While the dismissal of Kong Le was handled without incident, the forced exit of the RLAF General Thao Ma was accompanied by armed rebellion. General Ma, the extremely effective leader of the RLAF, became increasingly annoyed and distraught at the restrictions placed on his conduct of the war by higher headquarters. His dissatisfaction reached such a degree that in October he threatened a coup which he claimed was directed not against the government, but against the corrupt military leaders. General Ma and his RLAF pilots turned their T-28s against targets in the Vientiane area, particularly the headquarters of Generals Kouprasith and Sananikone. RLAF support alone, however, proved insufficient against the forces opposing General Ma. Convinced that he was not gathering support from the ruling circles, he moved to Thailand with several supporters. RLAF fighting effectiveness, although temporarily impaired, did not suffer lasting consequences other than the loss of an effective and spirited leader.

After the abortive coup in February 1965 by Generals Siho and Nosavan,* the Phouma Government decided to reform the Lao National Police (LNP), since Siho had used it in the attempted coup. As originally constituted and commanded by General Siho, the LNP was a paramilitary force organized into battalions. Following the Vientiane government's decision on a thorough reorganization of the police force, the basically military elements of the LNP were transferred to the Army, and USAID assistance was requested in rebuilding the LNP along conventional civil police force lines. The new police force was composed of two elements corresponding to the FAR/FAN

*See page 35.
split of the Army. In a desire to maintain the facade of a Government of National Unity, Phouma authorized a Neutralist Police (NP) and a rightist/conservative LNP. Both the United States and the United Kingdom agreed to train the new force. Some NP/LNP members were trained by the British in Malaysia, while several were trained in the continental United States (CONUS). Some 220 were trained in Laos itself, primarily at the USAID-established and supported Police Academy, and a number of NP/LNP personnel underwent training in neighboring Thailand.

A Presidential Determination

The Foreign Assistance Act of 1966, enacted on 19 September of that year, amended Section 614(a) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. The amendment made the $50 million aid ceiling inapplicable to countries, such as Laos, "which were a victim of active Communist-supported aggression." Other amendments to the basic act allowed the President to disregard some of the previous conditions placed on extending aid to other nations. Using the new Act, President Johnson authorized the use of up to $35.3 million beyond the original $50 million limit of FY 67 funds.

MAP Aid in 1966/Status of the RLAF

Although modest in size and capabilities in 1966, the RLAF had already proven itself the most capable fighting force on the Government side. It flew daily tactical air (TACAIR) strikes using T-28 aircraft, and deployed men and materiel using C-47s. All aircraft and training were provided
under the MA Program, primarily from USAF resources. Training was conducted in CONUS, in-country, and at third-country sites such as Udorn, Thailand. RLAF support of FAR/FAN ground operations, strikes on the Ho Chi Minh Trail, and C-47 transport capability had earned it a justifiably high prestige within Laos, and with the American personnel associated with its growth and development. The RLAF, despite a variety of problems, was and continued to be the great success story of USAF participation in the Laotian MA Program. The March 1966 Journal of Military Assistance discussed the RLAF, noting:

The present relative effectiveness of the RLAF is the result of years of patient MAP assistance. Generally speaking, the Lao are passive and unaggressive by nature, and such a high proportion of them are illiterate and uneducated that it is difficult to obtain recruits with suitable background for intensive training. Moreover, training is likely to be quite lengthy before a reasonable skill level is attained. Nevertheless, a nucleus of skilled pilot and maintenance personnel has emerged. Savannakhet Air Base has schools for pilot and aircrew training and for training mechanics, but these schools cover basics only, and the better graduates are often sent out of the country for further training, either at Udorn, Thailand, or in the CONUS. While field maintenance is performed in-country, more extensive overhaul work must still be accomplished out-of-country.

The primary RLAF operating base is at Savannakhet, although Vientiane (Wattay) is also important. Other operational fields are located at Pakse, Saravane, and Luang Prabang. Facilities at these fields are being improved to make them more nearly adequate to support the air effort in Laos.

USAF personnel manning in the joint Army/Air Force DEPCH organization headquartered in Bangkok consisted of four officers and nine airmen in the Air Force Division, and three officers and 14 airmen at the Air Force
Liaison Office (AFLO), located at Udorn, RTAFB.* These two offices managed the USAF portion of the Laotian MA Program within the DEPCH framework. While the Air Force Division concerned itself primarily with funding and materiel delivery, AFLO oversaw (1) the RLAF training given (among others) by Detachment 6 of the 1st Air Commando Wing (ACW) and (2) the logistics and maintenance services provided under contract by Air America. Air America personnel and hired Thai nationals** also constituted the bulk of T-28 crews, with 12 of the former and 22 of the latter assigned on 31 December 1965. Of the 39 T-28s assigned to the Laotian MA Program, 36 remained under U.S. control at Udorn. These were used both in training and operational missions originating from that base. Det. 6 of the 1st ACW trained T-28 pilots, mechanics, and supply specialists at Udorn. A U.S. Marine Corps Mobile Training Team continued to provide H-34 training under the aegis of the ACW. The AFLO at Udorn monitored the CONUS training of RLAF officers and enlisted men in diverse schooling, e.g., Squadron Officer School, aircraft mechanic, weather observer, and supply training.

The proposed DEPCH Air Force FY 67 program totaled $54,621,891, with some $12 million of that amount programmed for aircraft deliveries and over $20 million allotted to air munitions. These two constituted the largest expenditures, but materiel, aviation POL, technical assistance,

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*In mid-1966 the covert introduction of USAF and USA personnel, primarily in maintenance and supply specialties, began under the code name "Project 404." Nominally under DEPCH, it was under the operational control of the DIA-sponsored ARMA and AIRA.

**The code name "Firefly" was applied to the Thai "volunteers" who flew T-28s in the service of the RLAF. It was also used to designate U.S. FACs, including some enlisted personnel, who flew out of Long Tieng (site 20 alternate).
and maintenance services were also provided. Training expenditures ran
a poor last with only $553,000 programmed.  

Maintenance of the Laotian C-47s proved to be something of a problem.
After undergoing Inspect and Repair As Necessary (IRAN) procedures at
the China Airlines contractor facility on Taiwan, unnecessary delays
were experienced in pick-up and delivery. CINCPAC levied a requirement
on CINCPACAF to use USAF ferry crews to alleviate the situation. Air
Vietnam performed T-28 IRAN in Saigon, again under contract from DEPCH.
Due to the crowded facilities and increased influx of aircraft into
Vietnam at that time, however, all T-28 aircraft arriving from North
American Aviation were now assembled in Bangkok under the terms of a
contractual arrangement with Thai Airways.  

Among the facility improvements programmed for the Udorn operation
were the extension and blacktopping of the taxiway, and the erection of
an aircraft maintenance building and a classroom building for use by
Det 6. An aircraft hangar and a supply warehouse were also programmed
for the immediate future. 

Status of the RLAF, and the MAP effort necessary to support it, was
reflected in the following 31 December 1966 Aircraft Inventory and Util-
ization Report.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Total Active</th>
<th>Total Hours Flown 2nd Quarter FY 67*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FY 67</td>
<td>Received</td>
<td>31 Dec</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-47</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-28C/D</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>6036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O-1-A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U6-A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U17-A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UH-34D</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>9306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U-4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Estimated for in-country operations since RLAF had no established
accounting system.

(For details of the total FY 66 MAP see p. 159.)
Note

For reasons of "National Security," this page remains classified.
Political and Military Events - 1967

The continuing escalation of military activity in South Vietnam had a direct impact on the tiny Kingdom of Laos. The North Vietnamese Army troops, who had come initially to advise indigenous PL forces, now controlled many mixed PL/NVA units or were organized into their own battalions. By mid-1967 the estimated 6,000 Viet Minh (now NVA) troops who had remained in Laos in violation of the 1962 Geneva Accords had swelled to some 33,000. Of this number, some 16,000 were assigned a direct combat role in Laos, and NVA units were often used to spearhead attacks or shore up threatened positions. Most authorities concluded that left to their own devices the Pathet Lao would in all probability have collapsed both politically and militarily. As it was, NVA advisors and troops formed the backbone of the PL and used it to further the larger designs of Hanoi. Clearly the prime goal of NVA troops was to insure continued Communist control of the South Laos panhandle, particularly the portion known as the Ho Chi Minh Trail. With increased NVA infiltration into South Vietnam via the trail, it had become a vital line of communication which Hanoi and its allies strove to control. Since U.S. interests in South Vietnam were involved, the U.S. responded with increased air sorties in Barrel Roll (northern Laos) and Steel Tiger (southern Laotian panhandle - Ho Chi Minh Trail), as well as a revitalized MA Program. Once again, Laotians of all political persuasions were affected by factors completely beyond their control -- in this instance the struggle between Hanoi and Washington.

