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If you had asked me that question 5 years ago, I could have taken you right to three distilleries myself in Vietnam, which we don't own any more, and one down in Xieng Khnong, and I could have taken you to three over on the west side. But I would not say myself that there is not one existing; they could exist on the west side. But where I was they don't exist, and I know there is none in my territory, which could very easily be done. General Vang Pao could easily be making an agreement with the North Vietnamese, which is nothing uncommon in Southeast Asia, to get the raw opium down to him, and he has all the protection that a man would ever need to get it out, but he absolutely really controls the opium.

Mr. White. He is not doing that?

Mr. Buell. Oh, no, no, absolutely. There was a day that he was, he was in it; this is when it was a way to make a buck, bootleg days.

Mr. White. In those days, it was not illegal, was it, to grow opium or to transport it?

Mr. Buell. It was just the same as it is now, still illegal, but they just ignored the laws; there was no law enforcement. Those people didn't know what law was—that kind of law. There wasn't anybody in the world to tell me what to do; that is my ground, a farmer, and the farmer is pretty damned independent.

Mr. White. Mr. Buell, we have read reports in the newspapers that American-controlled transportation may have been used for transporting opium in Laos. Would you have any opinions on this?

Mr. Buell. Did you ever read that I transported any?

Mr. White. No, sir, I never did.

Mr. Buell. Well, I probably have. I will say it plainer. I have. And you would have, too, and the chairman would have, too.

Mr. White. Would you explain this to us?

Mr. Buell. There is no roads in north Laos. There was; there is no more. That is another thing the communists always takes care of, the roads, they seal up the roads. Again, as I say, opium comes in small packages and you can have your year's crop in one pocket. So I am sure that there have been times when our Ambassador or when we had Congressmen from the United States visiting over in north Laos who had their own airplanes chartered and they was with the Prime Minister or with General so-and-so and shaking his hand and going around with him, that they brought out opium themselves. Yes, there has been opium brought out on United States aircraft in these ways; but I am the first to say that as far as Air Continental, Air America, or any of our planes that ever made any type of a business or knowing deliberately that they was bringing out opium in northeast Laos, I
have to say absolutely no to that. There is instances where opium has been brought out on our planes, definitely.

Mr. WHITE. But that was without knowledge or intent?

Mr. BUELL. That is right. I have read these things in the newspapers also, and it is just a bunch of poppycock, that is all. We have got better Americans over there than that.

Mr. WHITE. Would you tell us just a word or two about the Weldons as a medical team over there?

Mr. BUELL. Of course, you don't like to blow your own horn. They are just a pair of wonderful people and as devoted and dedicated pretty near their lives to helping the people of all Laos. It so happened that Dr. Weldon, when he first came to Laos, fell in love with the north-east and north Laos program, that they have gone all over Laos. There cannot be too much said about them.

The medical program—Dr. Weldon right now is working much on this drug program that is going on, doing a wonderful job—he has had much bearing on. When we talk about the use of drugs and about the medical program, and so forth, in Laos, much credit has to go to him.

Mr. WHITE. Before the Weldons came to Laos, was the Tom Dooley Hospital or Hospitals operating in Laos?

Mr. BUELL. We had the Tom Dooley Hospital over on the Mekong River; it was operating over there. I am sure, had Tom Dooley lived and had time, that he also would have had a big program in Laos.

Mr. WHITE. How did his program or what they have attempted to carry on since he died, how did that compare with the program run by the Philippine Brotherhood—in size and effectiveness, I would say.

Mr. BUELL. Don't forget I am a little prejudiced; I think we can run a medical program better than the Philippines do. They are good. I have had Philippines work for me very much, but the Philippines really never had a program. Their program was always, which it is still today, under the supervision of Dr. Weldon, and they do a fine job. All the money that is used by the Philippines in Laos is U.S. money. It is called Operation Brotherhood, and I think that probably we do a little better training even than what the Philippines can do.

Mr. WHITE. What kind of religious programs are being conducted in Laos now, Mr. Buell? Do we have clergymen over there that are doing missionary work?

Mr. BUELL. The French have been in there for years and years, a couple hundred French Catholics. I have a couple of Catholic priests that work with me in the north that are people out of this world; they would both be elected to Congress; they should be somewhere, anyway. We do have another Protestant organization that is the Christian Alliance—I think it is an organization of several Protestant groups—that also does a very fine job, and we all work together.

Our AID program helps haul them around even, and if I need a good AID worker to go out in the field with me someday, I might just call on Father Bouchard to go and do it, or I might call on this Protestant preacher, and they will go out and do it and still not sell their goods that much.

We have another group working with us now and doing us a lot of good, World Vision, which is not solely a religious group, but sponsored very much by religion, and they are really helping us.

Mr. WHITE. Have any of these clergymen been killed in the course of their duties?
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Mr. Buell. Yes; in my group alone—I think again, don't put this in the Saturday Evening Post or something, but I worked with 17 priests in the north, and either seven or nine have been killed by the Vietnamese, not by the Laos.

Mr. White. By the North Vietnamese communists?

Mr. Buell. Yes. This pretty well answers your question about what the North Vietnamese communists think about religion, and I am not a Catholic.

Mr. White. I think this just about concludes our questions.

The Chairman. Thank you very much.

I would like to ask you one or two questions, Mr. Buell. You have had an intriguing, very, very interesting experience in Laos. Did you work solely with the refugees in Laos?

Mr. Buell. Yes.

The Chairman. Of course, you are also working in an area where the people are already settled?

Mr. Buell. Yes, sir; but everybody is a refugee.

The Chairman. What is the cause of the refugee problem—leaving communist-controlled territories where the Pathet Lao have taken over?

Mr. Buell. I have to ask you again, otherwise you are asking me: What causes a refugee in my area?

The Chairman. Yes; I am going to get around to asking you a question about the charge that has been made that American bombing has been a major factor of the refugee problem in Laos.

Mr. Buell. I wasn't going to answer your first question, but I will, being as you are coming up with the next one.

