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

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

(8) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 24014Z Jul 61; (C) Msg, OSD to CINCPAC, DEF 999725, 28 Jul 61.

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

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

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

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


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

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

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

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 151, 28 Jul 61.
28 Jul - 16 Aug 61

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

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

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

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

The Secretary of State, upon learning of Phoumi's proposed revision, informed Ambassador Brown on 16 August that the document remained "highly unsatisfactory" and urged that the RLG...
the RLG withdraw it. On the following day, however, Ambassador Brown reported that the amended version had on the 14th been introduced at the Ban Namone conference (see items 12 and 29 August 1961).

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

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

In addition, US diplomatic representatives in London, Paris, and Geneva were instructed to point out to the French and British the importance to the "entire program of deterrence" of obtaining an effective ICC and the fact that those who
who desired a settlement should realize that "there is a price to pay." In this case, the price was a strong ICC. If France and the UK did not want SEATO action, observed the Secretary of State, "then let them support us in securing proper controls to safeguard the free world interest." Also, the French, subject to the concurrence of the US delegation at Geneva, might be persuaded to sound out Souvanna on the subject of the ICC.

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

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

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

Phoumi, the Ambassador continued, "must be made to realize that as the representative of a minority (at least in the sense..."
sense of military strength and probably in the next coalition government) he cannot survive without help and support from a fully effective ICC. Souvanna must be convinced that a written guarantee of such an ICC is an essential prerequisite of any US support for him as Prime Minister."

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

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

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

30, 31 Jul 61 CHMAAG Laos in a message to CINCPAC, and the US Ambassador in Laos in a message to the Department of State, recommended that RB-26 "Eyeball" reconnaissance missions be resumed. (B-26 reconnaissance flights had previously been authorized on 26 April (see item) "until the cease-fire"; they had consequently ceased on 3 May.) These missions were deemed necessary to obtain adequate intelligence on enemy build up and resupply activities. Both officials stated further that the C-45 and PV-2 aircraft presently conducting "eyeball" reconnaissance flights could not carry on against the improving Communist anti-aircraft defenses.

(See items 27 and 29 August 1961.)
31 Jul 61 The Geneva Conference engaged in a three-day discussion of whether a continued French military presence in Laos should be specifically mentioned in the proposed declaration of Laotian neutrality. The US and UK supported France by urging the exemption of French contingents from any blanket requirement for the withdrawal from Laos of all foreign troops. The RLG, however, merely stated that the status of the existing French Military Mission had been fixed by an agreement negotiated between the two Governments involved and that, for this reason, the future of the mission was a matter that should be reserved for the coalition government. The NLHX opposed this perpetuation of French influence. Souvanna's delegation at first supported fully the NLHX position, then declared that the Zurich communique (see item 22 June 1961) required the evacuation of French personnel but that the status of the Seno base should be the subject of future negotiations.

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

(C) Msg, Geneva to SecState, CONFE 488, 4 Aug 61.
1 Aug 61  The Deputy Secretary of Defense requested that the JCS undertake a study of force requirements for Southeast Asia. The purpose of the study would be "to set forth a force structure (US and Allied) to include forces deployed on the mainland of Southeast Asia and in reserve, which is considered capable of holding non-Communist Southeast Asia against attack by the Communist Bloc, including Communist China." The area to be held would include Thailand, Cambodia, South Viet Nam, and "the necessary southern part of Laos"; however, other less ambitious lines of defense might also be examined. The study should state the requirements for defense of the area both "under conditions in which neither side employ nuclear weapons" and "under conditions in which either side initiates the use of nuclear weapons." The study should, finally, include an assessment of the logistical problems for both sides. It should assume the cooperation of the Southeast Asian SEATO Allies and should cover the time span 1962-1966.

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

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

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

After making this general statement, the Secretary of State discussed five facets of US policy: 1) the ICC; 2) International
2) international aspects of the cease-fire and the re-organization of a unified Lao Army; 3) the formation of a government of national union; 4) tactics for the Geneva Conference; and 5) present courses of action to be continued by the US. In addition, the Secretary of State asked the US diplomatic representatives in Geneva and Vientiane for recommendations on how to convince Souvanna that a "satisfactory" ICC was an "essential element" of a Laotian settlement.

