cease fire." In this circumstance, the RLG would appeal to SEATO; the US would seek to control the timing of this appeal.

2. A large scale Communist buildup that clearly indicated the imminent resumption of hostilities.

In either of these events, the US would request an urgent meeting of the UN Security Council in order to apply pressure upon the USSR to bring about an effective cease-fire. A resolution would be introduced containing: 1) Security Council endorsement of Laotian neutrality and territorial integrity; 2) a call to establish an effective cease-fire; 3) the establishment of small UN teams positioned at strategic points throughout Laos; and 4) a statement that SEATO forces would be withdrawn if the UN agreed upon the appropriate measures for an effective cease-fire. If the USSR vetoed such a resolution, "a move into the [General Assembly] would promptly be made."

Simultaneously with this UN action, SEATO would proceed to intervene, as the US had done in the Lebanon crisis. If unanimous SEATO agreement could not be obtained, the intervention would nonetheless be initiated by those members willing to participate.

The JCS "consideration" provided the concept of military actions in support of the political objective established by the Department of State. The JCS conceived of implementing a "SEATO Plan 5 Plus," involving 104,700 combat troops (5,500 US; 11,400 Thai; 4,400 Commonwealth; 1,400 Pakistani; 2,700 South Vietnamese; and 79,300 Laotian forces) and 18,300 reserve and support forces in Thailand (11,000 US and 7,300 non-US). This force represented an augmentation of SEATO Plan 5 by 10,800 men. The above forces might, moreover, be supplemented
supplemented by US Naval Task Forces and by a SEATO "general reserve" of 6,000 troops retained in the parent countries. All US combat forces included in this concept were presently assigned within PACOM and could, depending upon the preparatory measures undertaken, be deployed into Laos in from 12 to 96 hours. The Thai and Vietnamese forces would deploy at the same time as US forces. The Commonwealth and Pakistani forces would be deployed in from 72 hours to 2 weeks, depending upon the amount of advance notice, the condition of SEATO alert, and the availability of transportation; but the initiation of the operation would not need to be delayed pending their arrival. If any of the expected forces should not participate, they would be replaced by US forces.

The initial intervention would secure the key points along the Mekong River, including Vientiane, Pakse, Thakhek, Seno, Savannakhet, and Pakse. The SEATO forces would not attempt to occupy or retake Xieng Khouang or the Plaine des Jarres. If, after the SEATO forces had thus initially deployed, the UN action did not yield a favorable result, then the military actions would be expanded, as follows:

1. Thai forces would occupy Sayaboury province (west of Luang Prabang) to destroy the PL there and assist the FAR in defending Luang Prabang.

2. South Vietnamese forces - at least one RCT - would operate in Laos along the common border.

3. The FAR and other Laotian forces would conduct conventional and guerrilla operations to defeat the PL through the area defined by the political objective (see above).

4. The
4. The SEATO force would also participate in offensive ground and air operations against the enemy. They would support the FAR and South Vietnamese forces with combat air support within the air space of Laos. In addition they would provide support in logistics, communications, clandestine operations, and psychological warfare.

5. Finally, the US would seek to prevent major DRV intervention by demonstrations, perhaps over DRV territory, of "massive deterrent" US air power positioned in the area. The foregoing concept was sufficiently flexible, the JCS said, to be implemented under various circumstances and on short notice.

The general guidance for reaction to the contingencies that might arise, the JCS continued, would be "a response adequate to fulfill the stated military objective." Enemy military actions would not alter this objective, but could compel appropriate responses that would not necessarily be confined to Laos.

Against the Communist forces already in Laos, the SEATO forces deployed under this concept could accomplish the objectives stated, although the operation might require a "period of years." Despite this, the operation would net an immediate gain by forcing the PL from offensive to defensive operations and by raising the morale and effectiveness of the FAR and the Asian Allies.

If major DRV forces were introduced into Laos, SEATO and other friendly forces would strike at them without waiting for actual engagement, but would seek to confine the conflict to Laos. If DRV forces attacked the friendly forces, the allied forces would respond with air strikes at installations and lines of communication in North Viet Nam.

Without
Without prior warning it was likely that only US, Thai, and South Vietnamese forces could react in time to confront such DRV intervention. However, RLG forces would be able to offer at least "harassing, guerrilla, stay-behind" resistance, and the other allied forces could be expected to be forthcoming. In any event, the SEATO forces, assisted by the FAR, would oppose the enemy as far forward as possible. At the minimum, they would hold Vientiane, Thakhek, Savannakhet, and Pakse. South Vietnamese and Thai forces would move into the Bolovens plateau, and additional Thai forces would assist in the defense of Mekong River crossing points and would reinforce their own northern defenses against the possibility of Chinese Communist intervention.

In addition to intervening in Laos, the DRV could further expand the conflict by attacking South Vietnam. To counter such an invasion, to which it was estimated the DRV could commit five divisions, the SEATO force would have to be increased to approximately 226,000 men, and the US contribution to 129,000 men, not including naval forces. The SEATO force would have naval and air superiority and should prevail. Its mission would be to defend Laos and South Vietnam against the DRV and to inflict a quick and decisive defeat upon the DRV. Again the enemy would be engaged as far forward as possible, and his military installations and lines of communication attacked. SEATO forces would, when appropriate, mount a general offensive against the enemy and would, if the military situation dictated, have the capability to conduct amphibious assault operations in North Vietnam.

If the Chinese Communists intervened in Laos whether with regular or "volunteer" forces, the JCS continued, "political authorization for essential military actions must be anticipated
be anticipated, since prompt counteractions would be re-
quired." Questions at issue would be whether to attack
selected targets in South China with conventional weapons and
whether to initiate use of nuclear weapons against install-
ations in direct support of Chinese operations in Laos.

To face this joint Chinese-DRV invasion, the SEATO force
would be expanded to 15 divisions and 8 RCTs - 278,000 men.
The US would contribute three divisions deployed in Thailand
and South Viet Nam and one Marine Division/Wing Team prepared
for amphibious assault operations against North Viet Nam.
The mission of the SEATO force would become the defense of
Southeast Asia. The general concept of operations would be:
1) to delay the enemy's advance with local forces and restrict
his lines of communications with air and naval forces; 2) to
reinforce rapidly and establish ground defenses well forward
of the vital areas in South Viet Nam and Thailand; and 3) to
conduct an unremitting air and ground offensive against the
enemy's war-making capacity.

(See items 3 and 5 October 1961.)

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29 Sep 61 In a cable to the JCS, CINCPAC argued against the transfer
of responsibility for Meo operations presented in some detail the relationship between the
Meo and FAR, and between Phoumi and Vang Pao (see item 19
September 1961); the distinction between the "pure bonafide
FAR" and the training, logistical and financial arrangements used in support of the Meo. Among the
advantages CINCPAC saw for the present modus operandi were

1) the
1) the Meo were not subject to the "peculiarities" of FAR logistics; 2) the hazardous logistic support was conducted by highly experienced personnel; and 3) the "flexibility" of financing enabled the quick exploitation of opportunities, such as influencing village chiefs and providing immediate pay to new units. For these reasons, CINCPAC believed that the operations, which had been developed over an extended period of time and under actual operating conditions, were specifically applicable to the existing situation, were highly effective, and should not be disrupted "at this stage of the game" by a premature change of command. Further, CINCPAC said, he had intended to continue the present mode of action even when a US or SEATO counter-insurgency plan had been executed.

(On 4 October the JCS told CINCPAC they concurred in his conclusion that there should be no premature change of command. Nonetheless, the Joint Staff was required to develop a contingency plan involving such a change, and CINCPAC should submit the requested plan (see item 15 November 1961). CINCPAC's position that the plan should not be implemented would be considered by the JCS in connection with any recommendation they might make on its execution.) (See item 14 February 1962).

(TS) Msgs, CINCPAC to JCS, DA IN 156147, 29 Sep 61; JCS to CINCPAC, JCS 1757, 4 Oct 61; both in JMF 9155.2/3100 (28 Jul 61).