As far as I am concerned, all the refugees that I have worked with, all of them—and we started out with a peak of 450,000—has and was caused by fear of communism takeover; and when the North Vietnamese came into the picture this fear even became much greater and would even cause them to leave.

We actually got, in '64 and '65—I got many refugees, had the Vietnamese not come into the picture, would not have been refugees, they would have stayed with the Pathet Lao. In fact, we have a world of what you call Pathet Lao refugees, if you want to call them that.

The Chairman. Mr. Buell, let me ask you this question; you are familiar, of course, with the lines along which the Pathet Lao is organized: Are they organized along the same lines as the Vietcong; that is, are they divided into local forces, regional forces, and main line forces?

Mr. Buell. Again, I am really saying things that I don't believe, ordinarily. To start with, again, you have got to say there is no Pathet Lao any more. In northeast Laos, the Pathet Lao just don't exist, it isn't, so help me God.

But now, to back up, before the Vietnamese came in, when the Pathet Lao was in control and doing their fighting, and so forth; no, their patterns were not like the Vietnamese. But there is no Pathet Lao in northeast Laos.

The Chairman. Has the fighting slowed down in that area since the invasion by the North Vietnamese?

Mr. Buell. Yes; for the past couple or 3 months it has really slowed down. I would say it has more or less come to a standstill. They are not—we are not going over and stepping on their toes or anything like that.
The CHAIRMAN. Do you anticipate returning to the area?
Mr. BUell. Yes.
The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. I commend you, sir, for the service that you have performed in the country of Laos.
The meeting will be adjourned.
(Whereupon, at 11:15 a.m., Thursday, May 25, 1972, the committee recessed, subject to the call of the Chair.)
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THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF COMMUNISM IN 1972

(Southeast Asia)

Part 1

THURSDAY, JULY 20, 1972

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON INTERNAL SECURITY,
Washington, D.C.

PUBLIC HEARING


Committee members present: Representatives Richardson Preyer of North Carolina, Mendel J. Davis of South Carolina, John M. Ashbrook of Ohio, Roger H. Zion of Indiana, and John G. Schmitz of California.

Staff members present: Richard L. Schultz, associate chief counsel; DeWitt White, minority legal counsel; Herbert Romerstein, minority chief investigator; and George Armstrong, minority investigator.

Mr. Davis. The committee meets today for the purpose of receiving the testimony of Dr. Charles Weldon in connection with the committee's continuing inquiry into the theory and practice of communism on both the domestic and international fronts.

I understand that the witness has spent approximately 10 years in Laos in almost daily contact with the forces of communism.

Dr. Weldon, it is a pleasure to welcome you to the committee. Will you please rise and be sworn.

Do you swear the testimony you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Dr. Weldon. I do.

Mr. Davis. Do you want to proceed, please, Counsel?

TESTIMONY OF CHARLES LOUIS WELDON

Mr. White. Would you please state your full name?

Dr. Weldon. Charles Louis Weldon.

Mr. White. Would you give us a little biographical background, where you were born, your education, and so on?

Dr. Weldon. I was born in south Louisiana, just north of New Orleans, in 1920, and shortly after that, when I was about 8 years old, I moved to west Texas and I was raised out in west Texas and...
went through high school in San Angelo, and then I went to Texas A. & M. and took petroleum-chem. engineering. In my senior year I went into the service. This was the beginning of World War II. I spent 5 years in the Marine Corps as an infantry officer, and at the end of the war I decided I would like to go into medicine rather than continuing in engineering.

I went back to school and got my medical degree from Louisiana State University Medical School in New Orleans. I finished medical school in 1951 and after my internship, and so forth, I went into practice in the rural community in Louisiana about 30 miles west of Baton Rouge.

My wife is also a doctor. We finished school together; we have practiced and worked together.

In 1961 we left Louisiana and went to American Samoa and worked in American Samoa for about 2 years with the Department of Interior.

Mr. Zion. Would you speak into the microphone, please.

Dr. Weldon. After leaving American Samoa we went to Laos in 1963, and we have been working in Laos since 1963.

Mr. White. Are you employed with a Government agency in Laos, Doctor?

Dr. Weldon. Yes, sir; I work for the United States Agency for International Development.

Mr. White. How would you describe your capacity in Laos? You are there as a physician, of course. Do you have a title there with the mission?

Dr. Weldon. Yes. Like most missions in AID the Laos mission is divided into various technical services, among other offices, and so forth. But I am chief of the Public Health Division. In other words, I am senior adviser to the mission, also to the Ministry of Health on matters relating to health.

Mr. White. When you first went to Laos did you also render medical care to a considerable extent?

Dr. Weldon. Yes. When I first arrived in Laos the United States mission was not particularly involved in medical assistance; and I didn't have then the administrative responsibilities that I have now, and I had much more time to actually work as a doctor and I spent a very large proportion of my time then, actually, in a strictly medical capacity and clinical capacity, taking care of sick people.

Mr. White. How would you describe the public health situation in Laos at the time you arrived there?

Dr. Weldon. It was pretty bad. Even in 1963 there was a pretty nasty little war going on in Laos. The North Vietnamese had not left the country as they had agreed to under the 1962 Geneva accords, and even though there was not a whole lot heard about it, there was, as I say, a considerable amount of military activity going on in the northern part of the country.

People were being displaced by the enemy. A lot of people were being injured, and so forth. At that time there was really no medical care at all for the people in the northern area of the country and very little medical care for people in the rest of the country. There were only six Lao doctors in Laos at the time.

Mr. White. And what was the population of the country at that time?
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Dr. Weldon. I do.

Mr. Davis. Do you want to proceed, please, Counsel?

Testimony of Charles Louis Weldon

Mr. White. Would you please state your full name?

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Dr. Weldon. I was born in south Louisiana, just north of New Orleans, in 1920, and shortly after that, when I was about 8 years old, I moved to west Texas and I was raised out in west Texas and

(7779)
Dr. Weldon. The population, there has never been a very accurate census of the country, but the population is probably around three million or a bit over three million.