With the ICC unable, and in some cases unwilling, to investigate
government charges of NVA infiltrations, Souvanna Phouma addressed the UN General Assembly, pleading for an end to outside interference in his nation. That august body sat and listened, but little more than sympathetic niceties emerged from the U.N. session.

MAP Becomes MASF

On 1 July 1967, the U.S. military services were assigned the responsibility for programming, budgeting, and funding for the support of the Laotian and Thai Armed Forces. Military department funding now included three Southeast Asian nations since South Vietnam had been transferred to the services as of 31 March 1966. The Military Assistance Program became Military Assistance Service Funded (MASF), and funding responsibility passed from the State Department-administered MA Program to the MASF Program administered by the various armed services. The joint Army-Air Force DEPCH organization in Bangkok had been handling Laotian materiel requirements since 1963 as the "MAAG-in-Exile," so little change was experienced in going from MAP to MASF. The stringent security classifications regarding the scope of military aid to Laos, however, made it easier to obscure actual expenditures within the annual budgets of the services concerned. Generally, the U.S. Army programmed and funded those items pertaining to the equipping and training of the FAR/FAN, while the USAF did the same for RLAF-related training and materiel. The USN generally paid the housekeeping bills for the DEPCH organization. All services contributed to the maintenance of the CAS (State Department/CIA)-trained and supported Special Guerrilla Units of Major General Vang Pao in MR II. Although the services had no control over these units, it was incumbent
upon them through DEPCH to furnish the supplies CAS requested through RO/USAID in Vientiane. The sensitivity of the MASF Program to Laos can be seen in an excerpt from a classified document of that period.  

Basically, the existence of a U.S. military assistance program for Laos is unclassified, but the scope, quantity and specific nature of this assistance must be classified at least Confidential. In fact, the existence of military assistance for Laos is not to be publicized.

The fact that military assistance for Laos is the mission of DEPCHJUSMAGTHAILAND is classified Secret and the organization handling military assistance is likewise classified Secret. . . .

Association of DEPCHJUSMAGTHAI Thailand with Laos is classified Confidential, e.g., message traffic to DEPCHJUSMAGTHAI referring in any manner to Laos. . . . Furthermore, the fact that the U.S. Government and the Royal Thai Government are formally involved in the military training of Lao students in Thailand is classified Confidential. Third country participation in military assistance activities within Laos is also classified Secret-NOFORN, and limited distribution procedures must apply.

MASF For the RLAF - 1967

Two well-planned and well-executed Pathet Lao attacks on the airfield at Luang Prabang almost caused the destruction of the RLAF. The first, a PL mortar and small arms ground attack on 2 February 1967 resulted in the destruction of six parked T-28s and two UH-34s. The Air Operations Center was also badly damaged during the attack, but it and the runway were rapidly repaired through the use of undepleted FY 65 construction funds.  

*Initially, replacements for the aircraft lost in February came from planes normally available for the Thai "Firefly" pilots.
C-47s, and one U-17 had been approved and funded for the RLAF under the USAF portion of the fiscal year 1967 MA Program. Delivery of the T-28s in the D-5 configuration from commercial sources helped to sustain the RLAF after the February disaster.\footnote{96/} Just as RLAF was beginning to recover and sortie rates were beginning to climb following the loss, an enemy sapper team penetrated the perimeter defenses of Luang Prabang airfield on 16 July 1967. The team successfully placed satchel charges on aircraft readied for the following day's mission. Nine more T-28s and one UH-34 were destroyed.\footnote{97/}

In addition to these catastrophes, the RLAF experienced other difficulties. For example, personnel management posed a continuing problem. In reference to recruiting skilled personnel for the RLAF, the Senior Air Force official at DEPCH stated that:\footnote{98/}

A major point of consideration is the availability of candidates for future training. For example, a prerequisite for officer training is a degree from a Lycee. The Lycees in Laos produce a total of 240 graduates annually. These graduates provide skilled personnel resources to the entire country. The RLAF must compete for its share.

The scarcity of trained enlisted and officer manpower in the RLAF led to several abuses. Most widespread among these was the retraining of the same individual into many specialties without being used in any of them, merely because that individual spoke English well enough to pass the in-country, CONUS, or third-country training.

Maintenance, too, continued to be a major problem. This was directly related to the logistics and personnel difficulties experienced by the
RLAF. The Chief of the Air Force Division within DEPCH reported that:

The logistics difficulties being experienced in Laos are a direct result of poor organization and control on the part of the RLAF, and the slow response inherent in the MAP logistics system. The logistics system in Laos has been forced to support both the expanding RLAF aircraft and support equipment fleets, as well as support the war effort. Command assistance and lateral support requests are frequently being used to overcome the long lead time required for items programmed through the MAP system. It has been impossible, in many instances, to foresee the changes in tactics and support requirements that in turn necessitate changes/additions to the Laos MASF program. The constant changes in the program and the resulting press to get the items as soon as possible have undoubtedly given other commands supporting the Laos program a distorted picture of the support being provided to Laos.

The RLAF currently operates a combined unit supply/base supply depot at Savannakhet. This facility presently supports all of the supply needs of the RLAF, and is the single source of Air Force supplies in Laos. All requirements generated by RLAF units at Pakse, Vientiane and Luang Prabang must be passed to Savannakhet, usually by personal contact or via the sporadic radio and telephone systems. Efforts are being made to have the RLAF open small forward supply points at Vientiane and Luang Prabang, so that at least a small number of aircraft "bolt-on" spare parts can be made available. The RLAF is also being provided lateral support from other MAP and USAF supply accounts at Udorn, Thailand, as RLAF aircraft and equipment are being used by USAF personnel operating covertly in Laos.*

*The reference here is to WATERPUMP instructors at Udorn flying combat sorties on weekends with their Lao T-28 student pilots. See CHECO Report, The Royal Lao Air Force 1954-1970, p. 80. The reference may also allude to the fact that USAF Forward Air Controllers (FACs) were flying in Laos. See CHECO Report, USAF Support of Airstrikes in Support of Indigenous Lao Ground Forces. This report covers the USAF "Butterfly" and "Raven" FAC program.
Maintenance was a continuing problem with aircraft assigned to Laos. The Air America-operated UH-34 helicopters experienced rotor blade problems due to their high use rate in support of the Laotian Government. The O-1s and U-17s used for introductory pilot training and by FACs within Laos continued to have persistent NORS problems since they only received supply support through RLAF channels. In addition to the normal maintenance problems, an incident occurred in 1967 where:

. . . a T-28 was recently declared NORS G by RLAF for bad spirits. Lao pilots refused to fly the aircraft on combat missions, although clearance was obtained for a one-time flight to Udorn. Here Buddhist monks were able to exorcise the bad spirits. The cost was $7.62 covering the cost of candles and herbs for the ceremony and Salem cigarettes, tooth paste and soap for the monks. This was considered a small price to pay for continued utilization of a $181,000 aircraft.

There was, however, a bright spot in the maintenance picture: the NORS rate on the T-28s overhauled at Udorn continued to be zero.

To enhance RLAF capabilities, a requirement was established to equip the T-28 aircraft with tactical aids for navigation (TACAN) and 21 of the T-28s had been fitted with the AN/ARN-21 TACAN by January of 1968. ARC 44 and ARC 45 radios were programmed to equip the O-1 FAC aircraft, which were used to control both RLAF and USAF strikes in Laos.

Personnel changes in 1967 included improvements in organization and training. In an effort to achieve better utilization of personnel, the RLAF underwent a reorganization with American help.* As an immediate

*Although U.S. advisory personnel (Project 404) had been introduced to Laos the previous year, their number continued to be limited by the American Ambassador who wished them to maintain a low profile in view of certain stipulations of the 1962 Accords.
result, 1500 personnel were authorized for the RLAF, with some 1250 being actually assigned by July 1967. Third-country training at Udorn continued. USAF instructors trained T-28 pilots, mechanics, and supply personnel, while USA instructors conducted the UH-34 training. The graduates in FY 67 were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T-28 Pilots</th>
<th>T-28 Mechanics</th>
<th>UH-34 Pilots</th>
<th>UH-34 Mechanics</th>
<th>Supply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Some RLAF personnel continued to be trained in the CONUS, but accurate figures on total numbers were unavailable. It was determined that comparable training could be given at Udorn at a greatly reduced cost.)