29 Sep 61 The three delegations negotiating in Ban Namone agreed that Princess Boun Oum, Souvanna and Souphanouvong would meet the first week in October at Ban Hin Heup (see item 6-8 October 1961).
30 Sep 61

From Geneva, Ambassador Harriman, in a message to the Secretary of State, suggested two critical objectives which the RLG should strive to attain during the forthcoming meeting of the Princes (see items 3 October and 6-8 October 1961). These objectives were the satisfactory composition of a coalition government and agreement among the Princes on the reconstitution of the Lao Army. Regarding the former, Ambassador Harriman believed that Ambassador Brown should be authorized "to agree with Phoumi" on the best of the various possible combinations. Regarding the latter, he stated that, as a "minimum understanding," the Princes should agree on the integration of forces, a census of forces, the formation on a proportional basis of a smaller army, and on the demobilization of excess troops and the storage of surplus armaments.

(S) Msg, Geneva to SecState, CONFE 680, 30 Sep 61.
1 Oct 61 CINCPAC conferred at Vientiane with Phoumi and Boun Oum. During the conference, Phoumi briefed Admiral Felt on the military situation, stating among other things that:

1. The FAR, by the end of the rainy season, would have complete control of the Phou Kha Khouai mountain range northeast of Vientiane.

2. While holding the Mekong, Nam Tha, Luang Prabang, Vientiane, and Savannakhet in spite of considerable enemy activity, the FAR and Meo units had engaged in operations north of Muong Beng, east and south of Sam Neua, north of the Plaine des Jarres, north and west of Xieng Khouang, and to the south toward Kham Keut.

3. The enemy remained capable of threatening Vientiane and Paksane.

4. The enemy seemed to have reduced his forces in the South and was directing his efforts toward threatening the cities of the Mekong valley and toward infiltrating through southern Laos into South Viet Nam.

5. Past fighting had left RLG forces in a favorable position from which to take the offensive.

6. A continuation of the cease-fire could permit the refitting and retraining of all FAR units.

7. Phoumi's forces were even now capable of seizing Xieng Khouang and threatening Ban Ban.

8. He had devised a contingency plan based on the existence of a firm defense and a striking force capable of either blocking enemy thrusts or taking the offensive. The plan was divided into three phases: a) Phase I, mop-up of the area controlled by the RLG, together with the refitting and retraining of all units; b) Phase II, which had been partially initiated, the reinforcement of FAR units in enemy-controlled
enemy controlled territory, along with the harassment of the enemy, and guerrilla activity; and c) Phase III, the re-occupation of enemy territory.

Following the briefing, Admiral Felt raised the question of the presence of US advisers at the battalion level. Phoumi replied that he had authorized US advisers at the company level and had agreed to a US adviser for every FAR armored vehicle.

Ambassador Brown took this opportunity to warn Phoumi against taking offensive action in defiance of the cease-fire. According to Admiral Felt, Phoumi replied that since the enemy did not respect FAR positions in the Sam Neua and Xieng Khouang areas, he did not feel obliged to respect enemy positions in Attopeu province.

Admiral Felt then told Phoumi that it would be wise to continue negotiations, since the additional time thus gained could be used to improve the effectiveness of the FAR. Phoumi responded by pointing out certain shortages of individual equipment, but General Boyle interjected that at the crux of the problem was the FAR's distribution of equipment to more units than were authorized under the MAP program.

Phoumi later told Admiral Felt that he had no confidence in Souvanna, whom he considered a tool of the Communists.

(On 28 September, Ambassador Harriman had objected to Admiral Felt's visiting Vientiane because of the danger that such a visit would raise doubts as to American sincerity in negotiating toward a settlement and also undermine the effect of previous US efforts to impress Phoumi with the need to negotiate in good faith. The Department of State, however, informed Ambassador Harriman that it did not consider the visit "a provocation in any sense," and that it believed Admiral
Admiral Felt might use his "considerable influence" to encourage Phoumi to negotiate in good faith. Ambassador Harriman thereupon told the Secretary of State that, since Admiral Felt planned to encourage Phoumi in this way, the visit might be most helpful.

(S) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, 04254, 10 Oct 61; (S) Msgs, Geneva to SecState, CONFE 667, 28 Sep 61; CONFE 673, 29 Sep 61; (S) Msg, State to Geneva, FECON NIAC T 461, 29 Sep 61.

2 Oct 61

While in Bangkok for the SEATO Military Advisers conference (see item 3-5 October 1961), CINCPAC conferred with Sarit concerning inter alia, a rotational training center in Thailand for US troops (see item 7 August 1961). Sarit thought such a center a "very good idea."

(S) Msg, Bangkok to SecState, 2186, 2 Oct 61.

3 Oct 61

The JCS forwarded to the Secretary of Defense a proposed State-Defense-Joint Staff outline program for limited holding actions in Southeast Asia. The plan was based on assumptions established by the Department of State. These assumptions were that: 1) there would be no political solution in Laos; 2) SEATO Plan 5 or a suitable variation would not be carried out; and 3) the Communists would continue to increase the scale of their military support and attacks. The program had as its objectives (also established by the State Department) to:

1. Delay further expansion and advance of Communist controlled areas toward the Thai, Cambodian, and Vietnamese frontiers; maintain current fluidity of military situation to hinder further hardening of Communist area and positions.

2. Maintain a fluid political situation in Laos to buy time for limited holding actions. Do not recognize a political division in Laos.

3. Make
3. Make the Communists understand that the scope of our action is limited.

The program envisioned the immediate implementation of step-by-step increases in the scope and tempo of current actions in Laos, "as determined in the field with no prior warning to the enemy." Operations would be conducted "at least through the dry season (May 1962)" by "existing US agencies in the field"; the US contribution would continue to be "advisory personnel" to Asian forces, and logistics support, including, if necessary, airlift.

The actions suggested in the program were:

1. Exploration of the possibility of stationing one US combat battalion in South Viet Nam for training purposes.

2. Rotation of battalion-size US elements into Thailand for combined SEATO training or as school troops.

3. Continued rotation of PACAF aircraft to Thailand and continued development of air defense facilities in Thailand and South Viet Nam.

4. A step up in the employment of US aircraft for tactical troop and logistic support.

5. Intensification of actions against Communist aerial resupply efforts.

6. Increase in Meo forces.

7. Use of defoliants and mines against Viet Cong access routes along the Laos-Viet Nam border, and exploration with the Thai of the use of defoliants.

8. Continued emphasis upon counter-insurgency programs in South Viet Nam.

9. Increase
11. Increase as feasible of covert activities in Communist-held areas, including North Viet Nam.


These programs would, if approved, be worked out in consultation with Sarit, Diem, and Phoumi. To preserve secrecy and speed of action, however, SEATO would have no responsibilities in the program; the SEATO Allies would only be "informed generally" as the program unfolded.

In their memorandum forwarding this program to the Secretary, the JCS stated that they did not endorse it as a desirable course of action. In the situation postulated by the assumption of the program the objectives would be self-defeating. Although the program did not explicitly "recognize" the political division of Laos, it "accepted" it. It assured the Communists that the US intended only to delay their final victory; it conceded the initiative to the enemy; and it gave "our friends no hope." The actions suggested in the program would, the JCS opined, "seriously undermine" the US military effort in the Far East and would place US forces and equipment in unnecessary jeopardy. Although they did not object to the use of the program for briefing the President, the JCS recommended strongly that the President be advised of their views.

(TS) JCSM-690-61 to SecDef, w/encl. 3 Oct 61, derived from JCS 2344/16, 2 Oct 61, JMF 9150/3100 (1 Oct 61).

The Deputy Secretary of Defense informed the JCS that he had reviewed the concept for intervention in Laos submitted by them on 29 September (see item). The Deputy Secretary raised a "fundamental question" regarding the concept - the feasibility
feasibility and desirability of undertaking an operation that might involve the use of one, two, or more divisions from CONUS reserves at a time of "great uncertainty" over possible developments in the Berlin crisis. The President's decision on the proposed plan might well hinge, the Deputy Secretary said, on "the risks of getting into a serious two-front situation."

The Deputy Secretary also requested clarification on two "lesser questions":

1. What would be the scale of the proposed naval forces to support the operations?
2. What would be the source of the "massive deterrent" US air power that the concept proposed to display to prevent DRV intervention in Laos?