Mr. White. Would you describe the military activity a little more in detail, Dr. Weldon? You say in the northern part of the country, was this primarily the northeastern part?

Dr. Weldon. That is right, particularly Sam Neua Province, the province that forms most of the border of Laos with North Vietnam, and there was really a partisan type of war going on in the north. On one side of the mountain you had basically a hill rice farmer trying to protect his farm and his country against the North Vietnamese and the Pathet Lao and associates, and on the other side of the hill you had mom and the kids trying to scrape out a living. But it was really a group of peasantry that was trying to just protect themselves from the invader. There was very little of the regular military up in this area at that time. Most of these were irregulars that were just trying to defend their homes.

Mr. White. And what was the character of the North Vietnamese forces at this time? Were they regular North Vietnamese forces or guerrilla forces?

Dr. Weldon. In 1963 most of the North Vietnamese that were involved were primarily cadre. A company sized unit of Pathet Lao may have had three, four, or five military or political advisers that ran things and were really military and political cadre.

Mr. White. At this time did their objective appear to be taking and holding ground, or was it primarily to protect routes into Vietnam?

Dr. Weldon. That is a good question. I am not sure I can answer it. It has been very controversial as to their intent at that time. Regardless of what their intent was, as far as I am concerned they were, people from another country that had invaded Laos and they were taking territory. As to why they were doing this, as I say, this is something we have talked about quite a bit.

Mr. White. Did this military activity generate a number of refugees?

Dr. Weldon. Yes.

Mr. White. Would you describe the situation to us, please?

Dr. Weldon. In 1963 upon my arrival...

Mr. White. Yes. Let us take it forward from there, then.

Dr. Weldon. Well, as you know, there has been military activity going on in the country for some time prior to my arrival in 1963. At the time of my arrival, I don't recall exactly, but I believe there were around 90,000 people in the northern part of the country on a refugee status. In other words, they were displaced from their homes probably within the last year, a maximum of 18 months.

We have tried, and I think fairly successfully, to rehabilitate people as quickly as possible. We don't usually keep them on a refugee status over 18 months. This is the maximum length of time for them to go through a crop cycle.

The crop cycle is of course conditioned by the monsoons, and if someone is displaced right at the end of the rice-growing season, then it may be up to a year and a half before they will have time to prepare land and go through a completed crop cycle.
So we had, at the time of my arrival, roughly 90,000 people who had been displaced in the last 18 months, or some period of time less than that, and these were in scattered groups, primarily in Sam Neua and Phong Saly, the two northern provinces.

Mr. White. Were these individuals forced to leave their homes? That is, were they compelled to leave, did they have an option of staying, or did they leave voluntarily as a class? Did you hear any expressions from them or see any evidence to indicate the answer to that question?

Dr. Weldon. Yes, I think so. First of all, of course, they had made the decision themselves, no one made the decision for them. They had previous experience with the communists, both the indigenous communists, the Pathet Lao, and the Northern Vietnamese. To live under the communists was just unsatisfactory to them, and when there was a danger of them falling under communist control, they left, they fled.

Mr. Davis. Excuse me just a moment. You say there were 90,000 refugees in 1963 when you arrived?

Dr. Weldon. Yes.

Mr. Davis. Was this number a great increase in the last 18 months or was it an average since the military activities had begun prior to 1963?

Dr. Weldon. I think it had a tendency to increase a little bit, Mr. Davis, probably in 1961. Probably there were very few refugees prior to 1961; there had been a few but not very many. But from 1961 to 1963 there had been some increase. If you recall, there was a considerable political upset in 1961 when the Lao Captain Kong Le revolted against the central government and took over for a while, and there were quite a few people displaced at that time really by an internal disruption.

Mr. Davis. So these were all freshly displaced from a new conflict that you were dealing with when you first arrived?

Dr. Weldon. Yes. These people in 1963, most of them had been displaced, as I say, within the last year or at a maximum of a year and a half. But there had been a tendency for the number of people to increase from 1961 to 1963. The reason for the increase during that period of time was primarily because of the military activities that were being carried on by the Pathet Lao and the North Vietnamese in the two northern provinces that border on Vietnam, Sam Neua, and Phong Saly.

Mr. White. Dr. Weldon, was the figure on the number of refugees 9,000 or 90,000?

Dr. Weldon. 90,000.

Mr. White. And these refugees generally moved from the northeast toward the southwest and the south; is that correct?

Dr. Weldon. That is correct. The movement has primarily been to the south and toward the west, actually. This is speaking in the broad sense now. There might be local movements that were not in these directions, but in the last 9 years the tendency has been for people to move away from North Vietnam, and this is south and to the west.

Mr. White. Doctor, you have stated that these people had prior experience with the communists and that they found living under them
So we had, at the time of my arrival, roughly 90,000 people who had been displaced in the last 18 months, or some period of time less than that, and these were in scattered groups, primarily in Sam Neua and Phong Saly, the two northern provinces.

Mr. White. Were these individuals forced to leave their homes? That is, were they compelled to leave, did they have an option of staying, or did they leave voluntarily as a class? Did you hear any expressions from them or see any evidence to indicate the answer to that question?

Dr. Weldon. Yes, I think so. First of all, of course, they had made the decision themselves, no one made the decision for them. They had previous experience with the communists, both the indigenous communists, the Pathet Lao, and the Northern Vietnamese. To live under the communists was just unsatisfactory to them, and when there was a danger of them falling under communist control, they left, they fled.

Mr. Davis. Excuse me just a moment. You say there were 90,000 refugees in 1963 when you arrived?

Dr. Weldon. Yes.

Mr. Davis. Was this number a great increase in the last 18 months or was it an average since the military activities had begun prior to 1963?

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Mr. White. Doctor, you have stated that these people had prior experience with the communists and that they found living under them
Dr. WELDON. The population, there has never been a very accurate census of the country, but the population is probably around three million or a bit over three million.

Mr. WHITE. Would you describe the military activity a little more in detail, Dr. Weldon? You say in the northern part of the country, was this primarily the northeastern part?