The RLAF initially had no capability for in-country training, so such a training capability was being developed. For example, an English language school was begun in 1965 at Savannakhet. Pre-flight training in 0-1s to prepare students for T-28 pilot training at Udorn was also conducted at Savannakhet in conjunction with this language school. A C-47 ground school prepared qualified pilots for C-47 transition, and was soon established as a qualified transition school. Although operated by the RLAF, students were evaluated by a USAF Base Flight facility in Thailand.

THAI-AM, the successor to Thai Airways, was awarded the IRAN and phase inspection contracts for the MASF-supported Laotian C-47s, and action was initiated through CINCPAC to transfer eight 0-1F aircraft from USAF assets to the Laos MASF program. These aircraft replaced the last eight aircraft programmed from FY 68-70. The aircraft flew covert FAC
missions in Laos, and transferral to MASF enabled DEPCH to support and maintain them through other than USAF channels. 106/

The status of the RLAF, and the MASF effort needed to support it were reflected in the following 31 December 1967 Aircraft Inventory and Utilization Report: 107/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Total Quantity Programmed MAP/MA SF</th>
<th>Quantity Received To 31 Dec</th>
<th>Total Active* 31 Dec</th>
<th>Total Hours Flown 2nd Quarter FY 68**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C-47</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2,166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-28B/D/C</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>5,484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O-1A/E</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U-6A</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U-17A</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UH-34D***</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>10,015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U-4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This is the number of attrited aircraft deducted from total quantity received.

**Estimated for in-country operations since RLAF had no established accounting system.

***Twenty five of these helicopters were operated by Air America out of Udorn and were under DOD control. Hours flown - 8726. Some 27 of the RLAF T-28s were also based at Udorn.

In addition to aircraft, construction was a significant item in the aid package. Among the construction funds programmed were some $492,000 to make Pakse into a Forward Operating Base. In Vientiane, the construction of a two-story ARMA/AIRA building was contemplated for the expanded ARMA/AIRA functions and personnel in Project 404. Improvements forecast for FY 68 at Savannakhet totaled $1,016,600. 108/

(For details of the FY 67 MAP see p. 161.)
Political and Military Events - 1968

The first months of 1968 saw an intensification of activity throughout Laos. As a direct result of the Tet offensive in South Vietnam (February 1968), USAF and RLAF air strikes increased in the Ho Chi Minh Trail area of southern Laos. The annual communist dry-season offensive in Laos also became the most intensive in several years, and PL/NVA troops seized several strategic areas from the Royal Laotian Government. Government losses in the northeast were particularly serious, but pressure continued to be applied to FAR/FAN positions in other areas. Equipment losses, particularly of 105mm howitzers, far exceeded programmed replacements, but in-theater and CONUS emergency requisitions under MASF prevented the situation from deteriorating completely.

At the end of 1968 the communist dry-season campaign was in full swing in MR II, where PL/NVA units attempted to decimate Vang Pao's guerrilla units, and in the Bolovens Plateau area of southern Laos, where NVA troops attacked FAR positions around Thateng. NVA infiltration into Laos increased and the Laotian panhandle continued to be a major sanctuary and supply route for NVA forces in South Vietnam. 109/

Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma, who was also Defense Minister, issued decrees instituting an ambitious reorganization of the Lao Defense Forces. One of the streamlining measures called for a standard 666 man Table of Equipment infantry battalion, regardless of whether it was a FAR, FAN, or Battalion Voluntaire. This greatly facilitated MASF support, particularly to the Volunteer Battalions, whose 40 units and 16,000 men augmented the FAR in maintaining internal order and in counterinsurgency operations.
These units were to be equipped under MASF with M18A1 57mm recoilless rifles, M-79 grenade launchers, water trailers, and a variety of communications equipment.\textsuperscript{110/}

Another consolidation involved the abolition of the Tactical Headquarters for North and South Laos and the several Group Mobile Headquarters. (Each of these Group Mobile Headquarters had several subordinate battalions which, however, rarely functioned as units.) As a result of the reorganization, the military commanders of the five MRs began to exercise the necessary coordination of troops and report directly to Army headquarters in Vientiane.

At the Defense Ministry level, Phouma's control was strengthened by the integration of the FAR General Staff into the Ministry structure. While there had been much discussion about integrating the FAN into the FAR, the FAN survived again; Laos remained the only country in the world whose government found it necessary to maintain two general staffs and two separate armies (FAR and FAN). Apparently, Phouma considered retention of the FAN politically justifiable, since he was leader of the Neutralist faction. FAN units in MR IV were transferred to FAR control, however, and FAN officers were finally granted royal commissions. Both FAR and FAN battalions were supported under FY 1969 MASF, and were to be shipped similarly to the Battalion Voluntaire mentioned above.

The unexpended balances of FY 67 and prior MA Programs were transferred to the military services for implementation under the new MASF framework.\textsuperscript{111/}
In 1968 key MASF actions for the RLAF concerned helicopters and T-28s. Seven additional UH-34 helicopters had been programmed under FY 68 Air Force MASF, with two of these to be bought from the ineffective ICC and the rest to become available from USN excess. In addition, the realignment of Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) helicopter programs from the UH-34 to the UH-1H resulted in some 12 UH-34s becoming available for Laos to meet future attrition requirements. These were stored in the CONUS until required.

Priority airlift delivered eight T-28D aircraft in March and four T-28D aircraft in April 1968. These were urgently required as replacements and to meet increased RLAF operational requirements. Altogether, 67 T-28Ds were programmed under the new Air Force MASF Program; these were in addition to the 77 which had been funded and delivered under MAP.

Logistics and supply problems continued to plague the RLAF, although American advisors had begun to tackle the problem. A small supply point had been opened at Wattay Airport, but this did little to augment the single RLAF supply point at Savannakhet since it primarily stocked spare generator parts for the AIRA-operated AOC. The Chief of the Air Force Division at DEPCH stated:

The RLAF continues to rely heavily on lateral support of spare parts from the DEPCHJUSMAGTHAI T-28 and Air America MAP Supply Accounts (DLAR and DLAP) at Udorn. This support continues to be given as USAF personnel are covertly operating RLAF Laos MAP aircraft.
The RLAF logistics system lacks overall coordination, planning and programming. Inputs of aircraft for maintenance at Savannakhet and Udorn (Air America) are often not coordinated and arrive at the maintenance facilities without prior notification. The RLAF Chief of Supply at Savannakhet is hampered in much the same way by a complete lack of requirement data from other RLAF units, including the other sections of the Air Materiel Command to which he belongs. The USAF Warehouse Specialist assigned covertly to the Savannakhet Base Supply is now being used by the AIRA as a "Circuit Rider" for the AIRA's supply problems and, in this capacity, has little time to assist the RLAF.

The lack of sufficient in-country U.S. advisors slowed the planning which was intended to enable subsidiary supply points at Pakse, Wattay, and Luang Prabang (as well as the main supply point at Savannakhet) to provide frequently-used T-28 spares. These supply points were to be stocked initially from DEPCH and Air America Supply Accounts, with eventual follow-on support from Savannakhet. In the interim, the RLAF continued its heavy reliance on the DLAR and DLAP accounts.