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

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

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

4. US tactics at the Geneva Conference. The Secretary of State believed that the US delegation should attempt "to get the equipment and access issues satisfactorily resolved insofar as the existing ICC is concerned" before the Conference neared the end of its agenda. In the event that the Conference bogged down completely, the US would seek an indefinite suspension on the basis of a continued cease-fire rather than move to have the Conference terminated. If the Conference were indeed suspended before action could be taken on the reform of the existing ICC, the US would simply declare that the commission's supervision of the cease-fire was inadequate but take no action to end the commission's activities. In the meantime, the US would continue working with Souvanna and the RLG to obtain a satisfactory cease-fire, an accomplishment which could lead to the resumption of the suspended
5. **Present US courses of action.** The US, in Secretary Rusk's opinion, would have to continue to support the existing RLG, train and equip the FAL, and seek implementation and further development of plans to contain Pathet Lao and Viet Minh armed forces and of programs of political action, economic aid, and technical assistance.

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

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

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

Because of Souvanna's habit of not consulting with his colleagues, the anti-Communist ministers would have to be strong men, capable of overcoming the Prince's autocratic tendencies. In addition, the membership of the cabinet should,
should, in the Ambassador's opinion, provide appropriate representation to the various provinces.

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

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

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

Situation 2. An attempt by Phoumi, with or without the King's consent, to maintain the Boun Oum Government after the collapse of negotiations among the Princes and in the face of pressure from Souvanna and Scumphancuong.
In this situation, which he considered the likeliest of the three, the Deputy Under Secretary suggested that the US "offensive" be based "first from Vietnam and also from Laos." The operation in Laos, however, "would be a holding one or one that would strengthen an operation by the RLG, supported by the Thai and Vietnamese, in the panhandle. American support would be kept to a minimum as far as ground operations were concerned." The US, he continued, "should contemplate carrying the offensive in its final stages to the DRV itself" (see item 7 August 1961).

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

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

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

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

5 Aug 61 After conferring at Phnom Penh on 1, 2, and 4 August, Princes Boun Oum and Souvanna distributed to the press a joint communique summarizing the results of their meeting.
The communique stated that, subject to the approval of the absent Prince Souphanouvong, they had agreed to cooperate in establishing a true coalition cabinet which would not be a mere enlargement of the former cabinet of either Prince. They agreed to a future meeting at Luang Prabang, a session to which Prince Souphanouvong would be invited. This meeting was to be held after delegations from the three factions had, during the meetings at Ban Namone or at some other acceptable site, studied the issues involved in forming a new government (see item 6 September 1961).

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

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

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

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

7 Aug 61
The JCS forwarded to CINCPAC for his comments, a "Concept for Multinational Task Force Operations in Southeast Asia." This
This paper, developed in the Joint Staff, (see item 11 July 1961) set forth a plan for securing and defending the remaining friendly areas in Southeast Asia subsequent to a division of Laos. Presuming a RLG appeal to the Free World nations for military assistance, the plan established a multinational task force (MTF), comprised of non-mainland-Southeast Asian countries, which would deploy to Thailand, South Viet Nam, and southern Laos to free the native armies of these nations to conduct "other military activities."

The MTF would also be prepared to conduct offensive air, naval, and guerrilla operations from its positions against northern Laos, North Viet Nam and southern China, as applicable.

The plan called for the deployment of the following forces:

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

j. Philippine and UK forces (if available) held in reserve in Thailand.

k. French forces (if available) to assist in securing the Seno area.

2. Indigenous Forces

a. 1 Thai infantry division to Sayboury province.

b. Available South Vietnamese forces to the Lao-South Viet Nam border areas.

c. The FAL would secure Luang Prabang and, if the New Zealand contribution did not materialize, Paksane.

d. Other Thai, South Vietnamese, and Lao forces would intensify their respective internal security activities.