Dr. WELDON. That is right, particularly Sam Neua Province, the province that forms most of the border of Laos with North Vietnam, and there was really a partisan type of war going on in the north. On one side of the mountain you had basically a hill rice farmer trying to protect his farm and his country against the North Vietnamese and the Pathet Lao and associates, and on the other side of the hill you had mom and the kids trying to scrape out a living. But it was really a group of peasantry that was trying to just protect themselves from the invader. There was very little of the regular military up in this area at that time. Most of these were irregulars that were just trying to defend their homes.

Mr. WHITE. And what was the character of the North Vietnamese forces at this time? Were they regular North Vietnamese forces or guerrilla forces?

Dr. WELDON. In 1963 most of the North Vietnamese that were involved were primarily cadre. A company sized unit of Pathet Lao may have had three, four, or five military or political advisers that ran things and were really military and political cadre.

Mr. WHITE. At this time did their objective appear to be taking and holding ground, or was it primarily to protect routes into Vietnam?

Dr. WELDON. That is a good question. I am not sure I can answer it. It has been very controversial as to their intent at that time. Regardless of what their intent was, as far as I am concerned they were people from another country that had invaded Laos and they were taking territory. As to why they were doing this, as I say, this is something we have talked about quite a bit.

Mr. WHITE. Did this military activity generate a number of refugees?

Dr. WELDON. Yes.

Mr. WHITE. Would you describe the situation to us, please?

Dr. WELDON. In 1963 upon my arrival?

Mr. WHITE. Yes. Let us take it forward from there, then.

Dr. WELDON. Well, as you know, there has been military activity going on in the country for some time prior to my arrival in 1963. At the time of my arrival, I don't recall exactly, but I believe there were around 90,000 people in the northern part of the country on a refugee status. In other words, they were displaced from their homes probably within the last year, a maximum of 18 months.

We have tried, and I think fairly successfully, to rehabilitate people as quickly as possible. We don't usually keep them on a refugee status over 18 months. This is the maximum length of time for them to go through a crop cycle.

The crop cycle is of course conditioned by the monsoons, and if someone is displaced right at the end of the rice-growing season, then it may be up to a year and a half before they will have time to prepare land and go through a completed crop cycle.
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unsatisfactory. Do you have knowledge of the atrocities that were committed by the communists in the course of their attacks upon the people of Laos?

Dr. Weldon. Not really personal knowledge, no. Naturally I was not in the country prior to 1963. But the type of things that disenchanted them with the communists was not really so much atrocities prior to that time as the way the communists operated and what they did to the people.

First of all, they took a lot of their young men, and women, too, away from them, and they never saw these people again. They took them to North Vietnam to retrain them for them to become political and military cadre. They had a tendency when the North Vietnamese political cadre moved into these areas, they had a tendency to completely subvert the local government, particularly the village leader, which is really the basis of government in Laos. If this guy didn’t play ball with them, they replaced him one way or another; I mean either arranged that he was replaced by another person or he was eliminated. Also, the communists had no respect for their traditions, their religious traditions, and their customs, and so forth.

The fact that they took their young people, the fact that they disrupted both their political and social systems, is very unsatisfactory and unsavory to them.

Mr. White. With regard to disrupting their religious practices, would you tell us more about that? What were their religious practices and what did the communists do about them?

Dr. Weldon. Well, there are basically two religions involved in this group; one is Buddhism. Most of the Lao-Thai people from an ethnic standpoint are Buddhist. The hill tribes like the Meo, which is the main ethnic minority involved in the northern part of Laos, these people are primarily animists; they don’t have a very structured or formal type of religion.

But in both instances the communists’ political cadre particularly had a tendency to possibly stop, not in a real overt manner to stop the religious practices, but they deprecate them. They tell the people that this is a waste of time, it is a lot of foolishness, and so forth, but they try to discredit the local communities, and so forth, and since in most instances they control the resources, I mean even food and this type of thing, it is very difficult often for these people to survive because they will not allow the people to support them, and so forth.

Mr. White. That is, to support the religious people, the monks and priests, and so forth?

Dr. Weldon. Yes. They tell the people that this is a waste of time and effort, and so forth, that it is not a very productive pursuit; and since people are not making any real contribution to the community they should not have food or any other things that they need to survive.

Mr. White. During the time that you have been there have there been efforts made by foreign missionaries to help the Lao people?

Dr. Weldon. Oh, yes. We have two very active missionary groups in Laos. One of them is Catholic and the other is Protestant. Both groups work very closely together and we have worked very closely with both groups. It is really a joint effort to take care of the refugee population, particularly.
Mr. White. Have the North Vietnamese communists indulged these religious missions there? Have they allowed them to operate or have some of the clergymen been killed in their efforts?

Dr. Weldon. They have pretty high casualties, particularly among the Catholic fathers. Some of the Catholic fathers are very militant anticommunists, and they are real targets. We have had a lot of them killed, and they have obviously been deliberately killed.

Mr. White. Do you have any idea how many figures on that?

Dr. Weldon. I can't remember exactly, but I can look this up for you, but the Catholic priests that we have worked with have rather detailed histories on all of these things. If I remember correctly, I think since probably say 1954, or say 1955, from the time Laos got its independence—for some reason or other the number 16 sticks in my mind—I am not sure, but I think there have been 16 missionary priests that have been killed by the communists. This is in a group of, I don't really know, maybe 30 or 40 missionaries.

Mr. White. Over a period of how long a time would you say this is?

Dr. Weldon. I would say probably starting in 1954 after the 1954 accords, so this has been over a period of 18 years. In addition to being killed, there are a lot of them that have been injured. Father Martin that works down in the southeastern area, and, I have forgotten, 3 or 4 years ago his jeep was ambushed and he lost his right leg. The two other people that were with him were killed. There have been quite a few of them wounded.

Mr. White. The last witness on this subject before the committee was Mr. Edgar Buell, whom I am sure you know very well. He described to us a massacre that took place at Ban Ban or, more accurately, at Phu Nong, I believe, just outside of Ban Ban. He indicated that you had assisted in the aftermath of this massacre. Can you tell us something about that?