In an attempt to improve supply management RO/USAID, the in-country logistics agency, finally received RLAF approval to screen RLAF stocks and determine excesses to RLAF requirements. These excesses were to be returned to USAF stocks. By early 1969 some $400,000 worth of spare T-28 parts had been returned to T-28 supply at Udorn. This demonstrated once again that MASF aid could be effectively managed in-country by RO/USAID when that organization took vigorous action. Unfortunately, this occurred all too infrequently. DEPCH, as the CINCPAC single-manager for MASF Programs to Laos, generally sat on the sidelines and did not control 58
the materiel once it had reached Laos. The American Ambassador to Laos effectively controlled the American portion of the war in Laos, and he had declined to grant DEPCH personnel the in-country clearance necessary to effectively manage end-use of MASF-provided materiel. When convenient for the in-country organizations, however, DEPCH personnel could be quickly cleared. In late 1968, for example, the aircraft maintenance officer assigned to the DEPCH AFLO at Udorn was placed on covert TDY to Vientiane. He was requested by the American Embassy to assist RO/USAID and AIRA during the absence of the RO's aviation representative. The Chief of the Air Force Division within DEPCH admitted that the move, while placing a strain on the DEPCH AFLO, had proven beneficial to the overall DEPCH mission. \[117\]

At Udorn the T-28 Supply went NORS-free for six days on 3 August 1968, the first time this had occurred in three years. The excellent performance of the account was credited to the very able Weapons System Liaison Officer (WSLO) assigned to the account. UH-34 NORS problems decreased markedly after the arrival of the UH-34 Weapons System Support Liaison Officer (WSSLO) in June, and the RLAF (DLAK account) NORS improved slightly under the increased surveillance of RO/USAID. \[118\] However, it was noted that: "RLAF, at present, is incapable of manning (and maintaining) all equipment assigned to MAP Laos. DOD control is maintained over equipment which cannot be operated by RLAF. Contractor-supplied maintenance and crews supplement RLAF capability to meet mission requirements." \[119\]

While T-28 and UH-34 training and maintenance continued to be performed at Udorn, the C-47 maintenance contract had gone to the newly-named
Thai-Am in Bangkok. What had begun as a political sop to the sensitive Thais turned into a viable relationship. The Chief of the Air Force Division of DEPCH (DCH-AF) commented:

The FY 69 C-47 contract with Thai-Am, which allows more flexibility, is proving very effective. Aircraft are leaving the facility in better condition than heretofore. RLAF maintenance capability does not appear to improve to any degree. Without the assistance of contract maintenance, RLAF aircraft would certainly deteriorate at a rapid rate. With the introduction of the requested C-47 Military Training Team, some improvement should be realized.

During the fall DCH-AF sought information on new uses for the C-47s. On 10 September 1968 he initiated action to obtain information pertaining to the installation of a psychological warfare capability on MAP Laos aircraft. DCH-AF was also interested in knowing whether studies had ever been made on C-47 multi-mission compatibility, specifically in respect to a .50 caliber side-firing, flare-drop, and psychological warfare capability. DCH-AF indicated his continuing desire to obtain programming and funding approval for a C-47 psychological warfare capability for MAP Laos.

To support new C-47 programs, new training programs had to be established. Although the RLAF C-47 Ground and Transition School set up at Savannakhet the previous year continued to provide basic indoctrination (and had extended its curriculum to include U-6 and U-17 transition training as well as UH-34 co-pilot to pilot upgrade training), it was not equipped to offer the necessary advanced C-47 training required for the psywar capability. To provide the necessary upgrade training for Laotian
C-47 pilots and maintenance personnel, the American Embassy (AmEmb) Vientiane requested the AmEmb Bangkok to obtain approval from the Royal Thai Government for the introduction of a MAP Laos C-47 Military Training Team into Thailand. On 3 December 1968 COMUSMACTTHAI indicated that the Thai Supreme Command had approved the introduction of the team, and had proposed Phitsanulok Airfield as a site. DEPCH had coordinated this program with all concerned and interested parties, and submitted the program for formal CSAF approval. Programming action had already been taken to modify four RLAF C-47s for the side-firing and flare-drop capability in order that these modified C-47s (actually AC-47s) be equipped to provide the necessary support for base and area defense. One gunship would be stationed at each of the major RLAF bases - Vientiane, Luang Prabang, Pakse, and Savannakhet. According to DCH-AF, gunship support was necessary to prevent the recurrence of incidents such as the two successful ground attacks on Luang Prabang in 1967. 122/

Late in 1968 the AmEmb Vientiane established an urgent requirement for five RT-28D aircraft configured for photographic reconnaissance to support the MAP Laos requirements. Unfortunately, the last of the 14 RT-28Ds transferred to MAP Laos from the VNAF in 1964 had crashed in May, leaving only one additional RT-28D in the MAP Laos inventory. This aircraft was put into the proper configuration, and became operational in November 1968. Conversion of more aircraft had to await parts availability. A DEPCH request to CINCPAC for five RT-28D aircraft for MAP Laos was rejected since this modification was not available to MAP.
In conjunction with the RT-28D program, AMEMB Vientiane also requested portable aerial film processing and printing equipment suitable for field use. Since it was for RLAF use, it had to be simple to use and to maintain. DEPCH incorporated this request into the FY 70 programming action. 123/

AmEmb Vientiane expressed its opinion on other matters also. DEPCH had arranged for the Sacramento Air Materiel Area to transfer ten dual T-28 egress systems from a USAF contract to MAP Laos. Additionally, 23 single egress kits became available under a MAP follow-on contract. Delivery for both systems was to run from February through April 1969. This modification would have resulted in three T-28 configurations: those with front, rear, and dual seat egress systems. AmEmb Vientiane found this arrangement unacceptable since it would impair T-28 flexibility and have an adverse impact on RLAF crew morale. AmEmb Vientiane desired dual egress systems in all RLAF T-28 aircraft, and DEPCH attempted to obtain JCS approval to install the dual system on all MAP Laos T-28D aircraft. 124/

Increasing combat mission requirements for FACs required attention to the procurement of additional O-1s. The delivery of eight O-1F aircraft from PACAF assets at no cost to MAP/MASF began early in 1968, and seven of these aircraft had been received by October of that year. These were in lieu of the O-1As which had been programmed for FY 68-70 but were no longer available. Unfortunately, by early 1969 the O-1 attrition rate had increased due to the rise of FAC combat mission requirements. Three O-1F aircraft were lost in November 1968, incurring one fatality. Nonetheless, DCH-AF noted: "FAC aircraft are being operated by USAF pilots and results are proving effective..." DEPCH undertook to procure
additional aircraft and contractual maintenance support.\textsuperscript{125/}

Acquisition of other aircraft for MAP Laos included seven T-28D aircraft transferred from the 56th Special Operations Wing (SOW) (the parent unit of the erstwhile Det. 6, 1 ACW, which had in the course of time been redesignated Det. 1, 56 ACW, and, finally, Det. 1, 56 SOW). Detachment 1, 56 SOW, the USAF training facility at Udorn, had accepted three aircraft, but these were incomplete and required extensive reconditioning by Air America and re-equipping from MAP Laos funds. DEPCH advised the 56 SOW that the remaining aircraft were to come equipped as specified under USAF directives.\textsuperscript{126/}

Much of the architecture and engineering (A&E) programmed in previous years began to take form as funding was approved and became available. Among the facility improvements completed or in progress in 1968 were the following:\textsuperscript{127/}

Vientiane - Wattay Airfield. . . . Construction of a 200 bed military hospital was almost complete, and construction of the additional ARMA/AIRA building to support Project 404 personnel was awaiting land acquisition.

Luang Prabang. . . . Among improvements scheduled were a new T-28 parking apron and a revetted ammunition storage area.

Savannakhet. . . . Facility improvements scheduled included a parking apron with taxiways for C-47 aircraft, a C-47 maintenance hangar, and revetted ammunition storage areas.
Pakse. Improvements designed to develop Pakse into a FOB included a parking apron and connected taxiways, an AOC, revetted ammunition storage areas, and a small maintenance facility.

Runway lights, approved under the FY 67 Program, were received and preassembled at Savannakhet. Lights were installed at Luang Prabang, Savannakhet and Pakse to allow for sustained operations from these locations. Wattay/Vientiane was already equipped with lights.

Signs of progress became evident in training, also. The RLAF C-47 Transition and Technical Training Schools at Savannakhet aided in providing basic technical training, and in screening candidates for further training in the U.S. and in third countries. The English Language School at Savannakhet tried valiantly to prepare students for technical training in that language, but was often frustrated by the low quality of Lao students assigned to it and the RLAF's indiscriminate use of assigned students in the performance of other tasks. DCH-AF noted that "little, if any improvement has been shown in the quality of students received at Det. 1, 56 ACW Udorn. In-country training has improved... but will not be self-sufficient in the foreseeable future."[128]

Detachment 1, 56 ACW (later SOW) continued its outstanding job of providing T-28 pilot and support training. A U.S. Army UH-34 helicopter program performed the same training service at Udorn for that aircraft. By mid-1968 the overall pilot strength of the RLAF numbered 104, broken down by aircraft as follows: C-47 (35, including co-pilots); UH-34 (23,
including co-pilots); T-28 (40); and other (6). 129/ The Journal of Military Assistance, in commenting on the RLAF training program, stated that: 130/

there have been certain signs of progress. In large part this can be attributed to the guidance and training by the U.S. advisors, and the younger (RLAF) officers show promise for future leadership -- the lack of which has been a major deficiency in the RLAF. In summary, although there is considerable room for improvement, "bright spots" are, by the same token, becoming noticeable, and the RLAF is due considerable credit in light of the fact it is operating under actual combat conditions.