(Presumably as a result of CINCPAC's strong objections (see item 20 July 1961), this plan differed significantly in concept from its original version (see item 11 July 1961). The MTF concept took into account CINCPAC's views that any operation of this type should take place within a "SEATO framework." Also, in harmony with CINCPAC's warning that the US should not promulgate any plan that reduced US contributions in Laos, the plan provided US forces as large as those envisaged for SEATO Plan 5 (see item 5 April 1961). Moreover, the plan, which originally had specified simply that US force contributions would be "minimum" and Southeast Asian contributions "maximum," now stipulated that "without reducing the priority of US force deployments, emphasis will be placed on the conspicuous utilization of Asian forces." (See item...
7 Aug 61 The CJCS responded to a Presidential query regarding the current status of Wattay (Vientiane) and Seno (Savannakhet) airfields. Both airfields, said the Chairman, were in "good" condition. Wattay's capacity was 36 sorties daily by either C-124 or C-130 aircraft; Seno could handle 60 sorties, but could not be used by fully loaded C-124s.

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

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

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

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

7 Aug 61 The foreign ministers of the US, UK, and France, in session in Paris, agreed that their three governments should seek a basis
basis for a common policy supporting Souvanna as Prime Minister of a neutral Lao Government. However, in order to arrive at such a basis, prior understanding should be sought with Souvanna and other Lao leaders on: 1) composition of the neutral government; 2) the role of the ICC; 3) the future of the Lao Army and the problem of PL forces; and 4) the French military presence. Regarding tactics, the ministers agreed that the French should make the initial approach to Souvanna, emphasizing the Western consensus on composition of the government and the future of the FAL; the British would follow up, concentrating on the role of the ICC and the French military presence. Simultaneously, the US would inform the RLG of the tenor of the Western position and attempt to persuade the RLG to conform to this position in its negotiations with Souvanna (see item 9-11 August 1961).

The following were the agreed positions of the three nations:

1. Composition of a Neutral Lao Government

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

   Further, Souvanna would be "expected" to postpone national elections until: a) suitable provision had been made for handling the problem of PL forces; b) the non-Communist
non-Communist elements had been able to organize their political strength; and c) a "satisfactory degree of tranquility" had been restored to Laos.

2. The ICC

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

3. The Laotian Army and PL Forces

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

4. The French Presence

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

Reporting to the Department of State, the Secretary of State noted he had told his conferees that the US would be in no way obligated to the above agreement if a new Lao Government
Government was constituted "in such a manner as to make neutrality impossible."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

8, 9 Aug 61 The Department of State, believing that "closer definition" should be given to the "key" portfolios of a Lao coalition government (as discussed by the US, UK, and French foreign ministers; see item 7 August 1961), requested Ambassador Brown on 8 August to give his views on the relative importance of cabinet posts. The Department felt that Defense, Interior (if the police fell under it), Youth, Veterans, Religion, and Social Affairs were posts which should "definitely" be denied the PL; Foreign Affairs, Education, and Information, while also important, formed a second category. The remaining posts (e.g., Finance, Economic Affairs, et al) might with less risk be entrusted to the PL.

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

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

8-11 Aug 61

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

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

9-11 Aug 61

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

(S) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState, 209 and 216, 9 Aug 61; 221, 10 Aug 61; 237, 11 Aug 61. (S) Msg, SecState CIRC 219, 8 Aug 61.

11 Aug 61

Ambassador Brown, commenting upon the Secretary of State's recent statement of "over-all strategy" for Laos (see item 2 August 1961).
2 August 1961) stated that the "basic factor in Laos today which in its impact overrides all others" was the military situation on the ground. The US would continue to operate at a disadvantage as long as this situation continued to favor the Communists. This factor affected US efforts to:

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

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

The military imbalance also served to weaken the effectiveness of US efforts to "hold and force back pro-Communist NLFX and followers" by political action and economic and technical assistance programs. The good results of such programs tended to vanish rapidly when villagers were threatened with the loss of life by the PL. Self-preservation, which was the most important consideration of the average Lao, would probably determine how he would vote in any future election. Nevertheless, Brown recognized the need for continuing and even stepping up activities in the "political-psychological action area." It was clearly essential for the
US not only to assist the RLG in "immunizing" areas still under its control against Communist blandishments and encroachments, but also to build up a solid base for expansion of such activities if and when the situation permitted. Aside from military strength, what was most needed in Laos, stated Brown, was a strong cadre of dedicated, brave and effective local provincial administrators and civil servants, including police.