Dr. Weldon. Yes. The place you have reference to, Phu Nong, is in the northern part of Laos just south of Ban Ban, a few kilometers south of Ban Ban up in the mountains. This is on the east side of the Plain of Jars. At the time there were about 9,000 refugees in this one enclave. These were people from the area who had been compacted into a rather small mountain valley. As you know, Route 7 that comes out of Vietnam passes through Ban Ban and into the Plain of Jars; this is one of the main supply routes of the communists into Laos.

They weren't very happy about the Lao Government maintaining this enclave on the mountains that overlooked Route 7 so they wanted to eliminate it. They made several attempts to overrun it, and they were not successful. So this was primarily by Pathet Lao troops. Since the Pathet Lao had not been able to overrun it, they put two battalions of North Vietnamese into the operation, and they did overrun it. The people fled as best they could, and the enemy tried to apprehend them, tried to capture them, and wanted them to remain in place.

I am not sure exactly why they wanted them to remain in place. Most likely they needed manpower in that area, primarily porters and this type of thing. They were very anxious to keep the people there. But the people fled, and it's very rugged mountainous country, and at the end of about 4 days they were so tired they had to stop and rest some. The main body of this group slept in a little high mountain val-
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Mr. White. I know this must be very difficult for you, Doctor, to remember this.

Dr. Weldon. I am sorry, but these are—I feel rather foolish, but these are, these people were very good friends of mine. Anyway, they continued to flee, and a lot of the older people and some of the small children, and so forth, could not stay up with the main body, maybe the father and mother were already carrying a child or two, you know, and the North Vietnamese continued to harass these people and try to prevent them from getting to safety.

So, when it was no longer possible for one of the people, say the mother or a child, to stay up with the main body, and they were going to fall into the hands of the enemy on some occasions, actually the father shot them. But they lost about 1,500 or 1,600 of the people.

Mr. White. Now, this group in general was unarmed civilians, were they not?

Dr. Weldon. Yes.

Mr. White. These were not military personnel?

Dr. Weldon. No, these were unarmed civilians.

Mr. White. Now, you participated in, of course, the care of these people that were gotten into refugee centers?

Dr. Weldon. Yes.

Mr. White. What happened to them thereafter, Dr. Weldon, were they resettled?

Dr. Weldon. Yes. We resettled these people. First, of course, it was just emergency care, medical care, giving them food, blankets, clothing; they had lost all of their household goods, of course, and they needed cooking pots and simple hand implements, this type of thing, and so forth. But as soon as we get people back on their feet, then they are dispersed into areas where they can start farming again, build their homes, and the like.

Mr. Zion. Dr. Weldon, about what time frame are we talking about, when was this particular massacre?

Dr. Weldon. If I remember correctly, this is April of 1964. It was either April or May, I think it was April of 1964.

Mr. Zion. Did you happen to know Thomas Dooley?

Dr. Weldon. No, sir.

Mr. Zion. You didn't succeed him there? You apparently came in about the time he died?

Dr. Weldon. That is right. Dr. Dooley had left Laos sometime before I arrived, maybe a year.

Mr. Zion. I was with Mead Johnson and Company at the time and we were privileged to supply him with some nutritional supplies he needed in Laos, and Dr. Hans Snively, who was medical director of Mead Johnson at the time, spent a little time with Dr. Dooley in his
mission, and you have perhaps read his book or you have lived his book, I would guess. So you didn't actually know Dr. Dooley?

Dr. WELDON. No. As I say, he had been gone from Laos for at least a year and possibly a little longer than that before I arrived.

Mr. ZION. Last year I was in Geneva talking to the Red Cross trying to get some cooperation among the European countries as pertaining to the Geneva Convention as it applies to prisoners. The Red Cross told me that they had provided some Red Cross supplies to the Pathet Lao, that they had accepted some, but would not permit any of these supplies to be used for the loyal Laotians, nor had they made them be used by the South Vietnamese or the American prisoners. Did you have any association with any Red Cross activities during the time you were in Laos?

Dr. WELDON. Yes, sir; we have worked with the representatives of the International Red Cross continuously, the whole time that I have been there.

Mr. ZION. In your experience did they permit any of the Red Cross supplies to be used by other than the Pathet Lao or the North Vietnamese or the Vietcong?

Dr. WELDON. You see, I am looking at the thing from the opposite side of the fence. The International Red Cross people that I am working with are in Vientiane with the central government, and they are working with the noncommunist people.

Mr. ZION. And they did receive International Red Cross supplies?

Dr. WELDON. Yes.

Mr. ZION. You are not then aware what sort of Red Cross activities are carried on by the other side?

Dr. WELDON. I don't know what is carried on the other side, Mr. Zion. I have not had any knowledge of what Red Cross activities are going on over on the communist side.

Mr. ZION. You have no knowledge, then, either by escapees or direct association with any prison camp activities, either in Laos or prisoners that were taken in Laos and transported perhaps to China or North Vietnam?

Dr. WELDON. I talked to some Lao, quite a few Lao over the years, that have been prisoners of the North Vietnamese and the Pathet Lao, but I can't recall this particular subject of the Red Cross coming up, and I can't remember ever discussing anything that related to the Red Cross activities on the communist side.

Mr. ZION. In Geneva the International Red Cross people told me that when they had requests from the communist bloc for supplies, they sent them to them, and they also sent additional supplies above those that were requested so that they could be used for the prisoners that had been taken by the communist forces. And they told me that those extra supplies that they had sent for the prisoners were invariably returned, that they apparently didn't want to see the International Red Cross supplies used for communist prisoners, though they were willing to use them for their own forces.

But you were not aware of this, you had no opportunity to observe this?

Dr. WELDON. This subject has just not come up. I have no knowledge of what Red Cross activities might be going on. Different Laotians
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Mr. White. Now, you participated in, of course, the care of these people that were gotten into refugee centers?

Dr. Weldon. Yes.