* * * * * * *

In view of the vital role played by T-28s in Laotian combat operations, it is noteworthy that Laotian graduates of the six-month, 200 flying hour T-28 course are fully qualified, combat ready T-28 pilots; moreover, their counterpart graduates of the five-month, 150 flying hour UH-34 course are considered to be equally proficient. Much of this progress is attributed to the continuing advice and efforts of the U.S. advisors.

CONUS training for selected RLAF officers and enlisted personnel also continued. Among the officer specialties with students in training were: Undergraduate T-28 Pilot, Aircraft Maintenance Officer, Communications Officer, Aircraft Traffic Control Officer, Pilot/Instructor T-28, Instrument Pilot/C-47, and Personnel Officer. Enlisted training in CONUS included: Munitions Specialist, Aircraft Propeller Repairman, Aircraft Pneumatic Repairman, Aircraft Mechanic, Airframe Repairman, Weather Observer, and Instrument Repairman. 131/

The reorganization of the RLAF continued, and RLAF personnel authorization rose to 1700, with 1554 assigned in July 1968. However, resources

65
of personnel with the necessary aptitude and educational levels to absorb the required RLAF technical training remained limited.\textsuperscript{132/}

The status of the RLAF, and the MAP/MASF effort needed to support it, was reflected in the 31 December 1968 Aircraft Inventory and Utilization Report:\textsuperscript{133/}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Total Quantity Programmed MAP/MASF</th>
<th>Quantity Received To 31 Dec</th>
<th>Quantity Active 31 Dec*</th>
<th>Total Active Flown 2nd Qtr FY 69**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C-47A/D</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1,639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-28B/C/D</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>8,452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O-1A/E/F***</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3,283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U-6A</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U-16A/B</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UH-34D****</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>10,016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U-4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Attrited aircraft deducted from total quantity received.

**Estimated for in-country operations since RLAF had no established accounting system.

***O-1 aircraft flown by USAF FACs for AIRA accounted for 2146 hours. O-1 aircraft flown by RLAF accounted for 1137 hours.

****Twenty-two UH-34Ds were DOD controlled and operated by Air America. Hours flown: 7754. Twelve UH-34Ds were controlled and operated by the RLAF. Hours flown: 2262.

(For details of the FY 68 MAP see p. 164.)

Political and Military Events - 1969

PL/NVA pressure intensified during the latter stages of the 1968/69 dry season. By the early summer of 1969, PL/NVA units had routed the FAN from Muong Soui, the last strategic position held by the neutralist forces west of the Plaine des Jarres. These enemy successes were achieved in the Plaine des Jarres area in the north in spite of massive B-52 strikes beginning in February, and in the vicinity of Muong Phine
in the south. Fortunately, FAR and Vang Pao's guerrilla forces made significant inroads into Pathet Lao-held areas by late summer of 1969. NVN strength in Laos was estimated at some 48,000 troops in 1969. This figure was exclusive of the 10,000 or so NVA troops which traversed the Ho Chi Minh Trail monthly, and the 50,000 allied PL forces. This increased North Vietnamese aggressiveness in Laos also posed problems for neighboring states, with Thailand being particularly concerned. Consequently, the build-up of American forces in Thailand to prosecute the wars in South Vietnam, North Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia mushroomed to larger proportions.

The NVA role in Laos had changed significantly from 1964, when a few NVA units acted as advisors to Pathet Lao troops, to 1968, when NVA units formed the backbone of most offensive operations while the PL units constituted the support element. There remained little doubt that PL forces were unable to launch any major offensives without direct support from Hanoi and its allies. On the other hand, the situation for FAR/FAN forces was similar for they were unable to take any major initiatives without U.S. MAP/MASF aid.

Laos remained unique in that it had three legally constituted armies under the terms of the 1962 Accords: the Pathet Lao, FAR, and FAN. The FAR Commander in Chief and his General Staff exercised loose command and control over the five MRs, each of which had its own General Staff and functioned as a tactical headquarters controlling all military assets within its territory. The RLAF and the small River Flotilla were organizationally elements of the FAR.
The FAN was theoretically responsible to the FAR General Staff; however, it actually responded directly to Prime Minister Phouma in his position as the leader of the Neutralist faction of the "Tripartite Government." The FAN had a relatively minor strength of some 7,000 in comparison to the FAR ground force of 54,000. The FAN had undergone several reorganizations and was facing another reorganization in 1969. However, the de facto integration of the FAN into the FAR (long urged by U.S. Army advisors) seemed to be progressing satisfactorily.

Vang Pao's CAS-supported Meo guerrilla forces, which were friendly to the Vientiane Government, continued to operate, as did two dissident neutralist forces which were not directly responsive to Souvanna Phouma.* Indeed, both of these forces—the Khammouane Forces and the Deuane Dissident Neutralists—had sided with the PL when hostilities erupted on the PDJ in 1963. The combined strength of these dissident forces was 3,900. The Khammouane Forces numbered some 1325 troops and were located in Phong Saly Province, and the Deuane Dissident Neutralists numbered about 2575, and were located on the PDJ. While the Khammouane Forces were comprised of some seven infantry battalions, the Deuane Dissident Neutralists constituted the greater threat with seven infantry battalions, one antiaircraft artillery (AAA) battalion, one field artillery battalion, one armored battalion, and one engineer battalion.136/

*Mention should also be made here of the regular Thai Army units, which were employed at Long Tieng (the MR II headquarters of Vang Pao) in 1969. When their presence became politically sensitive in regard to the 1962 Accord provisions, the regular Thai Army units were replaced by Thai Army "volunteers" supported by the United States.
Enemy and dissident neutralist forces had been using armored units successfully for some time, and the lack of an equally capable FAR force had demoralized the Royal Laotian Army (RLA). As a result, the U.S. Army contingent in DEPCH programmed thirty-seven armored cars (twelve XM 706 and twenty-five XM 706E2) at an estimated cost of $1.41 million for FY 1970 MASF aid. These armored cars had to come from new production since no armored car assets were then under U.S. Army control.137/

Another much-needed boost in FAR morale came about when a small shipment of M-16 rifles arrived in late 1968 to replace the M-2 carbines, M-1 rifles, and Browning Automatic Rifles (BAR) previously furnished to friendly forces. This weapon conversion pressed ahead in 1969 when an additional 4000 M-16s arrived and were distributed. An additional 16,000 of these weapons were programmed for future delivery under FY 70 MAP/MASF. Training with the new weapon was given initially by USA advisors, and then continued by the now-qualified FAR cadre using the M-16 training booklet which had been translated into Lao. Anticipated large-scale problems in the care and cleaning of the weapon failed to materialize, with the credit being due largely to U.S. Army attache supervision.138/

On the diplomatic front, Phouma continued to seek world-wide support for his charges of North Vietnamese aggression. Occasionally, he would be aided in this by a number of "majority reports" (India and Canada vs Poland) of the ICC which cited North Vietnam for violation of the 1962 Accords. The ICC had become increasingly ineffective and each of the three ICC members had gradually reduced its staff. Indeed, Canada had
announced plans to withdraw almost all of its personnel from Laos. The U.S., although aware of the ICC's ineffectiveness, favored its continued existence on the premise that a future peace settlement in Laos might call for a revitalized ICC. The U.S. attempted to persuade Canada to keep a larger contingent present. Curiously enough, the ICC in Laos was one of the international organizations that was eligible for MAP aid, and U.S. aid in the form of helicopters and associated maintenance services was provided.139/ 

MASF For the RLAF - 1969

For the RLAF, the most significant event of 1969 was its completed reorganization into four Composite Squadrons, each augmented by a U.S. Air Operations Center. The 101st Composite Squadron, based at Luang Prabang, was used primarily to support operations in MR I, while the 102nd Composite Squadron from Wattay (Vientiane) supported operations in both MR V and MR II. The 103rd Composite Squadron, based at Savannakhet, supported operations in MR III; and the 104th Composite Squadron at Pakse supported operations in MR IV. In addition, the RLAF was now controlled from a Combined Operations Center (COC) located in Vientiane.

