meeting of the Princes (see item 28-29 November 1961). According to the Chairman, the only solution to the existing impasse was for Souvanna and Souphanouvong, each with a 110 or 120-man escort and civilian staff, to visit Vientiane on a specified date.

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 792, 1 Dec 61.

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29 Nov 61

The US Country Team in Laos replied to the State-Defense-ICA queries of 23 October (see item) regarding FAR budgetary practices. According to the Country Team, Phoumi had been using the money budgeted for nonexistent ADO units to activate additional volunteer companies; the total amount expended for this purpose from 1 January through 1 October had been \$396,231. At present Phoumi was diverting funds from all other chapters of the FAR budget to pay his overstrength.

The Country Team stated that the Ambassador and CHMAAG would inform Phoumi that he was defeating all efforts to make the FAR more effective by increasing his force levels without US approval. He had already been told, in a 24 October letter from CHMAAG, that the US could not recognize force levels in excess of those currently authorized; he had at that time been asked to stop recruiting new troops. (See, however, items 17 November and 2 December 1961.)

(S) Msg, CHMAAG Laos to OSD, DA IN 177724, 29 Nov 61.

30 Nov 61

In evaluating "Chinese Communist Capabilities and Intentions in the Far East," Special National Intelligence Estimate 13-3-61 envisioned the probable Chinese Communist reaction to SEATO or US combat forces coming to the defense of Laos or South Viet Nam. Echoing an earlier estimate (see item 5 July 1961), the SNIE believed that the Chinese would initially increase their aid to the PL and DRV while deploying substantial forces along the South China border. In the more extreme case where a SEATO or US action constituted a threat that the DRV forces could not counter, the Chinese would "almost certainly" intervene overtly; the Chinese would

would

would "probably" intervene even if the threat was only against the Communist position in northern Laos.

(S) SNIE 13-3-61, 30 Nov 61; J-2 Sect.

30 Nov 61 The Department of Defense, with JCS concurrence, requested that the Department of the Army deliver seven L-20 aircraft and appropriate spares to CHMAAG Laos, for use as administrative airlift. (See item 28 September 1961)

(S) Msg, OSD to DA et al., DEF 906415, 30 Nov 61.

30 Nov 61 According to CHMAAG's daily situation report, the Northern Command of the FAR was continuing its clearing sweeps, the Central Command remained in a defensive posture, and the Southern Command continued anti-guerrilla operations. The above dispositions had remained relatively unchanged since the "intensified efforts" directed by Phoumi (see item 4 November 1961).

In the Northern Command, the clearing sweeps, begun on 6 November, were four-pronged: 1) along a front from the southeast to the northeast of Luang Prabang; 2) northeast from the Muong Houn front toward Muong Sai; 3) southeast from the Nam Tha front toward Mung Sai; and 4) north and south along the Mekong Valley in Sayaboury Province. No significant progress was reported during November.

The Central Command remained in defensive posture except for a two battalion sweep conducted northward from Paksane from 21 to 25 November.

In the Southern Command, there was no evidence that Lao guerrilla units had begun to harass Viet Cong routes. The principal reported actions were sweeps. GM 14, operating southwest of Thakhek, and GM 15, east of Savannakhet,

conducted

conducted relatively uneventful local patrols. GM 18, however, conducted a successful clearing operation through Attopeu province, reaching its objective of Ban Hin Lat on 13 November, destroying while on patrol a Pathet Lao training compound of approximately 50 buildings.

(TS) JCS SEA Sitreps 1-61 to 5-61, 2 to 30 Nov 61; (S) Msgs, CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC; DA IN 170561, 4 Nov 61; DA IN 171180, 6 Nov 61; DA IN 171848, 7 Nov 61; DA IN 171846, 8 Nov 61; DA IN 173443, 14 Nov 61; DA IN 175849, 21 Nov 61; DA IN 176709, 25 Nov 61; DA IN 177082, 26 Nov 61; DA IN 178749, 28 Nov 61; DA IN 178764, 30 Nov 61.

1 Dec 61 The Director of Military Assistance, OASD (ISA), raised the authorized MAP-supported US personnel for MAAG Laos from 253 to 280 (see item 26 June 1961). In so acting, the Director was adopting, with some modification, a 21 September recommendation by CINCPAC, endorsed to the Secretary of Defense by the JCS on 15 November.

(C) Ltr, CINCPAC to JCS, w/encls, 21 Sep 61, att to JCS 1849/581, 26 Sep 61. (C) JCSM-789-61 to SecDef, 15 Nov 61, derived from JCS 1849/617, 3 Nov 61. (C) 1st N/H of JCS 1849/617, 8 Dec 61. All in JMF 1040.1 (14 Apr 61).