Mr. White. What happened to them thereafter, Dr. Weldon, were they resettled?

Dr. Weldon. Yes. We resettled these people. First, of course, it was just emergency care, medical care, giving them food, blankets, clothing; they had lost all of their household goods, of course, and they needed cooking pots and simple hand implements, this type of thing, and so forth. But as soon as we get people back on their feet, then they are dispersed into areas where they can start farming again, build their homes, and the like.

Mr. Zion. Dr. Weldon, about what time frame are we talking about, when was this particular massacre?

Dr. Weldon. If I remember correctly, this is April of 1964. It was either April or May, I think it was April of 1964.

Mr. Zion. Did you happen to know Thomas Dooley?

Dr. Weldon. No, sir.

Mr. Zion. You didn't succeed him there? You apparently came in about the time he died?

Dr. Weldon. That is right. Dr. Dooley had left Laos sometime before I arrived, maybe a year.

Mr. Zion. I was with Mead Johnson and Company at the time and we were privileged to supply him with some nutritional supplies he needed in Laos, and Dr. Hans Snively, who was medical director of Mead Johnson at the time, spent a little time with Dr. Dooley in his
that I know that have been prisoners of the communists at different
times, this has just never been discussed, I never thought to ask them
about it.

Mr. Zion. Did any of the Lao prisoners that you talked to, have they
ever been retained with American POWs, or in association with them,
to your knowledge?

Dr. Weldon. No, sir.

Mr. Zion. It would be your presumption, then, that they might have
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Dr. Weldon. Yes; it would certainly seem that the Americans were
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Mr. Zion. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. White. Doctor, can you tell us about any more or any other
major atrocities such as this massacre following the evacuation of Ban
Ban?

Dr. Weldon. Well, there are a lot of things that have happened like
this over the years and it's still going on to an extent. I mean, you
know, the ambush on the roads that continue up to today, this type of
thing, where civilians are in taxis or something like that, and the taxi
is shot up, or sometimes the act is very deliberate, it is not just an in·
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I recall within the last several months there was a taxi stopped just
north of Vientiane, and there were about 14 people on there, I believe,
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were quite a few women and children in the group, and they stopped
the taxi, had them get off, and after they had gotten out of the taxi,
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You see, it was not just a simple act of ambushing a taxi on the road,
I mean they took this and stopped the vehicle; they knew they were
women and small children and they shot all of them.

Mr. Ashbrook. Would counsel yield at that point?

Doctor, a few years ago Allen Dulles indicated in testimony before
the Congress that in his judgment the central communist tactic in
Southeast Asia was terror, whether this terror manifested itself in the
systematic assassination of village chiefs or reprisals against those
who might cooperate, come into a hut at night, slitting a throat, that
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I will give you a good example of this in a minute. But they go in
there and shoot a few civilians and what they are saying is, "You shape up, you do what we tell you, or you die; you play ball, or you die."

(At this point Mr. Schmitz entered the hearing room.)

Mr. Ashbrook. How does this affect the people over a period of time?

Dr. Weldon. The main thing is that it has just terrified them of living under the communists and particularly the North Vietnamese, and this is why when the enemy approaches these people immediately flee. This is why we have such a refugee problem in Laos. I know, and I imagine it's a large factor also in Vietnam.

Mr. Ashbrook. Were there any places in Southeast Asia where the element of terror is removed? It's my understanding that even in villages in Vietnam and Laos that seemingly you are under government control, noncommunist control, that they are still within these villages often, communist agents, sympathizers who enforce the same type of terror, particularly where there was any effort to cooperate with either the South Vietnamese Government or the Americans during the early part of the so-called Vietnamization.

Dr. Weldon. This is true in Laos, Mr. Ashbrook, but I don't think that it has had quite the significance in Laos that it has in Vietnam. I am talking about in the government-controlled areas. They have not used nearly as much terror in Laos as they have in Vietnam, but this is beginning to be more and more evident, it seems to me, in the last 2 or 3 years, where there are more assassinations, there are more ambushes, there are more threats, you know, in the village; there is more infiltration of the village particularly by young people that were taken out of the village maybe even 8 to 10 years ago, have been trained as political cadre, and have just recently been returned to their villages to start to organize, and so forth.

Mr. Ashbrook. Thank you.

Mr. White. Dr. Weldon, you mentioned that you would tell us of an example of these terror tactics.

Dr. Weldon. One of my first experiences in Laos with this type of thing, way up in the northern part of the country, a little place called Phia Kham, we had heard that there had been some trouble at Phia Kham, and I did not know the nature of it. Anyway, I flew into the place, and when I got there, I found seven wounded men and all seven of these people were elderly men in their late forties and fifties and maybe even older than that. Someone 50 in Laos is a pretty old man, generally speaking. Anyway, these seven elderly men were all shot through the thighs, and this struck me as a little odd that all seven of these guys had the same type of wound.

Anyway, we evacuated these people and got them to the hospital and got them straightened out. I naturally was interested in what had happened. Well, the night before that this small group of North Vietnamese had come into this village. They arrived just before dark, and the people had put them up and cooked food for them and made them comfortable for the night, and so forth. The next morning they again prepared food for them to take with them. They were obviously getting ready to leave, and they helped them get ready and gave them food to take with them, and so forth.
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Mr. White. A few minutes ago you mentioned the instance of the people who were taken out of the taxi, told to dismount, and were subsequently shot with AK-47's. Would you say, for the record, what an AK-47 is?

Dr. Weldon. This is an automatic rifle. This is a basic infantry rifle that the communists use, both the North Vietnamese and the Pathet Lao nowadays.

Mr. White. Where are these produced, do you know?

Dr. Weldon. I think most of them are being produced in China now. I think the weapon was developed in Russia, but I think most of these are being produced in China now.

Mr. White. This is the standard infantry weapon of the North Vietnamese?

Dr. Weldon. Yes. It is the counterpart to the M-16.

(At this point Mr. Zion left the hearing room.)