The new arrangement permitted rapid response to both tactical/logistical requirements and the control/use of associated airlift. The U.S. In-Country Team provided the major central control function for both operations and logistics. Members of this team advised the RLAF Commander and assisted him in single management of operations and logistics. Other USAF personnel augmented the RLAF at the squadron level and advised on operations functions. Each RLAF Air Base Commander was responsible for
all tactical requirements levied on his unit by the COC in Vientiane. This responsibility included coordination with the Army (FAR/FAN) MR Commanders to insure tactical operational support, the assurance of adequate operational capability of crews and aircraft assigned, maintenance support for flight line and organizational functions, and stockage of POL and ordnance sufficient for support of operations. 140/

Another major reorganization project was still in progress, involving the RLAF supply structure. In conjunction with the Composite Squadron concept, the RLAF supply depot at Savannakhet was transferred to Wattay AB at Vientiane and reduced in scope to in-country stockage of C-47 and U-4 parts. All other aircraft (T-28, O-1, U-17, UH-34, and U-6) would now be supported from the supply accounts maintained at Udorn RTAFB, Thailand, and by T-28 Supply (DLAR) and Air America (DLAP) which had, for all practical purposes, provided this support all along. The main RLAF in-country operating locations (OLs) would each have a contingent of RLAF supply personnel and would maintain bench stocks of high consumption items to support daily operations. It was hoped that the reorganization and the move of the supply center to Vientiane would encourage more direct supervision by the RLAF staff and result in more emphasis on a reliable in-country RLAF supply self-sufficiency. All serviceable in-country excesses were returned to stock at Udorn. 141/

In commenting upon these various facets of RLAF reorganization, many of which were U.S. inspired, the Journal of Military Assistance said: 142/

Considering the RLAF's limitations in manpower and equipment, it has developed into an effective force, able to fly nearly 2,000 day-time T-28 sorties a month in support of tactical operations.
However, this rate can only be maintained via much U.S. logistic support. Moreover, not only aircraft maintenance, but also training will continue to be carried on in other countries for the foreseeable future. Laos itself lacks the facilities, and those it does have are too vulnerable to attack, but the main drawback is the continuing shortage of trained and trainable personnel. Nonetheless, the support capabilities of the RLAF provide the FAR with one vital advantage over Pathet Lao/North Vietnamese forces.

Tactical T-28 combat sorties increased during 1969 to over 2000 per month. DCH-AF attributed this to several factors, among them the more effective organization of RLAF and FAR resources and the increased operational requirements in Laos resulting from the bombing halt over North Vietnam. On the latter point, he went on to explain that the "cessation of bombing of North Vietnam has resulted in increased use of logistic avenues within Laos." The increase of Pathet Lao and NVA activity in Laos following the bombing halt caused DCH-AF to add:

Due to the dual role of the MASF Laos program (developing RLAF capability and supporting U.S. national objectives without overt violation of the Geneva Accords), the present aircraft requirements may be considered temporary for the period in which combat operations continue and U.S. national objectives require such support.

Accordingly, DEPCH urged a Unit Equipment (UE) change to the previously programmed RLAF support. Specifically, DEPCH requested an increase of the T/RT-28B/C/D from 53 to 77, an increase of the UH-34 from 33 to 38, and a decrease of the 32 O-1/U-6/U-17 aircraft and their replacement by 31 U-17/T-41 aircraft. DCH-AF added:

...The UE change from O-1 FAC/Training aircraft was made because CSAF has advised that there are not enough O-1 aircraft in the USAF.
inventory or from projected availability to support VNAF, Laos and Thailand requirements and recommended that Laos program U-17/T-41s for FAC/Training requirements. The MAP Laos UE change was submitted to SECDEF in CINCPAC Secret message DTG 152055Z March 1969.

By the same token, actual deliveries of programmed O-1 aircraft had begun previously and DCH-AF noted an improvement in the FAC program. Three O-1F aircraft were received in January 1969 from PACAF assets, and three O-1As were received in March 1969 from U.S. Army assets in CONUS. These deliveries more than offset the loss of one O-1E in January and one O-1F in March. The O-1 aircraft fleet was restored and maintained at the required level by the Air America facility at Udorn. In addition, "the introduction of covert USAF O-1 aircraft mechanics and Air America contract maintenance personnel into Laos has alleviated many of the maintenance problems previously experienced."145/

The answer to DEPCH's request for the UE change came just prior to the end of the fiscal year. JCS, while approving the RLAF reorganization and the requested UE change on the UH-34 aircraft, rejected the T-28 UE increase because of insufficient assets to support the increase without diverting aircraft from current approved requirements. No mention was made of the request for FAC/Liaison/Training aircraft by the JCS. An immediate reclaim was initiated by Amb Emb Vientiane, AIRA, and DEPCH. In a lengthy explanation, DCH-AF noted the necessity for the additional T-28 aircraft and the need for additional personnel at Det. 1, 56 SOW, to support the presently assigned T-28 fleet in its combat, training, and reconnaissance missions.146/
Regarding the O-1 FAC/Liaison/Training aircraft requested in the UE change, CSAF first suggested that T-41 and U-17 aircraft be substituted, since O-1s were scarce. CSAF then advised that current scheduling of O-2 and OV-10 aircraft into the USAF inventory would accelerate the release of a limited number of O-1s from PACOM assets into Laos MASF. Accordingly, USAF recommended deletion of DEPCH FY 68 and FY 70 Programs for U-17Bs for the RLAF and the substitution of O-1 aircraft (with U-17Bs being programmed in FY 71-75). Additionally, FY 69 programming of T-41 aircraft to alleviate the O-1 shortage was reprogrammed for FY 71 because of the projected O-1 availability. However, DCH-AF cautioned that O-1 delivery had "not been sufficient to meet MAP Laos and USAF in-country O-1/U-17/T-41/FAC/Liaison/Training requirements." 147/ In his October 1969 Report, DCH-AF added that "the alleged O-1 availability did not become a reality during this quarter. In addition, three U-17 aircraft... will not be delivered to Bangkok until November 1969. The lack of O-1s and the failure to meet programmed delivery dates of U-17 aircraft has seriously degraded MAP Laos FAC support during this period." 148/

Late in 1969, however, CSAF advised DEPCH that six T-28 aircraft would be airlifted to arrive by 31 December 1969, and that an additional 16 aircraft would be airlifted to arrive not later than 31 January 1970.*

*These were most probably the 22 aircraft that had been procured under the USAF MASF Program to meet Laotian attrition requirements. They had been on loan to the VNAF to support its pilot training requirements. They were airlifted to Udorn for reassembly and armament.
More good news came in November 1969 when the DEPCH request for additional T-28 maintenance manning at Udorn was approved. By the end of November, 50 technicians (USAF and civilian) were in place at Det. 1, 56 SOW, for 179 days TDY. The DEPCH request for a 185-man PCS augmentation for Det. 1 also received CINCPACAF and CSAF approval, and the only remaining stumbling block was the Thailand personnel ceiling. AmEmb Bangkok and MACTHAI took the problem under advisement. DCH-AF reiterated that "if immediate relief is not obtained and the 185 personnel made available to Detachment 1, it will be necessary to request an extension of the SMAMA Maintenance Assistance Team. Detachment 1 cannot sustain the MAP Laos T-28 requirements without this additional manning."\[149/\]

Considerable message traffic was also generated by DCH-AF in an attempt to fill an AIRA Vientiane identified requirement for three U-10 aircraft for Project 404 operational use. Due to the non-availability of 0-1/U-17 aircraft, DCH-AF proposed in early December 1969 to accept the three U-10s as interim substitutes at no cost to be added to the MASF Laos aircraft UE. CSAF approved the proposal, but later advised that action had been taken to deliver four 0-1 aircraft to MAP Laos. DEPCH now faced the problem of whether to retain the U-10s or not, since the arrival of the 0-1s early in 1970 would bring the authorized 0-1/U-17 UE to its limit (including the three U-10s) with no additional 0-1/U-17s programmed prior to FY 1/1972.\[150/\]