1, 4 Dec
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After observing that Phoumi had thus far resisted US pressure to force him into negotiating for the establishment of a coalition government, Ambassador Brown on 1 December informed the Secretary of State that Phoumi, if he chose to do so, could confront the US with any of several difficult situations. If Phoumi refused to accept a settlement satisfactory to the US, he could: 1) withdraw entirely from Laotian politics and create in his followers feelings of bitterness toward the US; 2) establish a rebel state in southern Laos; or 3) remain in office and seek to block negotiations.

In response to Ambassador Brown's message, the Secretary of State on 4 December offered comments and instructions concerning Phoumi's possible courses of action. Should Phoumi withdraw from the political arena, the US would make the best possible deal with Souvanna concerning the establishment of a coalition government. The Secretary of State agreed with Ambassador Brown that the US should attempt to forestall any separatist movement and try to avoid allowing Phoumi to involve the US in military action contrary to national policy.

If

If Phoumi chose, as seemed most likely, to thwart negotiations while remaining in office, the US Ambassador was to approach Souvanna directly and inform him that the US would support his government in maintaining the genuine neutrality of Laos. Should Souvanna, with the advice of the US Ambassador, succeed in forming a satisfactory cabinet, Phoumi would be given the choice of either cooperating or being abandoned by the US.

(S) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState, 789, 1 Dec 61; State to Vientiane, NIACT 524, 4 Dec 61.

1-13 Dec
61

Souvanna on 1 December informed Boun Oum of his willingness to hold a meeting of the Princes at Vientiane, provided that both he and Souphanouvong were permitted security escorts of 110 men and civilian staffs numbering 30, and provided that a demilitarized zone was established at the meeting site.

On 4 December, in what Ambassador Brown termed a "piece of gamesmanship designed to put [the] other side in [the] wrong and to avoid [a] three Prince meeting in Vientiane," Boun Oum countered with an offer to visit the Plaine des Jarres, relying on the ICC to provide for his security, if Souvanna, also without personal military escort, would come to Vientiane for future meetings.

Souvanna on 6 December invited Boun Oum to meet with him and Souphanouvong on the Plaine des Jarres on 8 December. Boun Oum was to be allowed to bring with him a 110-man escort and a personal suite of 30 men. Boun Oum, however, responded on 8 December by repeating his offer of 4 December. In spite of Boun Oum's reply, Phoumi informed the US Ambassador that he would agree to Souvanna's visiting

Vientiane

Vientiane on the terms specified in that Prince's message of 1 December.

Souvanna on 11 December repeated his offer to bring Souphanouvong with him on an escorted journey to Vientiane. Although Souvanna repeated in substance the conditions stated in his message of 1 December, the RLG, in spite of Phoumi's assurances to the contrary, chose to ignore the suggestion. Thus, in a message released on 12 December, Boun Oum merely repeated his offer to go unescorted to the Plaine des Jarres.

On the 13th, however, the RLG acted as Phoumi had indicated it would; Boun Oum informed Souvanna that he and a small group of advisers would visit the Plaine des Jarres on the following day (see item 14 December 1961). Future visits by Souvanna and Souphanouvong to Vientiane, the message continued, would be conducted under the conditions set forth by Souvanna on 1 December.

(S) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState, 803, 4 Dec 61; 820, 8 Dec 61; 826, 11 Dec 61; 836, 13 Dec 61; (S) Msg, State to Vientiane, NIACT 534, 9 Dec 61; (C) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState, 812, 7 Dec 61; 819, 8 Dec 61; 797, 3 Dec 61; (OUO) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 800, 4 Dec 61.

2 Dec 61 Ambassador Harriman reported to the Secretary of State that during the past week the US, UK, Soviet, Indian, French, and Communist Chinese delegations had agreed on the text of articles dealing with ICC voting procedures, investigations inspection teams, and the relationship between the Geneva co-chairmen and the ICC. The issues yet to be resolved in restricted meetings were the relationship between a neutral Laos and SEATO, a time limit on the withdrawal of foreign troops, the French presence, and the integration of factional armies (see item 29 November, 11 and 13 December 1961).

(S) Msgs, Geneva to SecState, CONFE 923, 2 Dec 61; 971, 17 Dec 61; 981, 23 Dec 61.

Phoumi

2 Dec 61. Phoumi informed an "AEG representative" that he would not "capitulate" to Souvanna, even at the risk of losing US military and economic support as a result of his intransigence. Should the US cut off its aid, Phoumi continued, he would: 1) establish a dictatorship; 2) attack toward Muong Soui, Xieng Khouang, and Mahaxay; and 3) in the event the Viet Minh reacted in force, retreat into Thailand. Phoumi said that he had discussed this strategy with both Sarit and King Savang. Sarit had not committed the Thai Government to support the plan, but he had inquired into the war capability of the FAR in the event US aid was halted. (Phoumi did not disclose the King's reaction.)

The RLG Minister of Defense also stated that he had learned from various sources that the US was eager to withdraw from Laos and leave the training of the FAR to the French.

Turning to the plan for the integration of the Lao armed forces (see items 20 October and 3 November 1961), which had been presented to him the week before, Phoumi declared that the scheme was unrealistic.