(See item 5 October 1961.)

The US Ambassador in Vientiane, in a message to the Secretary of State, offered suggestions concerning the objectives which Phoumi, as spokesman for the Boun Oum faction, should seek during forthcoming meetings of the Princes. The choice of tactics by which to gain these ends would be left to the RLG negotiators. Ambassador Brown, after discussions with Phoumi, now sought the comments of the Secretary of State on suggested objectives related to the composition of the provisional government, the integration of the armed forces, the halting of Viet Minh infiltration, and the location of the administrative capital.

In the opinion of Ambassador Brown, the objective of the US regarding the composition of a provisional government was
was to insure "a sufficiently strong non-Communist presence" within the cabinet and army to give "reasonable assurance" that Laos would remain truly neutral in spite of Communist pressures. Essential to the fulfillment of this goal was the presence of a strong and balanced center group within the government. Ideally, such strength and balance could be obtained by dividing the 16-man cabinet so that the Pathet Lao-Souvanna group held eight posts, while the remainder were filled by non-Xieng Khouang neutrals and followers of Boun Oum and Phoumi. The Ambassador believed Phoumi should seek this equal division but be prepared to accept nine members of the Pathet Lao-Souvanna group. In exchange for key posts or for the appointment of strong personalities from within the RLG or from among the non-Xieng Khouang neutrals, Phoumi might agree to 11 Pathet Lao-Souvanna cabinet members.

The Ambassador, however, considered the appointment of strong non-Communists to key posts to be more important than the establishment of an apparently equitable numerical ratio among the various political factions. Because of Souvanna's "autocratic tendencies" and the certain presence in the cabinet of a disciplined leftist group, the non-Communists would have to be "vigorous, competent, and courageous," if they were to make their presence felt. For these reasons, Ambassador Brown suggested that Phoumi be urged to hold out for either the post of Minister of Defense, with control over the army, or Minister of Interior, with control over the police.

In making these suggestions regarding the composition of the government, the Ambassador admitted that it would be difficult, though worthwhile, to obtain a key position for Phoumi. Whatever his personal political fate, Phoumi should be urged
be urged to take into account the strength of personalities and the importance of the various portfolios rather than be allowed to accept a mere mathematical distribution of cabinet posts among the different factions.

Turning to the integration of the armed forces into a single national army, the Ambassador advised that Phoumi insist upon the adoption of an integration program before the coalition government actually took office. The integration would be completed and the excess troops demobilized before an election was held to choose a government to succeed the provisional coalition. The Ambassador also suggested that major staff and command positions be allocated according to the formula by which the army was integrated. Unless this were done, a political settlement might be undermined by the subsequent distribution of military positions in a manner unfavorable to the West. In addition, Ambassador Brown suggested that ranks in the new army be adjusted to compensate for the rate of promotion in the existing FAR, a rate believed to be slower than in the dissident armed forces.

In order to prevent Viet Minh infiltration, the US Ambassador believed that Phoumi should insist upon an explanation of how Souvanna intended to carry out his expressed intention of halting the passage of Viet Minh troops through Laos into South Viet Nam. Phoumi also was to insist that the provisional government declare at the very outset its intention to support the efforts of the ICC to prevent the infiltration of the Lao frontiers by foreign troops.

Finally, the Ambassador warned that Souvanna's desire to move the Laotian administrative capital to Xieng Khouang from Vientiane could adversely affect the political orientation of the nation. Souvanna felt that Vientiane was too close to Western influences in Thailand, but Ambassador Brown considered Xieng Khouang too
too near the borders of Communist North Viet Nam. Phoumi, it was suggested, should argue for the retention of Vientiane but be willing to propose that the more centrally located royal capital, Luang Prabang, serve also as administrative capital.

On 8 October, the Secretary of State forwarded to Ambassador Brown his comments on the suggested objectives outlined above. Regarding the composition of the provisional government, the Secretary of State agreed with the Ambassador's analysis of the various formulae for representation and with his emphasis upon the need for vigorous non-Communist cabinet members. Preferably, Phoumi would remain Minister of Defense, and "someone like Phoui Sananikone" would become Minister of Foreign Affairs. As a "partial fallback," Phoumi might serve as Minister of Interior and Phoui as Minister of Foreign Affairs. None of the key portfolios of Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Interior was to be given to members of the Communist NLHk or to members of Souvanna's group who were closely associated with that faction.

The Secretary of State, while expressing general agreement with the suggested objectives concerning the integration of forces, observed that more "concrete advice on details" might be forthcoming after Ambassador Brown had completed discussions with the representatives of the Western Allies in Vientiane and made his final recommendations (see item 20 October 1961).

Finally, the Secretary of State concurred in the suggested objectives for negotiations dealing with the prevention of Communist infiltration and the location of the administrative capital.

The
The SEATO Military Advisers (MILADs) met in Bangkok, with CINCPAC acting as US MILAD. The MILADs discussed and reached general agreement on SEATO Plan 4 (providing for defense of Southeast Asia against overt Chinese Communist and DRV attack) and SEATO Plan 6 (providing for defense of the Protocol States against DRV attack). In both cases, the US agreed (as the JCS had authorized CINCPAC to do on 24 August 1961) to serve as "appointed nation." Additionally, the MILADs, with a view toward easing any transitions from Plan 6 to Plan 4, agreed that the command structures for the two Plans should be similar. Thus, the US would provide the SEATO Force Commander for both Plans, and the Field Force Commander for Plan 6. For Plan 4, the larger concept, three regional Field Force commanders would serve under the Force Commander. The Central region, i.e., the principal region in which Plan 6 would be activated, would be commanded by a US officer with a Thai deputy; Pakistan and the Philippines would provide commanders for Western and Eastern regions respectively.

Having reached the above agreements, the MILADs further decided that the SEATO Council should be asked to approve them, and that each nation should declare its force commitments to the plans.


The JCS recommended to the Secretary of Defense that the FAR wartime force levels be raised, as recommended by CINCPAC (see item 9 September 1961), to a total strength of 62,321 (see item 19 October 1961).
Reviewing probable Bloc support of the Communist effort against South Viet Nam, Special National Intelligence Estimate 53-2-61 concluded, inter alia, that the Viet Cong probably intended, during the approaching dry season, to intensify its activities in the plateau areas of northern and central South Viet Nam. "To a considerable extent," the SNIE stated, the ability of the Viet Cong to maintain the expanded effort would depend upon improved logistical support from the outside. It was probable, for this reason, that the Bloc intended to build up the eastern sector of southern Laos as a "major supply channel" for this new Viet Cong campaign.
5 Oct 61 The JCS replied to the questions of the Deputy Secretary of Defense (see item 3 October 1961) regarding the proposed concept for military intervention in Laos (see item 29 September 1961). Addressing the Deputy Secretary's basic question concerning the dangers of simultaneous flare-ups in Berlin and Laos, the JCS stated that over a period of time they had examined various alternatives with regard to Laos and Southeast Asia and had recommended certain military actions short of US intervention that might have retrieved the situation. However, the JCS continued, "the time was now past when action short of intervention by outside forces could reverse the rapidly worsening situation." Execution of SEATO Plan 5, or a suitable variation thereof, was now "the military minimum commensurate with the situation." Without an acceptable political settlement prior to the resumption of overt hostilities, there was "no feasible military alternative of lesser magnitude which will prevent the loss of Laos, South Vietnam and ultimately Southeast Asia." If the execution of SEATO Plan 5 caused escalation, additional mobilization would be required. Nonetheless, as the JCS had previously stated (see item 7 September 1961), the US could not afford to become "preoccupied with Berlin to the extent that we close our eyes to the [critical] situation in Southeast Asia." In fact, the JCS had agreed in connection with Berlin planning that the execution of SEATO Plan 5 would be an effective counter to any Soviet denial of access to Berlin. It was not a question, the JCS concluded, of the desirability of prosecuting two limited wars at the same time. Rather, they said, "the
"the fact of the matter is that we may be faced with such a contingency."