Additional problems, this time of a financial nature, plagued DEPCH at year's end. Total funding had not been received by 30 December 1969 and the majority of dollar line funds were exhausted. Unless total
funding was received, extensive requirements would have to be submitted for immediate funding under Continuing Resolution Authority procedures. Problems also continued to plague the installation of the single and dual T-28 egress systems, and the date for beginning the conversion was slipped to June 1969. DEPCH continued to support the AmEmb Vientiane position that dual egress systems be installed in all T-28 aircraft. In May, JCS advised CINCPAC that it had reconsidered the request to equip all T-28s with the dual system, and now approved that approach. Consequently, the JCS instructed PACAF to assign sufficient priority to the project to insure its consideration for funding. Accordingly, DCH-AF programmed sufficient additional dual egress systems to completely modify all on-hand and programmed MAP Laos T-28 aircraft. By October 1969, twenty dual systems had been received with three-fourths of that number installed. As an interim measure, twenty-three single egress systems were to be installed during the same month. DCH-AF commented: "Receipt of the additional authorized dual systems is questionable in that CSAF has notified DCH-AF that Southeast Asia Operational Requirements action must be initiated through Seventh Air Force to insure adequate funding." On another front, actions initiated by DCH-AF in June 1968 seemed to have reached fruition when eight excess VNAF C-47s and six of eight Class V modification kits for the SUU-11A minigun were assigned to MAP Laos at no cost. Thai-Am was tasked with accomplishing the required modification, but the project was plagued by misfortune from the beginning. DCH-AF assessed the situation thus: "Through no fault of Thai-Am
or APRFE none of the gunships ever reached an operational status during this reporting period. Basically, the kits received from VNAF were a pile of junk. Consequently, CINCPAC proposed and the Country Team concurred in a one-for-one exchange of the eight RLAF (ex-VNAF) C/AC-47s for eight USAF MXU-470-equipped AC-47s. CSAF also approved the DCH-AF proposal to keep the C/AC-47s on hand as advance attrition aircraft at no cost to the MASF Program. The ex-VNAF aircraft were to be reconfigured back to the C-47 configuration and replaced by the ex-USAF AC-47s, the last of which was to be in place by January 1970.

At the end of 1969 two additional operating locations had been added in Laos. The RLAF now flew not only from the four permanent bases as detailed previously, but also from Ban Houei Sai and Long Tieng. (The latter was the MR II headquarters of the Meo guerrilla leader, Major General Yang Pao.) A seventh OL was in the planning stage.

The FY 70 MASF Laos Air Force Program, as approved by CINCPAC, was $83,198,406. This constituted an increase of slightly more than $22 million over the FY 69 Program. The increase was attributed almost entirely to the ever-increasing tactical combat sortie requirements.

The training program conducted at Udorn by Det. 1, 56 SOW, expanded with the arrival of the C-47 MTT in March 1969. The MTT had flown four MAP Laos C-47s from Don Muang to Udorn, and on 8 March 1969 six pilots, six flight mechanics, and six ground maintenance personnel of the RLAF entered training at Det. 1, 56 SOW. DCH-AF noted that "this group appears to be the 'cream of the crop' and should greatly enhance RLAF C-47 capability upon return to Laos. At this time it appears that one
or two of each category will make excellent instructors."157/ DCH-AF reported enthusiastically in July: "The C-47 MTT...is doing an outstanding job. The USAF Special Operations Forces personnel making up the first team are extremely well qualified and it is anticipated that the first group of RLAF graduates will be fully qualified as IPs, Pilots, Flight Mechanics and Crew Chiefs."158/ The purpose of the MTT was not only to upgrade RLAF C-47 pilots and crews, but to expand RLAF operational capability. Thus, DCH-AF stated:159/

In addition to normal upgrading, the crews have or will have received training in all aspects of C-47 COIN operations and procedures, including an actual check-out in AC-47 Gunship operations. USAF approval for a follow-on C-47 MTT has been obtained (second class). No problems have been encountered with 7/13 Air Force operational control of the team which is assigned to Detachment 1, 56th Special Operations Wing. Materiel support of the program has been well within the DCH-AF capability. Actual training has been accomplished utilizing four MAP Laos C-47s. It is anticipated that USAF will loan an AC-47 gunship to MAP Laos to insure the current class gunship training.

By year's end, training was progressing well. The second class graduated on 8 December, and the third class began on 10 December. RLAF personnel retained from the first class as IPs and instructors did an outstanding job. USAF had provided, on loan, an AC-47 gunship to insure that RLAF crews would receive the proper training. Unfortunately, operational requirements precluded any RLAF instructor personnel remaining from the second class. An attempt by DEPCH to convert the TDY C-47 MTT to a permanent MASF Laos Training Program incorporated into an expanded Det. 1 faltered because of the restricted Thailand headroom ceiling for PCS
Note

For reasons of "National Security," this page remains classified.
personnel. The fourth TDY MTT was then programmed and approved by CINCPAC. The American Ambassador to Laos estimated that the RLAF would be able to initiate a self-sufficient C/AC-47 training program in January 1972.160/

T-28 and UH-34 training continued to be given at Udorn. UH-34 pilots and mechanics were trained by an Army CWO and two Army enlisted personnel assigned to DCH-AF; RLAF supply personnel continued to be trained by DEPCH T-28 Supply at Udorn. By January 1970 two RLAF UH-34 pilots assigned to the Army MTT were upgraded to Instructor Pilots, and began conducting the majority of the flight training. Two RLAF ground school instructors were also qualified, and conducted classes.161/

The late 1969 class of 16 RLAF T-28 student pilots was scheduled for graduation in early March 1970. AmEmb Vientiane advised DEPCH in November 1969 that planned increases in T-28 aircraft indicated that two classes of 30 student pilots each would be the minimum required to man the aircraft (60 pilots annually). AmEmb Vientiane further advised in December that increases in class size were contingent upon additional personnel and aircraft being assigned to Det. 1. After studying the proposal, Det. 1 agreed that the annual output of RLAF T-28 pilots could be increased by conducting four 12 to 14-week classes of 15 students each per year if additional aircraft, instructors, and maintenance personnel were assigned. (No instructor pilots could be made available from RLAF resources, as every pilot was needed for operational missions.)162/

An interesting sidelight to the T-28 training had occurred at mid-year when a total of six Meo student pilots graduated at Det. 1 to join the
only qualified RLAF pilot of Meo ethnic extraction on active duty at that time. (At least four other RLAF pilots of Meo extraction had died previously in the line of duty.) Plans called for them to be stationed at Vientiane, where they could be supervised by the one qualified Meo pilot. Here they would operate in support of the ground forces of Meo Major General Vang Pao, Commander of MR II and leader of the CAS-sponsored irregular Special Guerrilla Units (SGUs). How had Vang Pao infiltrated the RLAF? A recent DCH-AF stated: "They (the Meo pilots) were given preliminary training by CAS, I think, and then superimposed on an RLAF quota to Det. 1."164/

Although third-country and in-country training continued to improve, the RLAF was not and would not be self-sufficient in training in the foreseeable future. An urgent FAC requirement necessitated the diversion of training aircraft to operations; the result was a shortage of training aircraft at the RLAF Preflight Training School at Savannakhet, which caused that school to lapse into practical nonexistence. In commenting on the general state of training affairs, DCH-AF said: "Little, if any improvement has been noted in the quality of students received at Det. 1, 56 SOW, at Udorn from the RLAF Preflight Training School at Savannakhet. This is also a reflection of the drain on the personnel resources of Laos. The English language capability of the current T-28 pilot class is minimum acceptable."165/ In retrospect, there was some improvement because the first students to arrive in 1965 spoke no English at all so "minimum acceptable" was actually progress, although the DCH-AF did not look at it that way at the time.
In the latter part of 1969 AmEmb Vientiane advised DEPCH that total RLAF personnel authorization had risen to 2557. The increase of 857 individuals over previously published figures was the result of a manpower survey. A Unit Document Listing (UDL) was in preparation to give the RLAF a central personnel system.\textsuperscript{166/}

Status of the RLAF, and the MAP/MASF effort needed to support it, was reflected in the following 31 December 1969 Aircraft Inventory and Utilization Report: \textsuperscript{167/}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Total Quantity Programmed MAP/MASF</th>
<th>Quantity Received To 31 Dec</th>
<th>Total Active 31 Dec*</th>
<th>Total Hours Flown 2nd Qtr FY 70**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AC/G-47A/D</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2,390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RT/T-28B/C/D***</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>9,414</td>
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<tr>
<td>O-1A/E/F/G****</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3,915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U-6A</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U-17A/B*****</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1,039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UH-34D*****</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>13,025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U-4</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U-10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Attrited aircraft deducted from total quantity received.

**Estimated for in-country operations since RLAF had no established accounting system.

***T-28 FAC hours flown were 482. Other T-28 hours flown - 8932.

****O-1 FAC hours flown were 3164. RLAF hours flown - 751.

*****U-17 FAC hours flown were 654. RLAF hours flown - 385.

******28 UH-34s were DOD controlled and flown by Air America (4 UH-34Gs not utilized; undergoing Class V modification). Hours flown - 10359. Four-teen UH-34s controlled by RLAF hours flown - 2666.