CHMAAG, in reporting this conversation to CINCPAC, stated that the threat to renew hostilities "could be a Phoumi bluff in an attempt to change US policy on a Souvanna government and to safeguard his own position." General Boyle believed that Phoumi "must realize" that his plan would "thwart the US effort to have a strong anti-Communist element within the coalition government," that the FAR would become ineffective without US aid, and that certain FAR generals probably would not remain loyal to a Phoumi dictatorship.

(S) Msg, CHMAAG, Laos, to CINCPAC, DA IN 179127, 2 Dec 61

CHMAAG

2 Dec 61 CHMAAG Laos and the Lao Ministry of National Security, in accordance with the MAAG-Phoumi agreement of 17 November (see item) completed a plan to reduce the strength of the FAR by about 9,000 men in four monthly increments. (See item 18 December 1961)

(S) Msg, CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC, DA IN 179237, 2 Dec 61.

5 Dec 61 The Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA), Bundy, informed the JCS that contingency planning for the withdrawal of all US military forces and equipment from Laos should commence at once. If the current progress of the Geneva Conference continued and the "Three Princes" meetings in Laos were successful, Bundy said, a peaceful settlement might be obtained within a few weeks. In such an agreement the US would be required to withdraw all its military forces, perhaps within 60 days after the entry into force of the agreement. Mr. Bundy requested the recommendations of the JCS on this matter. (See items 26 December 1961 and 14 February 1962.)

(S) Memo, OASD(ISA) to CJCS, 5 Dec 61, att to JCS 2344/24, 7 Dec 61; JMF 9155.2/3100 (5 Dec 61).

11 Dec 61 At a restricted meeting in Geneva, the continued French presence in Laos was agreed upon and a time limit fixed for the withdrawal of foreign troops (see item 12 January 1962).

(S) Msg, Geneva to SecState, CONF 971, 17 Dec 61.

14 Dec 61 Ambassador Brown reported to the Secretary of State that he had persuaded Phoumi to call off a "substantial attack" on Tha

on Tha Vieng and Tha Tom, to have been conducted by FAR and Meo forces on 16 December. When Ambassador Brown had learned of the planned attack, he had first sought and received verification from Phoumi. He had then told Phoumi "this simply could not happen"; such an attack might destroy and chance for successful negotiation. If Phoumi allowed the planned attack to proceed, the Ambassador had told the Lao leader, "all MAAG teams would be called away, there would be not one helicopter, not one aircraft and no munition in support of the operation" Phoumi replied that he would try to call off the operation. (He obviously did so.) (See item 2 January 1962.)

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 840, 14 Dec 61.

14 Dec 61 Boun Oum visited the Plaine des Jarres and conferred with Souvanna and Souphanouvong. The communique issued after the meeting merely stated that they had reaffirmed the need to establish a coalition government and that they would meet as soon as possible in Vientiane to take concrete steps toward the formation of such a government.

In a conversation with the US Ambassador, Boun Oum elaborated on this terse communique. He reported that the Princes had talked of a cabinet composed of four RLG conservatives, four members of the Pathet Lao party, and eight neutrals -- half from the Vientiane and half from the Xieng Khouang neutralists. The key portfolios of Defense, Interior, Foreign Affairs, and Finance also were discussed. The Princes agreed to meet again on 26 December at Vientiane.

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 846, 15 Dec 61; (C) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 842, 14 Dec 61.

CHMAAG

14 Dec 61 CHMAAG Laos informed CINCPAC that, in view of the possibility that a neutral RLG might successfully be formed, he was planning for the removal of excess MAP materiel and equipment from Lao territory. CHMAAG, postulating future FAR force structure at 20,000 men, planned to attempt the recovery of excesses in:

1. Items with a "war making potential," such as individual and crew served weapons.
2. High dollar-value items, such as late model vehicles and communications equipment.
3. Items in short supply in US supply channels.

(On 23 December, CINCPAC authorized CHMAAG to continue to plan along the above lines. See item 24 January 1962.)

(S) Msgs, CINCPAC to JCS, DA IN 187345, 23 Dec 61; CINCPAC to JCS, 240420Z Jan 62.

16 Dec 61 The Secretary of Defense, CJCS, and other DOD officials met with CINCPAC and US officials from Saigon in Hawaii, to review the progress of US action in South Viet Nam. During the review of Viet Cong operations, the Secretary asked what number of the 17,000 Viet Cong in South Viet Nam had come overland by way of Laos. CHMAAG South Viet Nam estimated that 25% had come this way; the major point of infiltration from Laos was just south of the 17th parallel (near Tchepone in Laos).

(TS) Record of SecDef Conf at Hq. CINCPAC, 16 Dec 61, att to JCS 2343/60, 26 Dec 61; JMF 9155.3/9105 (16 Dec 61).