Mr. White. In these areas that have been or are being held by the communists, what, if anything, do they do about education and medical care, Dr. Weldon?

Dr. Weldon. It has been my impression from talking to people who have lived under the communists that they have a fairly effective program of education at the elementary level. They have built a lot of schools and they have developed teaching materials, particularly books, for the first, second, and third grades. There is a very high proportion of the children that are in school in the communist areas. Also, they have developed medical care, usually at a rather low level, but somewhat comparable to what we are doing on the other side. They have no trained medical people, and they have to do with medical auxiliaries that are very low-level people, but they are making some attempt to provide medical attention to the people.

Mr. White. What has been done in the other areas, those still under the control of the central government and where our mission is operating, in the way of education and medical care?

Dr. Weldon. Even though I have been intensely interested in education, this is not primarily my field, and I have a practical knowledge, but as far as the detailed knowledge of what is going on in education, I really don't have it. But this is one of the basic programs that we have been carrying on in Laos, to try to help the Laotian Government provide at least an elementary education to all the Lao children. I think we are coming close to achieving this.

Mr. White. Excuse the interruption, but prior to our initial efforts in Laos, say 10 years ago, what was the educational level there, what was the literacy rate or illiteracy rate; do you happen to know?
When I got there, the figure was quoted as 98 percent illiterate. Whether this is correct or not, I don't know, but it was awfully high, anyway. There were very few people who had an opportunity to gain literacy.

Mr. White. You mentioned what efforts had been made in the primary areas. How about secondary and higher educational?

Dr. Weldon. Yes; we have made, particularly in the last 4 or 5 years, a lot of efforts particularly at the high school level. We have developed a program of high schools that are taught in Lao. When I first arrived in Laos, there was only one high school in the country in Vientiane, and it produced about 90 graduates a year, and this school was taught in French, I mean the language of instruction was French.

Now very few kids have the opportunity and background really to learn French well enough in the elementary school to progress satisfactorily in high school in French. So the United States Government has assisted the Lao Government in developing a system of Lao high schools where things are taught in Lao.

Most of the technical aspects of this have been done by a contract with the University of Hawaii, and I think they have done an excellent job. I think it is one of the most significant programs that we have had there. But now there are 4 or 5 Lao high schools now, and everyone is just tickled to death with this program and particularly the Lao are.

Mr. White. How about higher education?

Dr. Weldon. There is nothing higher than high school in Laos, right now, except in the field of medicine and law and administration. There is a small school of law and administration, and there is a small medical school, but there is nothing that resembles a college or a university in the country.

Anyone that continues on above the lycee or high school level has to go out of the country except in these two rather small fields.

Mr. Davis. Excuse me, Counsel. You said when you arrived in 1963 there were six Lao doctors; correct?

Dr. Weldon. Yes.

Mr. Davis. What is that number today?

Dr. Weldon. At the present time I think we have 38. It's either 38 or 39.

Mr. Davis. How many doctors from the United States were there when you arrived?

Dr. Weldon. There was one doctor with the Dooley Foundation, and my wife and I, and I believe that was all.

Mr. Davis. How about today?

Dr. Weldon. There are two additional doctors on my staff; there is myself and three others. That is it on the American side.

Mr. Davis. So the increase in the medical services has been strictly on Lao; correct?

Dr. Weldon. Yes, sir. Now there are other third-country nationals in medicine there, particularly from the Philippines. There are at the present time, I believe, 24 Philippine doctors that are working with the Lao people. I made one mistake, Mr. Davis, there are usually two or three American doctors in the Embassy who take care of the American community.
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Mr. Davis. But to work with the Lao people and the refugees mainly?

Dr. Weldon. There are only four of us.

Mr. Davis. This would be under AID, right?

Dr. Weldon. Yes, sir; there are no other American doctors in the country right now, just the four that work with AID.

Mr. Davis. You say the higher education consisted of medicine and law and administration. What has been our contribution in the medical field there? Have you all been assisting in the teaching?

Dr. Weldon. Yes, sir. One of the programs that I first tried to develop there was—when I say "medical school," this also includes the school of nursing, and we, the United States has supported the development of a nursing school. This was strictly a United States project. I thought this was the area where we had the most critical need, even more so than doctors at that time, but today there is not a Lao R.N. Next June we will graduate our first Lao R.N., you know, an accredited person with a diploma. But this is a program we developed.

Now we will give them quite a bit of assistance in the medical school, but most of the development of the medical school has been by the French, most of the assistance that has gone into it has been by the French, and I have deliberately stayed away from it. We have enough problems as it is. If they will do something, we are tickled to death for them to do it. We have worked in a cooperative fashion with the French, and if things bog down, we try to be of help, and so forth.

Mr. Davis. Has there been an effort to disturb this by the communists?

(At this point Mr. Ashbrook left the hearing room.)

Dr. Weldon. No, I would say not. I can't think of anything; no.

Mr. Davis. Thank you.

Mr. White. Of course, the nursing school there is somewhat removed physically from the communist area of influence, isn't it, Dr. Weldon?

Dr. Weldon. Yes, this is in the capital city of Vientiane.

Mr. White. In the creation of the nursing school and establishing a nursing course, did you have any psychological elements of tradition to overcome with the women of Laos?

Dr. Weldon. I am talking about the more formal aspects of training. Now we have done a lot of impromptu training; I don't know exactly how many. But out in the countryside through the medical programs we are trying to develop in a country that has no medical resources, we have trained at least 2,000 people as types of nurses and medics and everything else. We have had a lot of problems in training because many of the people that we had to work with didn't speak Lao. About 60 percent of the people in Laos are not Lao ethnically, they are not Lao type people, they are the so-called ethnic minorities like the Meo, the Lao Tung, the Tai, the Lue, all sorts of people there; and a lot of these people, their first language is not Lao, and a lot of the girls can't speak Lao. So, when we first started the program, trying to develop some sort of medical attention out in the countryside, the first problem we had was teaching these kids how to speak Lao so we could have a common language to communicate in.
This was quite a job. Now, also, all of the folk medicine is male oriented, unfortunately, in Laos. We had a very difficult time getting the first girls into the nursing program. The people by tradition and culture didn’t feel this was a suitable pursuit for a girl. I really sweated blood to get the first seven little girls into the program.