The JCS also replied to the Deputy Secretary's two "lesser questions" (see item 3 October 1961), as follows:

1. The naval forces in support of SEATO Plan 5 operations would consist of one or two attack carrier strike groups with supporting forces, the employment of which would not unacceptably reduce Seventh Fleet capabilities in the remainder of WESTPAC. In the event of Chinese Communist intervention and the resulting additional naval deployments, elements of the First Fleet would deploy from EASTPAC to replace the WESTPAC striking power diverted to Southeast Asia.

2. The "massive deterrent" US air power that would put on a "show of force" over North Vietnam could be "displayed" by the air forces assigned to SEATO Plan 5, by other PACOM aircraft, or by SAC training flights. Such an exercise would not "dilute" other deployments and would moreover serve the secondary purpose of providing useful reconnaissance.

5, 6, 7, 10 Oct 61

The Service Chiefs submitted to the JCS their respective comments on the preliminary report of the Southeast Asia Study Group (see item 18 September 1961). The CSA and the CMC both considered the assumption of the report, that the Chinese Communists would not be provided nuclear weapons by the USSR, to be "unrealistic." The CNO considered the report's statement that escalation would be the worry of the Chinese "not entirely valid." CSAF stated his similar worry differently: "the proposed force requirements would," he said, "be invalidated in the event of participation, even of a covert
covert nature, by the USSR."

CSA had several more basic objections to register. The Study Group proposal that the US employ nuclear weapons from the outset of any war in Southeast Asia appeared, CSA said, to be based on the assumption, *inter alia*, that the Chinese would not have a retaliatory capability - this, as stated above, he considered an unrealistic assumption.

The logistics section of the study was "misleading," CSA continued. It failed to take into consideration the logistic capabilities of the Army forces that would support the four-phased military operations. Also, the conclusion that the use of nuclear weapons would be accepted by the Southeast Asia Allies was unproven, and the possible calamitous effect of such employment on world opinion was ignored.

The CSA then reminded the JCS that their approved revision of Basic National Security Policy had emphasized a change in policy for the employment of nuclear weapons in limited war, as follows:

a. Make every feasible effort to keep the war at a non-nuclear level but be prepared to use nuclear weapons when required; and

b. meet non-nuclear attacks with a nuclear response when vital interests cannot be defended at the non-nuclear level.

The implication of the study was that a Chinese nonnuclear attack on SEATO forces and bases would be considered as escalation and US use of nuclear weapons would be considered mandatory. This need not necessarily be true, CSA said, and again he cited chapter and verse of the JCS-approved Basic National Security Policy:

1. A limited war should be conducted in a manner which "controls the scope and intensity of the conflict to minimize the risk of escalation to general war."

2. Should
2. Should limited war occur, the US would "prevent undesired escalation of the war and prevent the accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons."

With US escalation mandatory and directed at a decisive defeat of Communist China, the result would be general war - a situation CSA believed "could be avoided by actions less drastic than those visualized by the study group."

There was, CSA said finally, no justification for concluding that a nonnuclear war in Southeast Asia would be unsuccessful for the US and its Allies. In accordance with national policy and military planning, therefore, the US should not predetermine a reliance on nuclear weapons. Rather, the US should use nuclear weapons only if the enemy initiated their use or if their use was necessary to defend the vital interests of the US.

(See items 12 October 1961 and 15 November 1961.)

(TS) JCS 2339/25, JCS 2339/26, JCS 2339/27, all 10 Oct 61, and JCS 2339/28, 11 Oct 61; all in JMF 9150/3410 (1 Aug 61).

Concerned by reports of increased Viet Cong infiltration through southern Laos into South Viet Nam, CINCPAC, in a message to PACAF, noted that the RT-33 and RB-26 aircraft were incapable of providing photographic coverage of Laos in the "space and time frame required," and expressed his belief that an RF-101 unit with its supporting photo processing center should be moved to Viet Nam or perhaps to Thailand in order to provide the necessary coverage. CINCPAC then requested the opinions of CHJUSMAG Thailand and CHMAAG Laos on the possible use of RF-101s.

(On 15 October, CHMAAG Laos stated his own and Ambassador Brown's endorsement of the proposed employment of RF-101s)
RF-101s over Laos. In addition, he recommended that consider- 
ation be given to establishing an air courier service to fly prints from the airfield at Don Muang, Thailand, to Bangkok. CHJUSMAG Thailand reported on 17 October that the US Ambassador at Bangkok approved basing the RF-101s at Don Muang but believed that, pending further discussions with the RTG, the reconnaissance coverage should be confined to Laos. (See item 17 October 1961.)

(S) Msg, CHMAAG Viet Nam to CINCPAC, 100909Z Sep 61; (S) Msg CINCPAC to PACAF, DA IN 158822, 6 Oct 61; (S) Msg, CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC, DA IN 163053, 15 Oct 61; (S) Msg, CHJUSMAG Thailand to CINCPAC, DA IN 162368, 17 Oct 61.

6 Oct 61

The JCS, responding to a 3 July 1961 request by the Secretary of Defense (see item), forwarded to the Secretary detailed data on logistic, airfield, and lines of communication improvements required for Southeast Asia. The requirements listed had an estimated cost of $626.81 million and included the following projects for Laos:

1. Improvement of Wattay airfield (Vientiane).
2. Construction of two roads from Attopeu, Laos: one to Ban Het, Viet Nam and one to Ubon, Thailand.
3. Prepositioning of 8 mechanized landing craft (LCM) at four Mekong River crossing points between Laos and Thailand.
4. Increased air terminal facilities at Seno.
5. Negotiation for entry and base rights in Laos, as required.
6. Provision for "support of combat attrition . . . in the event of resumption of hostilities."
7. Various communications improvements.

(On 22
(On 22 October, CINCPAC, who had been asked to designate his priority needs from among the total requirements, classed the improvement to Wattay airfield as "urgently required.")

(On 13 October, the JCS decided that they were in general agreement with the Australian views. They authorized the Director, Joint Staff, to so inform the Australian 237
6-8 Oct 61

Princes Souvanna, Boun Om, and Souphanouvong conferred on 6 October at Ban Hin Heup concerning the establishment of a coalition government.

At the conclusion of the day's talks, the Princes issued a communique which stated that they had formed a joint committee to summarize the differences of opinion among the factions in order that these conflicts could be resolved by the Princes themselves. The newly-created committee immediately began discussing the selection of a Prime Minister, the size of the cabinet, and the distribution of portfolios.

On 8 October, the three Princes sought to resolve some of the differences that had come to light during the committee sessions. The Princes approved the creation of a 16-man cabinet, agreed that the Prime Minister and Vice President of Council would hold portfolios, and decided to present Souvanna to the King for designation as head of the coalition government (see item 18 October 1961). In addition, they directed the committee to continue its discussions and made Souvanna responsible for choosing the time and site of the next meeting of the Princes.
Teams's views of the Ryan Plan (see item 31 August 1961).

The Secretary of State, although aware of the need for "maximizing" Western influence in Souvanna's expanded police force, did not believe that the Ryan Plan should be put into effect at this time. In addition to those arguments previously conveyed to the Secretary of State by Ambassador Brown, the major reasons for delaying implementation were that: 1) the French, who were likely to have the primary training mission within the Lao Ministry of Defense, would desire and would receive the task of training the gendarmerie as well; and 2) Souvanna appeared unwilling or unable to accept the Ryan Plan.

The subject of the Lao national police, the Secretary of State added, would be considered further after talks with the French (see item 30 October 1961).

(On 15 October, Ambassador Brown, who continued to believe that the Ryan Plan should be put into effect at this time, informed the Secretary of State that, if the plan were not adopted in its entirety, the Ambassador hoped that the French could be persuaded to modify their proposed gendarmerie program to include a provincial police force and to assign the US a role in training and advising as well as in financing the police organization. (For the French plan, see item 21 October 1961.))

(S) Msg, State to Vientiane, 322, 8 Oct 61; (S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 592, 15 Oct 61.

The President directed several courses of action with regard to Viet Nam, among which were:

1. The initiation of guerrilla actions, including the use of US advisers if necessary, against Viet Cong aerial re-supply missions in the Tchepone area in Laos.