18 Dec 61 The JCS recommended to the Secretary of Defense that the Department of State again be urged to approve FAR force augmentation (see items 9 September and 4 October 1961). The JCS stated the requirement for augmentation was still valid; and they noted that the attitude and

actions

actions of Phoumi, which had been the principal reason for the original State disapproval (see item 18 November 1961) had recently changed for the better (see items 30 October, 17 November, and 2 December 1961). Moreover, CINCPAC had, on 28 November, again strongly endorsed the augmentation. The JCS considered, in addition, that failure to approve this augmentation might be construed as a lessening of US efforts to stabilize and improve the military situation in all of Southeast Asia.

(On 17 January 1962 the Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA) informed the JCS that "soundings" taken at the Department of State on FAR augmentation had indicated that "a formal request would at best elicit a formal rejection on grounds of overriding political considerations." At the first opportune moment, however, the Acting Assistant Secretary said, the Department of Defense would be prepared to lay the request again before the Department of State.)

(S) JCSM-872-61 to SecDef, 18 Dec 61, derived from JCS 2344/25, 13 Dec 61; (S) 1st N/H of JCS 2344/25, 22 Jan 62. Both in JMF 9155.2/3100 (9 Sep 61). (S) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, DA IN 177087, 28 Nov 61.

18 Dec 61 CHMAAG Laos reported to CINCPAC that Phoumi had, in a recent conversation, come down hard against a future French presence in Laos. Phoumi thought that the Soviet support of a French presence was based on their belief that the FAR would be weakened by French indifference and inefficiency and that the weakened FAR could be infiltrated and would offer no obstacle to continued infiltration of South Viet Nam. Phoumi also believed that the FAR would not welcome the French who had, in the past, done nothing to improve the economic or military situation of Laos.

CHMAAG believed that Phoumi was more disturbed by the possible continuance of a French presence than by any other agreement likely to issue from Geneva. Phoumi believed and CHMAAG thought him "probably right," that the French resented US influence in Laos, and would attempt, as they had in the past, to undermine it.

(S) Msg, CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC, DA IN 185095, 18 Dec 61

18 Dec 61 At a restricted meeting in Geneva, general provisional acceptance was given to all texts that earlier had been provisionally agreed upon. (The major issues not yet resolved by the end of the year were the integration of factional armies and the Laos-SEATO relationship.) (See item 12 January 1962.)

(S) Msg, Geneva to SecState, CONFE 981, 23 Dec 61.

20 Dec 61 In a message to CINCPAC, CHMAAG Laos set forth the assets the RLG would carry to the approaching three-princes meeting and ensuing negotiations (see item 27-30 December 1961). In the opinion of CHMAAG, an opinion in which [REDACTED] USARMA Vientiane, and the Ambassador concurred, the RLG approached the negotiations in a better position than it would have, had the meeting been held at the time of the cease-fire. He advanced the following reasons:

1. The combat potential of the FAR had increased. Five battalions had completed EKARAD training in Thailand, and a new program to strengthen and retrain the ADC was underway. The first officer training class would graduate 195 leaders in February; specialist training programs were turning out communications, medical, logistics, and maintenance technicians; and the Lao T-6 pilots

had

had increased their proficiency. The FAR logistical situation had also improved. Finally, the acceptance by the Lao of US advisors was "at a new high" and the expanded US advisory effort itself had stimulated new aggressiveness in unit commanders, and inspired better performance under fire by both officers and men.

2. The FAR military situation had greatly improved. The FAR was carrying the battle to the enemy in many areas where the cease-fire did not hamper operations. The volunteer, ADC, and Meo irregular forces under Vang Pao had virtually isolated the Plaine des Jarres and could, if authorized, expand their operations into Sam Neua and the "Thai-Lao autonomous zone" of the DRV. The enemy had been forced to divert larger and larger numbers of troops to the protection of lines of communication. Additional guerrilla organizations were now being formed in Sayaboury province, in the area north and east of Thakhek, and among the Kha tribesmen of the Bolovens plateau. All gave promise of success.

3. The RLG had increased its popularity among the people. The Communists were feared and unpopular among the people because of their harsh treatment of the peasantry. On the other hand, RLG information and aid programs had had their effects; moreover Prince Boun Oum was very popular throughout Laos. The Prince had travelled widely and fearlessly to the "grassroots" of Laos, winning the populace to the RLG cause.

4. There was an apparently widening rift between the PL and the Kong Le forces. The number of defectors to the RLG from Kong Le's forces had increased during November and should, because of lack of pay, food shortages, and the

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incessent propagandizing of the Pathet Lao, continue to increase. In addition, significant numbers of civilians were attempting to transfer themselves from Kong Le/PL to RLG protection.

(See items 23 December 1961 and 5 January 1962.)

(S) Msg, CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC, DA IN 185983, 20 Dec 61.

22 Dec 61 The JCS approved CINCPAC OPLAN 93A-61, one of the "family of plans" directed by the JCS on 28 September against the contingency that the USSR would block allied access to Berlin. OPLAN 93-61 submitted by CINCPAC on 14 October 1961, had as its mission the conducting of US air operations in support of Laotian efforts against the Communist airlift in Laos. CINCPACAF would conduct the operations, but CHMAAG Laos would effect the necessary liaison with RLG officials and establish the requirements for missions.