(For details of the FY 69 program see p. 166.)
Controversy Surrounds the U.S. Role in Laos

In the United States, the period of the late 1960s was one of great unrest, particularly among certain elements of the student population. The lengthy war in South Vietnam, with its attendant requirements on the human and material resources of the United States, had deeply divided public opinion; one segment endorsed the intervention policy while the other claimed to abhor the U.S. role in Southeast Asia.

As a result of the pressure of public opinion, a Congressional inquiry was initiated into the U.S. role in Southeast Asia. Restrictions against other and similar involvements resulted from the inquiry. One of the first of these was a prohibition against the commitment of United States ground combat troops into Laos or Thailand without the consent of Congress. This restriction was incorporated into the FY 1970 Defense Appropriations Bill. The prohibition, initially adopted by the Senate and then publicly endorsed by the new Nixon administration, was included in a compromise bill that provided $69.8 billion for the Defense Department—an amount some $5.5 billion less than requested by the Administration. The bill not only represented the heaviest cut in a defense budget requested by a U.S. President since the end of the Korean War, but also contained a new assertion of Congressional prerogatives over foreign and military policies. Under the amendment, none of the funds in the Defense Appropriations Bill "shall be used to finance the introduction of American ground combat troops into Laos or Thailand."
Late in 1969 the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, chaired by Stuart Symington, investigated the U.S. role in, and the scope of aid to, the Kingdom of Laos. Among those who testified were the Ambassador to Laos, G. McMurtrie Godley, and two of his predecessors, Messrs. Sullivan and Unger. The following exchange between Senator Fulbright and former Ambassador Sullivan (who had turned the post over to Ambassador Godley in June 1969) provides an insight into the sensitivity of the situation.

Senator Fulbright had just asked Mr. Sullivan if it were not true that Souvanna Phouma received some technological and grant aid from the Soviets, who actively aided his North Vietnamese opponents. Mr. Sullivan had admitted the truth of this statement. The investigation continued:

Sen. Fulbright: Doesn't this ever strike you as sort of an absurdity. They (the Soviets and NVA) are pretending they are not there, and we are pretending that we are not there. What does it all lead to? We give the impression, not only to foreign people, but to many of our own people that we are mad. Why isn't it better to go and say what we are doing and give a reason for it, and say the reason you give, which I think is the only possible reason - the support of the war in Vietnam - that we have just gone in and are doing what we think is assisting the war in Vietnam. That makes some sense. I do not quite see the persuasiveness of your reasons.

Mr. Sullivan: Well, my answers may not be persuasive, but I go back and state our concern has been, and still is, to try to establish those conditions which would permit the 1962 neutrality agreements to apply; and in doing that I think it was incumbent upon us to maintain that initial understanding we have had with the Soviets...

Senator Symington, in addressing Mr. Sullivan somewhat later, concluded:
Mr. Secretary, you say in view of the Geneva Accords the existence of an overt military organization in Laos was impossible. You should have added one word, "therefore." It is obvious why there was created an organization known as Deputy JUSMAG Thailand as an integral part of the JUSMAG headquarters...

Political and Military Events - 1970

During late 1969 and early 1970 Hanoi introduced an estimated 13,000 new troops along with more sophisticated weaponry into Laos. (However, 130mm guns and T-54 tanks did not appear until late 1971.) According to President Nixon, some 67,000 NVA troops were believed to be in Laos in 1970. 171/

Souvanna Phouma, in one of his frequent attempts at reconciliation with the Pathet Lao, proposed the neutralization of the PDJ, but his efforts were rewarded by a Communist-launched offensive which recaptured the PDJ and territory beyond. 172/ In response to the unprecedented level of combat, the FY 1970 MASF for ammunition for RLG forces was increased by $30.9 million - $13.8 million for the Air Force MASF and $17.1 million for Army MASF. 173/

The 1962 Accords had called for a unified national Army composed of 10,000 troops each from the Pathet Lao, the Forces Armees Royale, and Forces Armees Neutralist. Manning levels for the three major Laotian armies were estimated to be 51,300 for FAR, 6,000 for the FAN, 48,000 for the Pathet Lao, and 67,000 for the NVA. The facade of neutrality and

*At the battle for Long Tieng in MR II (17 March - 1 April 1970), one Lao pilot flew an incredible 19 missions in one day when USAF air was unavailable due to visibility of less than one mile.
tripartism continued to be preserved for political convenience, but each faction went its separate way. Leadership of the units did not turn out as planned either. For example, on 20 May 1970, Phouma turned his position as Minister of Defense (he was also Prime Minister and Foreign Minister) over to Sisouk Champassak. Sisouk undertook a reform and overhaul of the Defense Ministry, beginning with a reorganization of the FAR General Staff in August 1970.

Although the United States heavily subsidized, advised, and modernized the FAR, FAN, and the CAS-supported guerrilla forces, French grant aid to Laos continued to be high. Some $7 to $8 million were spent by France in Laos annually, although most of their aid was directed toward the cultural and education field. Nevertheless, the French continued to maintain a small French Military Mission also. The United Kingdom (which was Co-Chairman of the Geneva Convention along with the Soviet Union) also maintained a small aid program for Laos. Other nations, notably West Germany and Japan, financed non-military internal improvements, such as on waterways. Assistance from Thai and South Vietnamese neighbors was viewed with mixed emotions by most Laotians because of the territorial imperialism demonstrated by these nations in the past. The Royal Laotian Government continued to appreciate Thai assistance, but at the same time remained wary of Thai involvement. The common NVA threat, nevertheless, resulted in the development of closer cooperation in the interest of mutual security. Thailand provided some third-country training to the Laotian Armed Forces, and countenanced the large-scale American presence on Thai Air Force Bases at which Laotians were being
trained. Insofar as the Vietnamese were concerned, the Lao were not comfortable with Vietnamese of any political persuasion, but relations with the South Vietnamese appeared cordial. Since the ouster of Prince Sihanouk in Cambodia (in March 1970), relations between the Phouma Government and Cambodia seemed to improve.  

President Nixon's Key Biscayne Statement on Laos

Renewed Congressional inquiry into the U.S. role in Southeast Asia caused President Nixon to recapitulate the involvement in Laos, and to state his policy in the matter. The Presidential statement came on 6 March 1970 from the Key Biscayne White House. The President began by calling upon the United Kingdom and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to restore the terms of the 1962 Geneva Accords in Laos. He cited the flagrant violation of the Accords by the presence of 67,000 North Vietnamese troops within the country, and commented that "the indigenous Laotian Communists, the Pathet Lao, are playing an insignificant role." He went on to say that both the USSR and North Vietnam had originally sanctioned the Phouma Government, but that NVN was now seeking to destroy it. His distinction between U.S. aid to Laos and the North Vietnamese aid to the Pathet Lao rested on his knowledge that the North Vietnamese...
Mr. Nixon pointed to the swift U.S. compliance with the Accords in 1962 when 666 Americans withdrew from Laos, while only some 40 NVA troops passed through the ICC checkpoint. The President cited the continuing invasion of Laos by NVA troops, and noted that President Kennedy had ordered 5,000 U.S. Marines to Thailand as a precautionary move in May 1962 as "the invasion of Laos continued." The withdrawal of the Pathet Lao from the Tripartite government in April, 1963, led to a full-scale resumption of the fighting, which in turn increased U.S. interest in and U.S. aid to Laos. The President said: "Souvanna has called upon three American administrations to assist his government in preserving Laotian neutrality and integrity." He also noted that increased U.S. aid to Laos, in the form of supplies and munitions, was in line with the 1962 Accords under the provision that the Laotian Government was permitted to seek help in its self-defense; and it was the government of Souvanna Phouma which the U.S. recognized as the legitimate government of Laos, and which the U.S. would support. The President pointed out that:

...in May 1964, as North Vietnamese presence increased, the United States, at Royal Lao Government request, began flying certain interdictory missions against the invaders who were violating Lao neutrality...thus when this administration came into office we faced a chronically serious situation in Laos. There had been six years of seasonal communist attacks, and growing U.S. involvement at the request of the Royal Laotian Government. The North Vietnamese had steadily increased their infiltration through Laos into South Vietnam, and their troop presence in Laos itself. Any facade of native Pathet Lao independence had been stripped away. In January 1969, we thus