2. A mission by General Taylor to South Viet Nam to explore ways in which US assistance could be more effective (see item 3 November 1961).

(TS) NSAM 104, 13 Oct 61, att to JCS 2339/30, 18 Oct 61.
The JCS informed the Secretary of Defense that, subject to his approval, they had authorized CINCPAC (the implementing message to CINCPAC was actually dispatched on 12 October 1961) to "program for" the increase in WSMT personnel in Laos (from 330 to 500 personnel) directed by the President on 29 August (see item).

(On 25 October, the Director of Military Assistance, OASD(ISA), informed the JCS that OSD programming and funding actions for support of the increased WSMTTs had been initiated.)

12 Oct 61

The Deputy Secretary of Defense commented to the JCS upon the preliminary report of the Southeast Asia Study Group (see item 18 September 1961). The report provided considerable information on the problem of combating Communist activities in Southeast Asia, the Deputy Secretary said; especially useful was the material assembled on logistics. Final judgment and approval of the concepts and options set forth in the study were reserved, however, pending the submission of a final report. The Deputy Secretary suggested that, in the next phase of the study, emphasis be given to the following subjects:

1. The analysis of the pattern of military operations that might develop following the intervention of US and other external forces in the area.

2. The possibility of combating some types of Chinese Communist/DRV aggression in the area with a relatively small number of US ground forces aided by sizeable US air and naval forces. This investigation should identify the threshold at which large scale US intervention on the ground would be necessary.

3. The
3. The implications for our position in Southeast Asia if limited, selective use of nuclear weapons by the US is met by comparable use of nuclears by the Soviet Union.

4. The development of alternative logistics proposals for the area to include not only infrastructure but also prestocking of materiel and other related measures.

(See item 15 November 1961.)

(TS) Memo, DepSecDef to CJCS, 12 Oct 61, att to JCS 2339/29, 13 Oct 61.

13 Oct 61

The Vice Director, Joint Staff, furnished to CJCS a report by Brigadier General William H. Craig, senior member of a Joint Survey Team that had visited Laos, Thailand, and South Viet Nam during August 1961. The missions of the Survey Team had been, General Craig reported, the following:

1. To determine the situation in Laos.

2. To develop a library of information to augment that available in Washington.

3. To explore the possible resumption of full-scale hostilities in Laos.

4. To visit specified areas where US supported operations are or may be carried out.

5. To note UW capabilities, to include Meo operations.

The "observations" of the team were as follows:

1. Leadership: Despite extensive US training efforts, FAR combat capabilities "vis-a-vis the Viet Minh" had not appreciably increased, inasmuch as the rebels had also been preparing for resumption of hostilities.

Lack of leadership was the major FAR deficiency. At the top there was Phoumi--"a real driving force, the only one... observed in Laos," but "a poor organizer who does not know how to delegate." Phoumi's criterion for selection
selection of key subordinates was loyalty, not ability, and in consequence incompetent senior officers were retained in major command positions (most notably one Kam Khong, whose reward for losing five battles had been promotion to general and a prize new command assignment). Moreover, Phoumi was unpredictable and often ignored US advice. However, there was no one in sight qualified to succeed him. Other specific deficiencies in FAR leadership were that: 1) junior officers were poorly schooled and received no guidance from their superiors; 2) the officer corps was "badly shaken" by what it considered the failure of the West to support Laos against "an overwhelming intervention" from North Viet Nam; and 3) there were serious shortages of officers and NCOs generally. Even US fighting men could not be expected to win, the team said, with such poor leadership and support as the Lao enlisted man received.

2. Logistics. The FAR logistics system was "totally ineffective," principally, again, because of the serious lack of qualified leaders. A "US directed" logistics system down to battalion level was urgently required; the necessary equipment was in the FAR depots, but it did not reach the troops.

3. Training. The US training program was beginning to pay dividends, but it was a "long-term investment." Training problems included: 1) the unwillingness of the FAR to fill school quotas, because of the shortage of officers and NCOs at the front; 2) illiteracy; 3) lack of facilities; and 4) the change-over from French to US systems. It might take three to five years to develop effective Lao armed forces.

4. Current
4. Current Operations. The period since the cease-fire had not been one of stalemate and inactivity. The FAR had been training, regrouping, reorganizing, and engaging in small-unit combat activity against PL/VM limited offensives and other cease-fire violations. Moreover, Phoumi had been in consultation with Thai and South Vietnamese military officials.

Neither had the PL/VM been idle since the cease-fire. They were consolidating their control of Phong Saly, Sam Neua, and Xieng Khouang provinces, attempting to suppress the Meo, infiltrating southern Laos, recruiting, resupplying, and conducting patrols, probes, and hit-and-run raids. On balance, and owing primarily to the extensive Viet Minh encadrement of the PL and to Communist logistical support, the enemy had retained superiority over the FAR and could initiate offensive operations on all major fronts at times and places of its own choosing. It was, however, the consensus of the Survey Team and of most US advisers in Laos that the Lao soldier would fight; with necessary leadership, training, and time, he could be used to form units effective by US standards.

5. Possible Future Operations. The Survey Team agreed that there was a strong possibility that large-scale combat would be resumed at the end of the rainy season, with special effort devoted by the Communists to securing and expanding the route through Laos into South Viet Nam. (Both Phoumi and Diem believed that the Communists now planned to split Laos on a North-South, rather than an East-West line. The Communists would in this way, the Survey Team pointed out, be able to place Viet Cong troops in force along the Lao-South Viet Nam border.)
If hostilities were resumed, the FAR could conduct limited defensive and rear area security operations. In the face of enemy "attack-in-force," the FAR could conduct only delaying actions for two or three weeks. If, however, Phoumi were supported at once by multinational forces as in SEATO Plan 5, he should be able to hold present positions, implement extensive guerrilla operations in northeast Laos, clear his rear areas, and continue to improve the combat effectiveness of the FAR.

Phoumi appeared to the Survey Team to be "quietly desperate, but cagy and determined." He would accept any help in the form of US advisers. What he really wanted, the Survey Team thought, was a US commitment to resist actively Communist intervention in Laos; and what the US "really needed" in Laos was a "MAAG-Embassy" team such as Van Fleet and Puerifoy had formed in Greece.

The Survey Team then presented its conclusions and recommendations, as follows:

A. With the end of the rainy season in sight, the situation in Laos is now critical.

B. The future of the US in Southeast Asia is at stake.

C. It may be too late unless we act now one way or another.

D. An immediate decision is urgently required, therefore, as to future US policy in Southeast Asia.

E. If it is in the best interest of the United States to continue to defend Southeast Asia against communism we must take urgent action now.

F. It would be impossible to hold against the communists in Laos with only the FAR forces currently available.

G. Therefore, the following should be done if we are to remain in Southeast Asia:
   1. Take the initial steps, right now, to implement SEATO Plan 5, or a suitable variation
variation thereof, to permit the multinational forces concerned to be in the desired positions before the end of the rainy season.

2. Simultaneously, get tough with Phoumi, with the objective of developing adequate leadership and an effective logistic support system within the FAR.

3. Be prepared to provide General Phoumi with tactical air support in the event that hostilities are resumed.

Finally, the Team reported "a pronounced apprehension expressed by all US military and civilian ranks consulted in Southeast Asia that Washington's preoccupation with Berlin will result in the loss of Southeast Asia to communism."

The remainder of the Survey Team's report consisted of detailed assessments of: 1) environment, operational facilities, logistical support systems, airlift and communication facilities in Laos, Thailand, and South Viet Nam; and 2) unconventional and psychological warfare operations and assets of all US and friendly forces in or near Southeast Asia.

(TS) DJSM-1259-61 to CJCS, W/encl, 13 Oct 61; JMF 9150/5420 (10 Aug 61).

13 Oct 61

The JCS informed CINCPAC that representation had been made to the Department of State on the need for insuring the availability of Seno airfield during SEATO operations (see item 29 August 1961). State had replied that the French were presently refusing the use of the base to the US and RLG in order both to maintain their relationship with Souvanna and not to jeopardize present negotiations. The Secretary of State had already expressed to the French Secretary of State had already expressed to the French strong disappointment in their position, but had had no success in altering it. The Department of State therefore felt
felt that any approach to the French at the present time
would be "counter-productive" and would merely add to
French apprehension about US policy in Laos.