(TS) CINCPAC OPLAN 93A-61, 14 Oct 61; JMF 3146 (14 Oct 61) sec 1. (TS) Dec on JCS 2054/470, 22 Dec 61; JMF 3146 (14 Oct 61) sec 2.

22 Dec 61 CHMAAG Laos informed CINCPAC that the MAAG was organizing, equipping, and beginning to train ² the Kha guerrilla unit for operations in the eastern Plateau des Bolovens. Approximately six more Kha units could be formed in the area, CHMAAG said; and additional tribesmen might eventually be organized further to the north and east. The Kha presently were anti-PL but not pro-RLG; they were concerned principally with preservation of their traditional areas. They were, however, aggressive people who would form, CHMAAG hoped, into "light, hard hitting guerrilla units." ~~_____~~ planned a combined program patterned after the Meo program to bring the Kha into the RLG camp.

[REDACTED] was providing the initial weapons stocks for the Kha, CHMAAG said. Phoumi had cooperated by recognizing the first unit as a bona fide FAR ADC unit.

(S) Msg, CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC, 221540Z Dec 61.

22 Dec 61 Under Secretary of State Ball asked the US Ambassador in Vientiane for Country Team comments on draft instructions for a discussion with Souvanna of the economic aid that the US was willing to grant to a neutral Laos. Ambassador Brown was authorized, if he deemed it desirable, to present this program to Souvanna when the latter visited Vientiane for the meeting of the Princes.

The Ambassador was to explain that the US was prepared to share with other nations in a program of economic aid for Laos. For the time being, however, the US would continue to maintain the kingdom's financial stability. Souvanna's government would be expected to "make the maximum contribution from its resources" and to use American aid in a responsible manner.

Although the US was willing to continue, as interim measures, its support of the Laotian currency and its cash grants for specific purposes, some more effective form of assistance would have to be found. No longer would the US guarantee the Laotian military budget. Instead, a specific amount would be granted for "general budgetary purposes." The Lao government would then be responsible for allocating funds "according to its own evaluation of all competing needs." In addition, an acceptable remedy would have to be found for the ills caused by excessive RLG borrowing from the National Bank of Laos.

As to

As to the kingdom's economic development, which was considered "our primary joint objective," the US was willing to continue its present activities in education, rural development, construction, and relief, so that Laotian "human resources" might be developed concurrently with the "economic infrastructure." The US believed, however, that an intensive survey of the Lao economy was needed to provide guidance for a "realistic program of economic development." In addition, the US was prepared to assist in obtaining aid from other nations and from international organizations.

(On 27 December, Ambassador Brown replied that the aid program was "in line with our thinking." He believed, however, that the US should concentrate for the present on the formation of a coalition government. If Souvanna succeeded in forming a government, the offer of assistance could then be made. The Ambassador also noted that to "negotiate" with Souvanna at this time would jeopardize US relations with the existing RLG. Instead of discussing a detailed program, Ambassador Brown would "reassure Souvanna in a general way that the US was ready to give generous assistance to a truly neutral government."

(S) Msgs, State to Vientiane, DEPTTEL 563, 22 Dec 61; Vientiane to SecState, 887, 27 Dec 61.

23 Dec 61 CINCPAC cabled to the JCS that, "if the Communists were to sit down now and assess the progress of their plans for Southeast Asia, . . . their appraisal would closely approximate the following":

1. The situation in Southeast Asia had never been more favorable for the advancement of Communist aims.

2. "Things

2. "Things are going well" in Laos. Military successes up through April 1961 had led the Communists to feel that they had the necessary "edge" at the bargaining table to assure a "neutral" Laos, with the Pathet Lao integrated into both the army and the government. Utilizing their normal tactics, the Communists could probably achieve the upper hand in Laos by ostensibly legal means within the next year; the negotiations on integration of the armed forces and formation of a coalition government would, in this regard, present them with a "sterling opportunity" to exploit the existing differences between various Lao political factions. Another advantage the Communists had realized was the "virtual elimination of the likelihood of US or SEATO military intervention." And the apparent acceptance by the US of a "neutral Laos" probably had convinced the Communists that another test of arms was, in any event, unlikely. But in the unlikely event that the RLG reneged on the integration scheme and attempted to maintain itself as a separate force, the Pathet Lao were well-prepared to resume hostilities.

3. In South Viet Nam, the Viet Cong were "making good progress in the field," at least in part because of their increased control of the Laos-South Viet Nam border areas. Although they were probably somewhat concerned about future US reactions in South Viet Nam, the Communists probably regarded the fall of the GVN as "only a matter of time."