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

12 Aug 61

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

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

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

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

There was little doubt, the Ambassador continued, of Phoumi's willingness to regroup his forces in the south; he had long indicated that such an operation was "in the back of his mind." The Ambassador had in fact long feared that Phoumi would prematurely launch such an operation and be crushed. Moreover, Phoumi would be glad to cooperate with the Thai and South Vietnamese.
The US Country Team in Laos submitted its recommendations for future Meo operations under several possible conditions, as follows:

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

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

**Situation No. 3.** A coalition government unsatisfactory to the US would be formed. The US might in this case: 1) maintain only a minimal diplomatic presence in Laos; 2) withdraw.
2) withdraw diplomatic recognition entirely; or 3) support the present RLG, the Thai, and South Vietnamese in an attempt to defend a partitioned Laos. In either of the first two alternatives, the US should continue whatever assistance was necessary for the evacuation of those Meo who wished to leave Laos. In the third alternative, the US might wish either to support the Meo in their present locations or to resettle them in southern Laos.

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

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

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

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

The meetings at Ban Nampone continued in a virtual deadlock over the method of selecting a Prime Minister for the coalition government. The RLG delegation insisted that the names of at least two candidates for the office of Prime Minister be submitted to the King, but the other delegations demanded the submission of a single name, that of Souvanna. The military subcommittee, facing an impasse over the effective date of the cease-fire, decided to postpone a decision on this question and agreed instead that, whatever the effective date, all troops would remain in the positions occupied at that time.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

15 Aug 61 Ambassador Brown reported as requested (see item 3 August 1961) on the status of US intelligence collection in Laos.
The Ambassador stated that efforts to gather overt intelligence information had been restricted by the combat situation in, and the de facto division of, Laos. Intelligence collected in Communist-held areas was limited to normal combat intelligence reports, aerial reconnaissance, and reports from other friendly governments - the French, and occasionally the Canadian ICC members.

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

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

16 Aug 61

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

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

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

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

On 19 August, the Secretary of State, disturbed by CHMAAG's report, told Ambassador Brown that Phoumi must be made to understand that "any unilateral action on his part designed to lead to resumption of hostilities would be strongly
strongly opposed by the USG[overnment] and considered a breach of faith . . . ."

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

17, 22 Aug 61

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

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

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

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

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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 Aug 61</td>
<td>The Chairman, JCS, forwarded to General Taylor, at the request of General Taylor's office, a report on the status of military supplies available in Laos and Thailand to support the PAL if hostilities were resumed. The report listed the tonnage in depot of each class of supplies, the quantities of all types of weapons and ammunition, and the days of combat that could be supported by the present stocks of each class of supplies. There were presently no critical shortages for approved MAP units in Laos, the Chairman said; however, Phoumi was creating and equipping unauthorized units and thereby siphoning off supplies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>19 Aug 61</td>
<td>Phoumi formally requested of CHMAAG that the US approve and provide support for the following augmentation of Lao armed forces:</td>
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**Regular**
In his request, Phoumi informed the US for the first time that the ADO forces had in fact been dissolved as of 1 January 1961 (see items 23 October and 29 November 1961). He also showed a keen recognition that leadership was the most serious FAL deficiency and indicated that he would accept Thai cadres to advise FAL units down to the squad level.

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

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

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

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 279, 19 Aug 61.
19 Aug 61  Soviet Ambassador Abramov called upon the King at Vientiane, and delivered a three-point message: the USSR backed Souvanna fully; a government of national union must be formed quickly; and the USSR desired a neutral Laos. The Soviet emissary was friendly and respectful during his audience, demanding nothing and hinting that "some results would shortly come out of Geneva." His "soft approach" mystified the King, Boun Oum, and Phoumi.

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

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

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

The basic plan.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4. Measures
4. Measures to "prevent unwarranted 'evaporation' of either [police] funds or material."

5. End-use audits by the USOM, when required.

6. Approval by both the director of police, or his deputy, and the Chief, Public Safety Division, USOM, of all large payments from USOM funds and of all building contracts involving USOM-provided funds.