Nonetheless, the JCS told CINCPAC, both State and
Defense fully appreciated that the use of Seno would be
essential in the implementation of SEATO or unilateral
plans for intervention in Laos; CINCPAC was authorized
to plan accordingly.

(S) Msg, JCS to CINCPAC, JCS 1875, 13 Oct 61.

14 Oct 61

The JCS informed CINCPAC that developments in Laos might
bring on the concurrent implementation of SEATO Plan 5 Plus
in Laos and a SEATO plan based on CINCPAC OPLAN 32-59
(Phase II-Viet Nam) in South Viet Nam. CINCPAC was requested
therefore to "refine" OPLAN 32-59 to accommodate "limited
or token" SEATO forces in an operation designed to: 1)
secure the border of South Viet Nam; and 2) assist the GVN
in regaining full control of its own territory by freeing
Vietnamese forces for offensive action against the Viet Cong.
(See item 21 October 1961.)

(TS) Msgs, JCS to CINCPAC, JCS 1853, 12 Oct 61; JCS
1886, 14 Oct 61.

17 Oct 61

In response to a request from the JCS for an evaluation
of a recently directed photographic reconnaissance effort
over Laos, CINCPAC stated that the required coverage could
not be obtained in less than approximately 14 weeks. In
making this estimate, CINCPAC took into account the range
and limited photographic capability of the RT-33, the main-
tainence of cameras, the probable number of abortive
missions
missions, and the difficulty in locating the areas to be photographed. Adverse weather could further delay completion of the project, and the lack of photo processing equipment at Vientiane would slow the delivery of the photographs to Washington.

CINCPAC also called attention to the vulnerability of the RT-33 and the risk that one might be destroyed in operations close to the border of either Communist China or North Viet Nam.

In contrast, CINCPAC continued, the necessary coverage could be obtained in approximately one week by four RF-101s operating out of Don Muang, Thailand, assuming that a photo processing center also was located there. Besides speeding coverage, the use of RF-101s would reduce the risk of losses during operations.

(CINCPAC, in a further report of the progress of the reconnaissance effort, informed the JCS on 20 October that 90 per cent of the aerial photo coverage of the Laos-Viet Nam border had been completed and was available to the JCS through the CNO.)

(S) Msgs, CINCPAC to JCS, 170253Z Oct 61 and 200417Z Oct 61.

17 Oct 61 The Deputy Director for Operations outlined for the Director Joint Staff, his observations of the situation in Southeast Asia. These observations were based upon visits to Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and South Viet Nam, and on conversations with US and indigenous officials in these nations. In summarizing his impression of the Laotian situation, the Deputy Director for Operations stated that he was "heartened by what I saw and heard . . . -- they
are not ready to give up yet."

During his visit to Laos, the Deputy Director for Operations had talked with Colonel Vang Pao of the Meo, and with leaders of the FAR. He had asked FAR Generals Ouane and Bounleut what the US could do, in addition to its present efforts, to help them. Neither of the Lao officers asked for the participation of US troops. Instead, they sought weapons and communications equipment for additional auto defense companies that could be employed in northern and central Laos.

These two FAR generals told the Deputy Director for Operations that the Lao had come to realize what they were fighting for, and that villagers driven from their homes by the Pathet Lao sought weapons and a chance to fight. Although aware of the "very limited capabilities" of these refugees, the Deputy Director for Operations believed that "if we are going to turn Laos over to the Communists, as it appears we will end up doing, let us leave an armed camp behind, so our job will be that much easier if and when we go back."

(*************)

(Memo, DepDir, J-3, to Dir, JS, "Observations noted during trip through Southeast Asia, 1-11 Oct 61, "17 Oct 61, on file with DepDirOpsns, J-3.

18 Oct 61

After calling upon King Savang at Luang Prabang, Souvanna, in a statement to the Laotian press, pointed out that, although his candidacy had been endorsed by all three political factions, he would not assume office as Prime Minister until he had succeeded in "setting up the coalition government in a definitive form." Instead, Boun Oum would remain in power until Souvanna's cabinet had been formed, thus
thus preventing a possible "breakdown of the machinery of
government." Once the coalition cabinet had been agreed upon,
Boun Oum would resign, and the King would call upon Souvanna
to form a new government.

In a subsequent conversation at Vientiane with US
Consul General Creel, Phoumi gave his interpretation of the
significance of Souvanna's interview with the King. Phoumi
maintained that Souvanna had conceded the legality of the
Boun Oum government by agreeing to its remaining in power, had
acknowledged the sovereignty of the King, and had recognized
the authority of the Laotian constitution.

After the royal interview, Souvanna had discussed with
Boun Oum and Phoumi the formation of both a unified Lao
dlegation to the Geneva Conference and a national coalition
government. Regarding the latter, Phoumi maintained that
Souvanna had expressed willingness to designate Phoumi as
Deputy Prime Minister but not as Minister of Defense. It
appeared that Souvanna desired the Defense post for himself
and the Interior portfolio for Pheng Phongsavan& one of his
followers.

Phoumi also reported that Souvanna had wanted to convene
a meeting of the Princes at Khang Khay in the near future,
possibly on 22 October (see item 21 October 1961). After
telling the Consul General of Souvanna's proposal, Phoumi
expressed his belief that he and Boun Oum might be in danger
from Viet Minh troops in the vicinity of Khang Khay, should
the meeting be held there. Phoumi added that he could see
no need for another meeting at this time, since it was up to
Souvanna to proceed with the formation of a government.

(C) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState, 600, 18 Oct 61; 610,
20 Oct 61; (U) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 602, 19 Oct 61.
19 Oct 61 In a letter to the Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, the Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA), adopting without change the recommendations of CINCPAC (see item 9 September 1961) and the JCS (see item 4 October 1961), urged that AID make a special allocation of $4.5 million in order to support for the remainder of FY 1962 an increase in the FAR wartime force ceiling to 62,321. If the force structure increase was approved the Department of Defense was prepared, the Acting Assistant Secretary said, to provide the approximately $5.0 million in additional military assistance that would be necessary.

The FAR by reason of accelerated training programs, the Defense official said, was now better able than formerly to accommodate this augmentation. Although any future political settlement would eliminate the necessity for such an augmentation, the Department of Defense believed that the current situation made it imperative that this increase be approved at this time. (See item 18 November 1961.)

(TS) 1st N/H of JCS 2344/13, 23 Oct 61; JMF 9155.2/3100 (9 Sep 61).

20 Oct 61 Ambassador Brown forwarded to the Secretary of State the text of a plan, agreed upon by the US, UK, and French Ambassadors at Vientiane, for the "regroupment, integration, and demobilization of Lao armed forces." This plan was based on several assumptions, the cardinal one of which was the establishment in Laos of an acceptable coalition government. The text, intended for use by the allied governments during the Geneva negotiations, contained a suggested program of three phases - the planning phase, the preparatory phase, and the execution phase. The program, however, was intended primarily
primarily as a guide for the negotiators and could therefore be modified as necessary.

During the planning phase, national, and regional or local, committees were to be formed. These committees, upon which all three political factions were to be represented, would aid the provisional government in selecting security units and in choosing officers for a reconstituted national army. Meanwhile, each of the factions would declare its military strength. Beginning with this phase, the ICC was to seek out any infringements by foreign powers of Laotian sovereignty or territory.

Phase II would see the positioning of previously selected security units, under control of the provisional government but drawn from the forces of all three factions according to the proportion agreed for the new national army. The ICC would then appoint observers to assist in verifying the strength of the factional armed contingents. Integration and demobilization centers would be established, and the integration of the headquarters staff and of service units into the new army would begin. The various centers, at which weapons were collected from the factional forces and where the reconstituted army underwent its training, were to be manned by personnel selected on a proportional basis from the three existing forces.

During the execution phase, the remaining military units would be demobilized. Troops representing each of the factions would then be integrated on a proportional basis into the Laotian national army. As soon as elements of the reconstituted force were trained, they would relieve the previously posted security units so that the latter might begin the process of demobilization. The demobilization of the
the factional units was to be under the close supervision of local or regional committees, which would work in cooperation with observers from the ICC.