4. After the fall of Laos and South Viet Nam, the Communist prospects in Thailand would be greatly improved, and the Communists would quickly turn their attention to that country

country. Under these circumstances either the Thai themselves would seek an accommodation with the Communists or, that failing, the standard techniques of subversion could be brought to bear.

Assuming, CINCPAC continued, that this hypothetical assessment was at all valid, the US and RLG must strive to obtain the best possible terms at the three-Princes meeting. Ambassador Brown had, to CINCPAC's mind, implied that the RLG should "go out of its way" to accommodate Souvanna. However, CHMAAG Laos saw the RLG bringing several assets into the negotiations (see item 20 December 1961). CINCPAC felt CHMAAG's assessment valid, and that "there was much to be gained and nothing to be lost by being tough as nails at the bargaining table."

(See item 5 January 1962.)

(TS) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 232035Z Dec 61.

26 Dec 61 Ambassador Brown was granted an audience with the King. During their conversation, the King, who at times appeared morose, denied "talk" that he would serve as Prime Minister in a new government and expressed his belief that Souvanna would fail to form a successful coalition. In addition, the King complained that foreign countries had interfered in a purely domestic matter by attempting to force the acceptance of Souvanna as head of the national coalition and that the assurance given by SEATO had proved worthless because of divided counsels in that organization.

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 882, 26 Dec 61.

The Acting

26 Dec 61 The Acting Secretary of Defense requested the JCS to include, in their study of the possible withdrawal of US forces from Laos (see item 5 December 1961), their evaluation of a proposal that the personnel of MAAG Laos be organized at the time of withdrawal into a provisional tactical unit. This unit would evacuate in slow stages overland through Savannakhet province to South Viet Nam. This course of action would be, the Acting Secretary continued, a "show of force" to raise the morale of the peoples of Southeast Asia and to demonstrate the seriousness of US intentions; it might also, he concluded, produce some useful intelligence on Communist activities in the panhandle of Laos. (See item 14 February 1962.)

(S) Memo, Actg SecDef to CJCS, 26 Dec 61, att to JCS 2344/27, 29 Dec 61; JMF 9155.2/3100 (5 Dec 61).

26 Dec 61 The JCS approved for presentation to the SEATO nations CINCPAC's recommended changes to SEATO Plan 5. By CINCPAC's proposal, submitted to the JCS on 25 November, a third force, Force CHARLIE, would be added to Forces ALFA and BRAVO of the current plan (see item 5 April 1961). Force CHARLIE, to be composed of two US battle groups, would deploy to Pakse and be responsible for all Laos south of Seno. This area of Laos was, CINCPAC had stated, a principal area in which the insurgents were presently consolidating their positions. With Force CHARLIE, then, to assume some of Force BRAVO's responsibilities, the Thai battalion in BRAVO would be transferred to ALFA, as would a Pakistani battalion from Central Reserve. With these added forces, ALFA would take over from BRAVO responsibility for Thakhek. The revised composition of the combat forces
in Laos

in Laos would be as follows:

Force ALFA

- 2 US BLTs
- 2 Thai battalions
- 1 Pakistani battalion

Force BRAVO

- 1 Australian battalion
- 1 New Zealander battalion
- 1 UK battalion

Force CHARLIE

- 2 US battle groups

(TS) Msg, JCS to CINCPAC, JCS 2715, 26 Dec 61, derived from JCS 2339/48, 19 Dec 61; (TS) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, DA IN 176601, 25 Nov 61; all in JMF 9060/3100 (25 Nov 61).

27 Dec 61 During the informal meeting of the three Princes at the Prime Minister's residence, Prince Boun Oum demanded that the eight-man "center group" in the coalition government be divided equally between the Vientiane and Xieng Khouang factions. He also demanded retention of Defense and Interior portfolios by the Vientiane faction until Souvanna "'proves'" his neutrality. There was no further need for a three-Prince meeting, said Boun Oum; he suggested that Souvanna should "get to work and form his cabinet."

Souphanouvong also demanded the Defense and Interior posts for his group, adding that if there were to be no negotiations he would return to Xieng Khouang. Souvanna's efforts to conciliate failed.

(S-NOFORN), DIA Intelligence Bulletin, 36-61, 28 Dec 61, p. 1.

27 Dec 61 The Secretary of State, in an "eyes only" message "confirm[ed]" Ambassador Brown's full authority to take action necessary to bring about an acceptable coalition government

government. Specifically, if Souvanna proved cooperative while Phoumi and Boun Oum did not, the Ambassador was empowered to go so far as to inform the present leaders of the RLG that the US would no longer support them, inform the King of this decision, and urge the King to appoint a new Prime Minister willing to negotiate in good faith. (See item 1-4 December 1961.)

(TS) Msg, State to Vientiane, NIACT 571, 27 Dec 61.

27-30 Dec
61

The meeting of the Princes began on 27 December and almost immediately ran into a "substantial snag," when both Boun Oum and Souphanouvong claimed for their factions control over the Ministries of Defense and Interior. Ambassador Brown reported that after this first session he visited Souvanna, who claimed to be psychologically depressed because of Boun Oum's apparent ultimatum concerning the two cabinet posts. The Ambassador stated that the US would support a government headed by Souvanna and that he himself would do his best to bring about a genuine discussion rather than a mere exchange of demands.