Assumptions upon which the plan was based.

1. Any coalition government would either be friendly enough to the US to agree to such a plan or, at the least, reluctant to discard the plan if it were already in operation.

2. If no coalition could be formed and the country was divided, the need for a national police of this type would be even greater.

3. France would not be engaged in the development of a Lao national gendarmerie.

4. If a representative of the Pathet Lao became Minister of Interior, the program would have to be either terminated or altered.

   (See item 31 August 1961).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The US, CINCPAC argued in conclusion, could gain by "further hardening" its position in Laos, and giving the "full measure" of its support to Phoumi, the one Lao leader who "has stood the test of time and adversity."
22 Aug 61 The JCS, adopting the recommendations of CHMAAG Laos (see item 10 June and 14, 15 August 1961) and CINCPAC, requested that the Secretary of Defense approve the augmentation of MAAG Laos by 10 additional WSMTTs (increasing the WSMTT forces from 166 to 330 men). (See item 26 and 29 August 1961.)

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

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

The US should not, however, Ambassador Young recommended, desert SEATO at this time. First of all, there was "no immediate alternative that would not entail unacceptable risk of future serious decline in US prestige and increased weakening of Southeast Asia." And second, SEATO retained some "assets": it was the legal framework of the US commitment to defend Southeast Asia; and its Asian and Pacific members were "relatively cooperative" with the US.
Since, said Ambassador Young, the basic weakness of the alliance was the membership of France, the US should consider "whether the French would tactfully disengage from SEATO." If France would not withdraw from the alliance, the US should secure an "explicit understanding" that France would not veto "operations even if they cannot join them."

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

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

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

1. To fill requirements for supplies and equipment for PAL troop units.

2. To meet the current requirements for training and "small scale combat operations."

3. To provide a 30-day war reserve in Thailand, with all withdrawals controlled by CINCPAC (Project SALT SHAKER).

CHMAAG, with Ambassador Brown's concurrence, replied on 25 August that CINCPAC's supply concept was "entirely adequate." Equally as important as the quantity of supplies, however, CHMAAG noted, was the control, distribution, and safeguarding.
safeguarding of them. At present, the US had no control over materiel once it arrived in Laos. Much equipment was siphoned off to "units which Phoumi creates at the drop of a hat"; consequently, authorized units were always short of equipment. With resumption of hostilities possibly imminent and "time running out," the most effective solution for FAL logistics would be for the US to "move in and run it." In this way, the US would not only ensure effective logistical operations in Laos; the US would also erect a major barrier to Phoumi's creating further unauthorized units.

(S) Msgs, CINCPAC to CHMAAG Laos, DA-IN142448, 22 Aug 61; Laos to CINCPAC, DA-IN144137, 26 Aug 61.

24 Aug 61

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

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

24 Aug 61

Ambassador Brown informed the Secretary of State that, almost for the first time, he had had what might be considered a "genuine" consultation with Phoumi. The Laotian General had opened the conversation by asking, in effect, whether the US was still determined to find a political solution by negotiation. At the Ban Namone meetings, Phoumi reported, the other side was continuing to insist on the acceptance of Souvanna as the sole candidate for Prime Minister. In addition, they were insisting that the King shoul
should be presented with a full state of ministers so that, virtually, he would be handed a Prime Minister and a government for his approval, but without any choice on his part.

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

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

The second alternative, Phoumi said, was to drop the Ban Namone talks--drop Souvanna--and have direct negotiation between Boun Oum and Souphanouvong. Getting "rid of the neutralists" would permit direct confrontation with the enemy to try to work out some kind of solution, Phoumi added. In response to Brown's question on who would be a possible PM emerging...
emerging from such negotiations, the Laotian General said
they they might be able to agree on some lesser figure,
like Kou Abhay.

(S) Mag, Vientiane to SecState, 318, 24 Aug 61.
24-27 Aug 61

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

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

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

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

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

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

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


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

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

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

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

26 Aug 61

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(See NSAM 80, item 29 August 1961.)

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

27 Aug 61

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

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

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

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


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