(CHMAAG Laos, in commenting on 9 November concerning the Ambassadors' plan for the integration of Lao armed forces, stated both his personal opinion of the plan and what he believed were Phoumi's views on the general subject.

General Boyle's personal opinions were that: 1) the basic assumption that a satisfactory neutral government could be formed was "wishful thinking"; 2) since implementation of the plan depended upon the factions involved, drastic changes seemed inevitable; 3) Souvanna's ability to control the Communists while executing the plan seemed doubtful; 4) the unified Lao Army contemplated in the plan would be unable to stop Communist infiltration into Laos or through Laos into South Vietnam; and 5) experience indicated that the ICC, upon whose effectiveness in policing the plan depended, would prove inadequate to its tasks.

Phoumi, according to CHMAAG, would demand an integration agreement that would contain safeguards to protect the FAR against Communist duplicity. Such a plan, based as it would be on the premise that Communists could not be trusted, would therefore be "unpalatable to diplomats." Phoumi, moreover, had no confidence in the ICC. General Boyle also predicted that any plan adopted by Phoumi would be supported by his followers in the RLG.

In addition, CHMAAG expressed his doubt that Souvanna would implement an integration plan in a manner to the advantage of the US unless Phoumi were Minister of Defense. He also warned that Souvanna might be overthrown by either Phoumi or the Pathet Lao during the process of integration and
and that, if this should occur, the US would have to be prepared to take advantage of the situation.)


21 Oct 61 The US Ambassador at Paris forwarded to the Secretary of State a translation of a French paper dealing with the establishment, organization, training, and functioning of a Lao gendarmerie. According to the paper the purpose of the French plan was "to furnish Prince Souvanna Phouma with some trustworthy people."

In essence, the paper called for the creation by the future Lao government "outside the tripartite commissions and the ICC" of a 3,000-man gendarmerie to be trained by a French Mission of Instruction. The establishment of this force would have to begin prior to the time that demobilization of the factional armies got underway. The gendarmerie, however, was to be independent of the reconstituted Lao Army. Since it was considered unwise to recruit from all three factions, priority would be given to members of Kong Le's force. Also, the gendarmes would be well paid to "remove the need, if not the wish, to live off the land."


21 Oct 61 As requested by the JCS (see item 14 October 1961), CINCPAC presented his "refinement" of CINCPAC OPLAN 32-59 (Phase II-Viet Nam), giving it a "SEATO label" and providing for its implementation concurrent with SEATO Plan 5 in Laos. CINCPAC also detailed the additional personnel augmentation, logistic transportation, and communication requirements that the dual actions would generate.

Souvanna
21 Oct 61

Souvanna and the Boun Oum government engaged in an exchange of messages concerning another meeting of the three Princes. Souvanna began by reminding Boun Oum of a message, alleged to have been sent on 18 October, which had postponed a meeting of the three Princes originally scheduled for that day until 20 October in order to give Souvanna an opportunity to visit the King. The meeting was to take place on the Plaine des Jarres, presumably at Khang Khay (see item 18 October 1961). After observing that Boun Oum had failed to reply to this invitation, Souvanna called upon the Princes to meet on the Plaine des Jarres on 23 October, or at the latest, on 25 October. The purpose of the meeting was to reach agreement on the rapid formation of a coalition government.

Boun Oum replied that he had not received the message of 18 October and that another meeting of the Princes was unnecessary at this time. According to the HLG, Souvanna had stated, in an earlier talk with Boun Oum, that the proposed meeting was to decide the composition of a unified delegation to the Geneva Conference - a point settled during the same conversation. Instead of summoning the other Princes to the Plaine des Jarres, Souvanna should discuss the composition of the provisional government with Souphanouvong, then visit Vientiane or Luang Prabang to receive Boun Oum's proposals, and finally submit an agreed slate to the King.

In commenting upon this exchange of messages, Consul General Creel observed that "matters thus now seem to rest in a typically Lao state of confusion." The Consul General believed that Phoumi and Boun Oum had reason to fear for their safety should they visit Khang Khay, but he also felt that Boun Oum had no great desire to "negotiate himself out of office."
CHMAAG Laos reported to CINCPAC that the FAR Northern Command, because of increased Pathet Lao activity in the Nam Tha area, had augmented its forces in the vicinity by moving two companies of the 3d Infantry Battalion from Luang Prabang and the battalion's heavy weapons section from Moung Houng.

The increased Pathet Lao activity which eventually prompted this reinforcement of Nam Tha began between 7 and 14 September when opposition developed to FAR clearing operations in the area, and certain FAR units were forced to withdraw and regroup. Reportedly planned as a 7-company show of force designed to cause the enemy to withdraw behind a new defensive line north of the village, the Nam Tha operation had encountered little opposition between 24 August and 7 September.

Pathet Lao resistance stiffened during September, and by the 28th the FAR forces in the Nam Tha area were reported to have "shifted to defensive activities." This shift was followed by a period of regroupment and consolidation, but after 12 October the FAR units engaged in limited clearing operations, "mostly of a reconnaissance nature." On the 17th, however, three days before the reinforcement of the Nam Tha garrison, four Pathet Lao companies, supported by mortars and recoilless rifles, drove an FAR company from Nam Ki, 15 miles northeast of Nam Tha. Ban Can, ten miles northeast of Nam Tha, was captured by the Pathet Lao on 18 October.

(S/NOFORN) Msg, CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC, DA IN 164673, 23 Oct 61; (S/NOFORN) JCS SitReps, 24 Aug 61-26 Oct 61.

By
23 Oct 61 By a joint State-Defense-ICA message, the US Ambassador in Laos, CHMAAG, and Chief, USOM Laos were queried regarding various fiscal inconsistencies revealed in Phoumi's request for FAR force augmentation (see item 19 August 1961), as follows:

1. What funds were released for the pay of ADO units from 1 January to 1 October 1961? If Phoumi was paid for ADO which were not in existence, what steps were being taken to adjust the FY 1962 Defense Support Budget to compensate for this overpayment?

2. Phoumi had indicated at one point in his request that the paid strength of the FAR was 43,763; yet the FY 1962 Defense Support Budget programmed for a paid strength of only 38,478. From what funds was Phoumi paying these additional 5,276 troops?

The Ambassador and CHMAAG should take "strongest measures," the Washington message continued, to emphasize to Phoumi that, if he expected US support for additional forces, he should consult with the US and obtain prior US approval.

(See item 29 November 1961.)

(S) Msg, OSD to AmEMB Vientiane, et al., DEF 904748, 23 Oct 61.

24 Oct 61 The US Government approved a Laos Country Team recommendation to arm an additional 1,000 Meo (bringing the total authorized force level to 12,000; see item 29 August 1961). The additional Meo would be recruited from and stationed among the tribesmen in the mountains between Nape and Ban Done (i.e., southeast of Xieng Khouang near the Laos-Viet Nam border). Their roles would be intelligence collection and the harassment of Viet Minh and Pathet Lao movements along Laotian Route No. 8.
25 Oct 61 Souvanna sent a telegram to Boun Oum reminding him that according to the Ban Hin Heup communique (see item 6-8 October 1961) Souvanna was responsible for selecting the time and place of the next meeting of the Princes and again inviting him to come to the Plaine des Jarres for tripartite discussion of national problems. Souvanna offered to meet with Phoumi, whose safety he guaranteed, if Boun Oum was unable to attend.

(On 26 October, Boun Oum, in a message to Souvanna, refused to visit the Plaine des Jarres because of his many obligations but suggested instead that Souvanna and Souphanouvong visit Vientiane. Boun Oum offered to guarantee the safety of the other Princes.)

(S) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState, 632, 26 Oct 61; 651, 31 Oct 61; (C) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 639, 27 Oct 61.

26 Oct-4 Nov 61 Between 26 October and 4 November, Souvanna and Boun Oum exchanged a series of messages in a fruitless effort to form a unified delegation to the Geneva Conference. On the 26th, Boun Oum called upon Souvanna to submit a list of his proposed delegates and those acceptable to the UNH. Souvanna replied on the 29th that he had not agreed to the formation of a unified delegation but had merely suggested such an action. Since he believed that the selection of a unified delegation was the responsibility of the yet-to-be-formed provisional government, Souvanna maintained that a meeting of
of the Princes on this subject was imperative. The meeting would be held on the Plaine des Jarres.