Although no formal meeting of the Princes was held on 28 December, the leaders of the three factions exchanged their views. Ambassador Brown reported that Souvanna had informed Phoumi that Defense and Interior would have to be controlled by neutralists, a position supported by Souphanouvong. Souvanna had stated that he intended to keep the Defense portfolio for himself and to give the Interior portfolio to Pheng Phongsavang who was of Souvanna's own faction.

On 29 December, Souvanna and Boun Oum discussed the composition of the cabinet but were unable to agree upon

upon the size and membership of the neutral central group. During the afternoon, however, Souphanouvong, claiming that foreign influence made it impossible for the Princes to reach agreement, left for the Plaine des Jarres.

The meeting came to a formal end on 30 December after Souvanna had visited the King and again talked with Phoumi. During the conversation with Phoumi, Phoumi proposed a 19-member cabinet -- 4 Communists, 4 conservatives, and a 10-man center group evenly divided between Xieng Khouang and Vientiane neutrals. Souvanna asked whether he, Souvanna, would control Defense and Interior under this scheme, but Phoumi said he needed time to consider the matter. Souvanna stated that if Phoumi's answer were affirmative, he and Souphanouvong would return to Vientiane to complete the negotiations.

(S) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState, 890, 27 Dec 61; 891, 27 Dec 61; 911, 30 Dec 61; (C) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState, 897, 28 Dec 61; 901, 29 Dec 61; 902, 29 Dec 61; (OUO) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 889, 27 Dec 61; (U) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 909, 30 Dec 61.

29 Dec 61 The Secretary of State, in a circular telegram, instructed the US Ambassadors at Canberra, London, Ottawa, and Paris to express to their respective host governments the hope that these nations would join the US in rendering economic aid to a Souvanna government. Although the US intended to continue its aid program at about the present levels, the coalition government would need additional financial and technical assistance. Participation in the aid program by Canada, the UK, Australia, and France would, in Secretary Rusk's opinion, demonstrate Western support of
Souvanna

Souvanna and increase the kingdom's chances of remaining truly neutral and independent.

(C) Dept of State CIRC 1187, 29 Dec 61.

29 Dec 61 Phoumi reported to CHMAAG that a coup, planned by adherents of Souvanna and Kong Le for the early hours of 29 December, had been thwarted. The purpose of the alleged coup had been to seize control of Vientiane while Souvanna and Souphanouvong were present for the meeting of the Princes. CHMAAG, however, informed CINCPAC that he "would not like to place too much weight on the accuracy of Phoumi report or extent of disaffection until we check further and sound out our sources."

(S/NOFORN) Msg, CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC, DA IN 188485, 29 Dec 61.

30 Dec 61 In a message to Ambassador Brown, the Department of State expressed its general acceptance of the 4-5-5-4 numerical ratio proposed by Phoumi (see item 27-30 December 1961). Souvanna's demand that his neutrals hold both the Defense and Interior portfolios also was considered acceptable. The Department, however, desired that Finance be in the hands of the Vientiane neutrals and that the influence that would be wielded by Pheng Phongsavan as Minister of Interior be offset by the choice of a strong and competent anti-Communist as his principal subordinate. Additional suggestions were made concerning other cabinet posts. Among the appointments found acceptable were the selection of Phoumi as Minister of Public Works and Vice Premier and the appointment of Souphanouvong as Minister of Planning.

Ambassador

(S) Msg, State to Vientiane, NIACT 578, 30 Dec 61.

30 Dec 61 Ambassador Brown informed the Secretary of State that, during a discussion of the composition of a coalition cabinet, Phoumi had said that "he had a final fall-back position of Souvanna as Prime Minister and Minister of Defense with Phoumi as Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Defense." It further appeared, according to the Ambassador, that Phoumi would prefer that Defense and Interior be divided between the RLG and the Pathet Lao rather than be entrusted to a neutral center group.

In commenting upon Ambassador Brown's report, Secretary Rusk agreed fully with the Ambassador's opposition to a division of Defense and Interior between the RLG and Pathet Lao, a situation "which would obviously create a chaotic and dangerous condition." The Secretary of State then reiterated the US position that the Pathet Lao should be restricted to minor cabinet posts.

(S) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState, 912, 30 Dec 61; State to Vientiane, NIACT 579, 30 Dec 61.

31 Dec 61 In response to a request by the Department of State for comments on certain measures designed both to bring pressure on the RLG to follow sound fiscal practices and to prevent Phoumi or others from removing from US jurisdiction RLG foreign exchange resources, the US Ambassador in Vientiane concluded that the present informal understanding, by which
the Chase

the Chase Manhattan Bank would inform the Department of State of any irregular RLG transactions, provided adequate protection to Lao financial reserves. Thus, the Ambassador recommended that no further action be taken at this time.