After we got the first seven into the program, and they performed so well, the people began to realize that maybe this is a good thing, and the thing just snowballed after that, and now we have absolutely no trouble getting girls. There are always a lot more kids that want to get into the medical training programs than we have the capacity to take care of.

Mr. White. Since your arrival in Laos, you have established a number of hospitals, haven’t you, Doctor?

Dr. Weldon. Oh, yes, hospitals and dispensaries; at the present time we operate about 230 outpatient facilities all over the country. This varies actually from day to day almost, from the military situation. We will have two or three places overrun this week and build two or three more somewhere else.

Right now we have about 230 simple outpatient dispensaries that we are running in the country, and these outpatient facilities take care of about 3 million patient visits a year; that does not mean patients now, but patient visits a year. But I am sure that since I have been in Laos we have built over a thousand dispensaries in different places, and they have been overrun by the enemy. Some have abandoned them, you know, as populations have shifted, and so forth.

Hospitals, I would have to stop and think, really; hospitals, we have probably 12 or 14 major hospitals overrun by the enemy since I have been there.

Mr. White. What has happened to those hospitals after they have been overrun?

Dr. Weldon. Most of them have been destroyed. I can’t think of any that have been overrun that are in use now. Now, don’t misunderstand me now, a lot of this has been subsequent to the fighting that went on in the area. In some instances the hospitals have been deliberately destroyed by the enemy, but most of them have just been a casualty of the war, if you know what I mean; I mean there was fighting in that area and they happened to get destroyed just like any other building happened to get destroyed.

Mr. White. Do the North Vietnamese communists have the capability of continuing the operation of these hospitals after they have overrun the area?

Dr. Weldon. I don’t know whether they have the capability or not; that is a difficult question to answer, but they are not, I mean, as I say, they have not continued to operate these places.

Mr. White. I am sure that you have had many visits from the American press and the world press. Have reporters that have visited over there evidenced an interest in the achievements of our mission in Laos?

Dr. Weldon. Oh, yes, yes. Just in my own office there is hardly a week or hardly a day that goes by that there is not some contact with the press that are interested in the various aspects of what we are doing there, and so forth.
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Hospitals, I would have to stop and think, really; hospitals, we have probably 12 or 14 major hospitals overrun by the enemy since I have been there.

Mr. WHITE. What has happened to those hospitals after they have been overrun?

Dr. WELDON. Most of them have been destroyed. I can’t think of any that have been overrun that are in use now. Now, don’t misunderstand me now, a lot of this has been subsequent to the fighting that went on in the area. In some instances the hospitals have been deliberately destroyed by the enemy, but most of them have just been a casualty of the war, if you know what I mean; I mean there was fighting in that area and they happened to get destroyed just like any other building happened to get destroyed.

Mr. WHITE. Do the North Vietnamese communists have the capability of continuing the operation of these hospitals after they have overrun the area?

Dr. WELDON. I don’t know whether they have the capability or not; that is a difficult question to answer, but they are not, I mean, as I say, they have not continued to operate these places.

Mr. WHITE. I am sure that you have had many visits from the American press and the world press. Have reporters that have visited over there evidenced an interest in the achievements of our mission in Laos?

Dr. WELDON. Oh, yes, yes. Just in my own office there is hardly a week or hardly a day that goes by that there is not some contact with the press that are interested in the various aspects of what we are doing there, and so forth.
Mr. Davis. But to work with the Lao people and the refugees mainly?

Dr. Weldon. There are only four of us.

Mr. Davis. This would be under AID, right?

Dr. Weldon. Yes, sir; there are no other American doctors in the country right now, just the four that work with AID.

Mr. Davis. You say the higher education consisted of medicine and law and administration. What has been our contribution in the medical field there? Have you all been assisting in the teaching?

Dr. Weldon. Yes, sir. One of the programs that I first tried to develop there was—when I say “medical school,” this also includes the school of nursing, and we, the United States has supported the development of a nursing school. This was strictly a United States project. I thought this was the area where we had the most critical need, even more so than doctors at that time, but today there is not a Lao R.N. Next June we will graduate our first Lao R.N., you know, an accredited person with a diploma. But this is a program we developed.

Now we will give them quite a bit of assistance in the medical school, but most of the development of the medical school has been by the French, most of the assistance that has gone into it has been by the French, and I have deliberately stayed away from it. We have enough problems as it is. If they will do something, we are tickled to death for them to do it. We have worked in a cooperative fashion with the French, and if things bog down, we try to be of help, and so forth.

Mr. Davis. Has there been an effort to disturb this by the communists?

(At this point Mr. Ashbrook left the hearing room.)

Dr. Weldon. No, I would say not. I can’t think of anything; no.

Mr. Davis. Thank you.

Mr. White. Of course, the nursing school there is somewhat removed physically from the communist area of influence, isn’t it, Dr. Weldon?

Dr. Weldon. Yes, this is in the capital city of Vientiane.

Mr. White. In the creation of the nursing school and establishing a nursing course, did you have any psychological elements of tradition to overcome with the women of Laos?

Dr. Weldon. I am talking about the more formal aspects of training. Now we have done a lot of impromptu training; I don’t know exactly how many. But out in the countryside through the medical programs we are trying to develop in a country that has no medical resources, we have trained at least 2,000 people as types of nurses and medics and everything else. We have had a lot of problems in training because many of the people that we had to work with didn’t speak Lao. About 60 percent of the people in Laos are not Lao ethnically, they are not Lao type people, they are the so-called ethnic minorities like the Meo, the Lao Tung, the Tai, the Lue, all sorts of people there; and a lot of these people, their first language is not Lao, and a lot of the girls can’t speak Lao. So, when we first started the program, trying to develop some sort of medical attention out in the countryside, the first problem we had was teaching these kids how to speak Lao so we could have a common language to communicate in.