On 30 October, Boun Oum, in another call for nominations, denied that a meeting of the Princes was necessary at the time. Souvanna responded on 3 November by reminding Boun Oum of the terms of the Ban Hin Heup agreement (see item 6-8 October 1961) and called a meeting of the Princes for 6 November on the Plaine des Jarres.

Souvanna's 3 November response apparently crossed in transmission a message sent him on 4 November by Boun Oum, who tersely suggested a meeting of the Princes at either Luang Prabang or Hin Heup. Thus, the exchange, which had begun with disagreement on the need for a meeting, ended in disagreement over the meeting place.

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 671-4 Nov 61; (C) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState, 641, 28 Oct 61, 646, 30 Oct 61, and 650, 31 Oct 61.

27 Oct 61 The JCS informed CINCPAC that the stationing of four RF-101 aircraft and a photo processing unit at Don Muang, Thailand, was approved (see item 17 October 1961). Reconnaissance missions, however, were to be restricted to Laos and South Viet Nam. Violations of the Chinese Communist, Cambodian, and North Vietnamese borders would be avoided.

(On 10 November, because of the need of prior approval by the US Ambassador in Vientiane for jet flights over the Plaine des Jarres or over Xieng Khouang province, CINCPAC directed CHMAAG Laos to discuss with Ambassador Brown the requirement for systematic high-altitude coverage of these areas by RF-101 aircraft. The Ambassador also was to be notified that the RT-33s had been withdrawn from reconnaissance duties.

(CINCPAC
(CINCPAC on 11 November informed the JCS that the
RF-101s and their supporting photo processing center were now
operational at Don Muang and that the RF-33 aircraft were be­
ing modified to perform courier service and to deliver photos
in support of the RF-101 reconnaissance task force.)

(S) Msg, JCS to CINCPAC, JCS 2025, 272318Z Oct 61; (S)
Msg, CINCPAC to CHMAAG Laos, 100120Z Nov 61; (S) Msg, CINCPAC
to JCS, 110011Z Nov 61.

27 Oct 61
CHMAAG Laos reported to CINCPAC his latest estimate of enemy
troop strength in Laos. Revising somewhat his estimate
of 23 September (see item), CHMAAG now reckoned enemy strength
at 31,000 men: 5,400 Viet Minh, 20,600 men in organized
PL/Kong Le units, and 3,000 to 5,000 guerrillas.

(S) Msg, CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC, DA IN 166366, 27 Oct 61.

30 Oct 61
In a message to CINCPAC, CHMAAG Laos reported the growth
in strength of the FAR from July to September, 1961, as
follows:

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<th>31 September</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular Army</td>
<td>47,011</td>
<td>49,668</td>
<td>53,981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADC</td>
<td>12,150</td>
<td>12,750</td>
<td>12,920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>59,161</td>
<td>62,418</td>
<td>66,901</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the same day, a MAAG representative discussed with
Phoumi the FAR overstrength and ensuing budgetary problems.
Phoumi blamed the FAR comptroller - who was not, CHMAAG
thought, at fault. Phoumi also, however, suggested that the
MAAG representative to his comptroller exercise a "more
direct advisory role." This action, CHMAAG said, would be
a "healthy development" in progress toward "effective comp­
trollership of FAR expenditures." (See item 10 November 1961.)

The
30 Oct 61

The Secretary of State, in a message to the US Ambassadors in Vientiane and Paris, stated that the availability of the French paper on the Lao gendarmerie (see item 21 October 1961) would enable the US to seek a prompt, informal, and detailed understanding with the French on the various aspects of an over all police program. Thus, the Ambassador at Paris was to inform the French foreign office of the US views concerning a Lao police force and of the US desire to seek an informal understanding on matters dealing with the gendarmerie and the police. The actual discussions, however, were to be conducted at Vientiane.

The objective of this understanding between the US and France was to assure that the police force would be: 1) created as soon as possible after the formation of the Souvanna government; 2) loyal to Souvanna; 3) able to cope with internal subversion, especially in rural areas; 4) able to serve as an effective counterweight to an integrated Army; and 5) trained by France and the US.

The attainment of these objectives, the Secretary of State believed, would require: 1) a larger force than the 3,000 gendarmes proposed by the French, perhaps as many as the 10,000 suggested by Souvanna; 2) a force capable of exercising the functions outlined in the Ryan Plan (see item 21 August 1961), except for the duties of the provincial or rural police who would be replaced by gendarmes; 3) the grouping of all police under the Minister of Interior, provided that he was acceptable to the West; 4) a gendarmerie recruited from among Souvanna's loyal supporters and a police force.
force reconstituted from the pro-Souvanna and US-trained elements of the RLG police; 5) adequate pay; and 6) an adequate number of capable instructors.

The discussions at Vientiane, the Secretary of State continued, would be based on the assumptions that: 1) the French would have the principal Western training mission in Laos; 2) French primacy would have to be recognized; and 3) Souvanna would be neither willing nor able to accept Phoumi's hand-picked police.

The Secretary of State also said that the most desirable solution was for the US to assume responsibility for the police, while France had the primary training and financial responsibility for the gendarmerie. The US, however, would help train the gendarmerie if France proved unwilling to shoulder the entire burden.

If AID was to help defray the cost of a police force of 10,000 men, said the Secretary, the US must consider the effect of such help on future AID support assistance to Laos. In this regard, he asked for the Laos Country Team's estimate of the cost to the US of supporting 7,000 police while France paid, trained, equipped, and supplied 3,000 gendarmes.

Throughout the Vientiane negotiations, Secretary Rusk continued, the US would attempt to convince France to assume the maximum possible share of the costs. The Department of State was to be kept informed of the financial aspects of the Vientiane discussions, and no financial commitments were to be made without prior approval from Washington.

(S) Msg, State to Vientiane, 435, 30 Oct 61.

The
31 Oct 61  The Department of Defense forwarded to CINCPAC the "informal comments" of the ICA [AID] on actions underway within MAAG Laos to plan for the continued presence of Filipino technicians (ECOIL) if the MAAG left Laos. The ICA saw many obstacles to the US attempting to plan this continued presence, among which were: 1) if the French were given the exclusive training responsibility for training when the MAAG departed, it would be up to them, in coordination with the Lao Government, to decide whether the Filipinos were retained, and then to negotiate any contract; and 2) if, as envisioned by MAAG Laos, control of the Filipinos reverted to USOM at MAAG's departure, this would be a return to the "PEO cover operation since any technicians qualified to supervise the Filipinos would necessarily be either military or ex-military personnel (See item 10 November 1961.)

(S) Msgs, CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC, DA IN 160533, 10 Oct 61; OSD to CINCPAC, DEF 905057, 31 Oct 61.
1 Nov 61  The ICC sent to each of the three Princes identical messages calling attention to "hostile activities" in the vicinity of Xieng Khouang, and urging the Princes to restrain their local commanders. The ICC also expressed the hope that the Princes would meet in the near future and that, in the meantime, they would use "moderate language" in their exchanges and "base their statements on facts."

(Prince Souphanouvong replied on 3 November to the ICC message. He denied that either Souvanna's troops or soldiers of the Pathet Lao had violated the cease-fire order. The blame, he continued, lay with Boun Oum's forces, whose flagrant violations of the truce had been instigated by "American warmongers.")

3 Nov 61  Under Secretary of State Bowles informed Ambassador Brown that, after intensive discussions with the UK and France, the US Government had decided to have the Ambassador in Vientiane present to Phoumi and Souvanna a plan for the demobilization and integration of the Laotian armed forces (see item 20 October 1961). The Ambassador, however, because of French concern with certain aspects of the plan, was to find, without delaying the presentation of the over-all plan, a "better formula" for insuring that the tripartite national commissions would not lend themselves to Communist domination and that the existence of security battalions would not result in the de facto partition of the kingdom.

In presenting