Among the possible courses of action listed by the Department of State and commented upon by Ambassador Brown were a cessation of cash grants, the halting of counterpart releases to support Lao currency, and the control of Lao external assets.

1. Cessation of cash grants. The Ambassador stated that this measure would have a "sledgehammer effect," particularly if all grants were stopped simultaneously. The US, however, might halt certain grants while continuing others, thus "twisting this type of sanction to almost any degree of effectiveness desired."

2. Halting counterpart releases. This sanction would, in the Ambassador's opinion, have almost the same effect as the cessation of cash grants. The RLG also would react in the same manner -- by increased borrowing from the Lao national bank. The resultant increase in the supply of local currency, if combined with the cessation of cash grants, would induce a run on the government's dollar reserves.

3. Controlling Lao external assets. In coming to his conclusion that the existing arrangement with the Chase Manhattan Bank was adequate to protect US interests, the Ambassador branded the US attachment of Lao funds in settlement of presently outstanding claims as "pointless and uselessly irritating to the RLG." Nor was the Ambassador eager to invoke any controls on RLG withdrawals which

could

could, in the event of Lao improvidence, lead to suspension of the free convertability of the kip. If there were certain knowledge that Phoumi or others were attempting the fraudulent withdrawal of external assets for purposes contrary to US interests, the Trading with the Enemy Act might be invoked. The Ambassador, however, doubted that the US could ever obtain such knowledge. Finally, Ambassador Brown believed that the US might require a certification of the purposes for which the RLG was withdrawing its external assets. Such a procedure was not believed necessary at present because the acting governor of the Lao national bank, whose signature was required for any such transfers of funds, was "relatively incorruptible." If a new governor were appointed, certification procedures might reasonably be invoked.

(S) Msgs, State to Vientiane, 564, 15 Dec 61; Vientiane to SecState, 914, 31 Dec 61.

31 Dec 61 Ambassador Brown told Phoumi he was "convinced" that unless the portfolios of Defense and Interior went to Souvanna's neutrals, the negotiations among the Princes would collapse. Phoumi, however, expressed doubt that his colleagues in the RLG would allow him to yield even one of these positions and declared that it was time for concessions by the other side. The US Ambassador replied that his government believed Phoumi had gained "substantial concessions" from Souvanna. The time had come, Ambassador Brown continued, "to sell these two positions for the highest possible price." Although Phoumi appeared sad, the Ambassador termed the conversation "entirely friendly."

Later

Later in the day, after being advised that his refusal to cede the two positions could mean the end of US aid (see items 27 and 29 December 1961), Phoumi told another embassy officer that he was too shocked by the US defeatist policy to carry on. He maintained that the RLG cabinet would not yield the two posts to Souvanna's faction. When reminded that Ambassador Brown had been instructed to take drastic action in the event the RLG proved intransigent, Phoumi replied that he saw no use in having American support if all it meant was surrender to the enemy. Phoumi then warned that he might leave the kingdom and that Boun Oum might seek its partition. In commenting upon this interview, Ambassador Brown observed that "It appears that the US position has now been fully comprehended by Phoumi. His reaction is understandable."

(S) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState, 915, 31 Dec 61; 916, 31 Dec 61.

31 Dec 61 At year's end, the FAR combat commands were occupied as follows: the Northern and Southern Commands were both engaged in "clearing operations," as they had been during recent months (see item 30 November 1961); the Central Command, while retaining its primarily defensive posture, had stepped up operations near Tha Thom, north of Paksane.

In the Northern Command, the FAR captured the town of Ban Na Mo, approximately 15 miles east of Nam Tha, on 7 December, and began on 12 December relocating units to improve its position in the Muong Sai area.

The Central Command conducted reconnaissance patrols in the Tha Thom area in early December. During the last week in December, air strikes were conducted against enemy positions in the area.

The Southern Command conducted routine patrols throughout the month. On 19 December, CHMAAG learned that the FAR planned a three-phase operation to clear the Mahaxay and Nhommarath areas (see item 4 November 1961), but a few days later the FAR postponed this action until the three Princes had concluded their upcoming negotiations.

(TS) JCS SEA Sitreps, 6-61 to 9-61, 7 to 28 Dec 61; (S) Msgs, CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC, DA IN 179380, 4 Dec 61; DA IN 179867, 5 Dec 61; DA IN 180457, 6 Dec 61; DA IN 181305, 7 Dec 61; DA IN 181876, 8 Dec 61; DA IN 183158, 12 Dec 61; DA IN 184167, 14 Dec 61; DA IN 185536, 19 Dec 61; DA IN 187009, 23 Dec 61; DA IN 187135, 24 Dec 61; DA IN 187777, 26 Dec 61; DA IN 188099, 27 Dec 61; DA IN 188694, 30 Dec 61; DA IN 188923, 31 Dec 61; DA IN 188922, 1 Jan 62.
