In presenting the plan to Phoumi and Souvanna, Ambassador Brown was to stress certain principles on which the US, UK, and France were in general agreement. These principles were: 1) the formula for the integration of the armed forces was to be agreed upon by the Laotians; 2) no faction would gain military advantage during the period in which the Army was being reconstituted; 3) the rebuilding of the armed forces would be accomplished as rapidly as possible; and 4) the Army would be reconstituted and excess troops demobilized before elections were held.

The Under Secretary of State, although he did not wish the plan to be revised at present, also informed the Ambassador of some "desirable additions" to be included at an appropriate time. In brief, Ambassador Brown was to attempt to secure Phoumi's and Souvanna's agreement to: 1) a practical time limit for each phase of the integration program; 2) provision for the storage under ICC supervision of excess armaments; 3) acceptance by the various national committees of rule by majority vote; and 4) the stationing of security battalions in areas where their particular faction already held predominant influence.

(S) Msg, State to Vientiane, 422, 3 Nov 61.

3 Nov 61

General Maxwell D. Taylor reported to the President on his mission to South Viet Nam. Although he and his party "avoided" Laos on the recommendation of Ambassador Brown, his report reflected in several instances the interrelationships of the Laotian and Vietnamese situations. General Taylor stated, for instance, that the future needs of South Viet Nam would depend upon the kind of settlement obtained in Laos.
in Laos and the manner in which North Viet Nam adjusted its conduct to that settlement. Again, the military appendix to General Taylor's report stated that, if the current impasse continued in Laos, thus permitting the Viet Cong the unrestricted use of southern Laos as a route to South Viet Nam, the resultant threat would "rapidly far exceed" anything the Vietnamese armed forces could be expected to handle. In recognition of this, an entire appendix of Taylor's report was devoted to the proposed establishment of a Vietnamese Frontier Force to deny the northwest frontier bordering Laos to Communist infiltration. The appendix called for continued operations in harassment of Viet Cong lines of communication in southern Laos whatever the outcome of negotiations on Laos, and that, if the Meo tribesmen in Laos became threatened by extermination, they be persuaded to resettle on the Laos-Viet Nam border.

Finally, in the political appendix to General Taylor's report Mr. Sterling Cottrell wrote that past US policy in Laos had already had its effect in South Viet Nam. A political settlement in Laos, had been "largely discounted in advance" by the South Vietnamese Government. GVN officials stated frankly that the US had abandoned Laos; they were concerned that the US might also abandon South Viet Nam "when the going gets rough." They were keenly aware of the effects of the infiltration from Laos and were certain that it would not be stopped by a weak "neutral" RLG or by the ICC.

(TS) Gen. Taylor's Report, 3 Nov 61; JMF 9155.3/9105 (13 Oct 61) sec 2A.
4 Nov 61  CHMAAG Laos reported to CINCPAC that Phoumi had ordered an intensification of FAR activities designed to: 1) further consolidate present front-line areas; 2) intensify guerrilla activity in the enemy rear; and 3) attempt to harass and interdict Viet Cong routes into South Viet Nam. The greater part of this FAR effort would take place in southern Laos, CHMAAG learned, where ADC units and CVs (compagnies volontaires) would attempt guerrilla actions near Lak Sao, Nhommarath, Mahaxsay, and Thaepone. If these guerrilla actions proved effective, then three GM would be committed to reducing enemy salients in those areas. In the north, the principal actions envisaged were enlargement of the area of FAR control around Luang Prabang, and raiding in the Muong Sai area.

In the opinion of CHMAAG, Phoumi would closely control the above actions to avoid overt cease-fire violations.

(See item 30 November 1961.)

(S) Msg, CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC, DA IN 169983, 4 Nov 61.

7 Nov 61  King Savang received Ambassador Brown at Vientiane. According to the Ambassador's report, their discussion touched upon, among other things, US policy toward Laos and the difficulties in establishing a coalition government.

Regarding US policy, the King expressed doubt that the Laotian situation could be resolved satisfactorily, since the Communists would never abandon their efforts to take over the country; the US in the meantime seemed to have abandoned the defense of the kingdom. Ambassador Brown sought to reassure the King by pointing out that US military support to the RLG actually had increased during past months.
months. The US, he continued, had not abandoned Laos but merely had discarded a purely military solution, that could at best lead to a partition, in favor of a more promising solution. The proper course of action was judged to be the establishment in a truly neutral Laos of a satisfactory coalition government with which the US could cooperate in combatting Communism.

Turning to the problems attendant upon the formation of a coalition government, the King stated that there were two rather than three political factions. There were those men who were pro-West and those who favored the Pathet Lao and Communism; in his opinion no completely neutral group existed. He could, moreover, see no real difference in the policies of Souvanna, Phoumi, and Phoui. The King further observed that the "non-Communist group were individuals and did not represent significant political groups." Concerning the deliberations of the three Princes, King Savang agreed with the Ambassador that Boun Oum should journey to the Plaine des Jarres. He did not, however, share the opinion that Phoumi should go there, for a visit by the leader of the Army to the territory of a rival faction could have adverse political effects.

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 678, 7 Nov 61.

7 Nov 61
The Director, Far East Region, OASD(ISA) forwarded to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA) a summary of what he considered were the concessions made both by the US and by Communists delegations at the Geneva Conference. Listed as "concessions" were all deviations from the original US/French and Russian drafts, even though not all such changes
changes had been agreed upon by the Conference as a whole. The Director, PER, also catalogued what, in his opinion, were significant issues remaining to be negotiated and characterized the current status of the conference.

The US, he believed, had thus far made 27 concessions, the most significant of which were: 1) public announcement by SEATO members of their acceptance of and willingness to respect a Lao renunciation of SEATO protection; 2) acceptance of the principle that the ICC could operate only "with the concurrence" of the RLG; 3) acceptance of a somewhat ambiguous article dealing with logistical support for the ICC, an article which designated the RLG as the primary source of such support and made no provision for the maintenance of equipment; 4) deletion of prescribed entry and departure points for military personnel and equipment; 5) deletion of a requirement for ICC operations centers outside Vientiane; 6) elimination of permanent ICC teams; 7) acceptance of a requirement that a majority vote of the ICC or a request from the RLG would be required before investigations could begin; 8) acceptance of the position that a unanimous vote of the ICC was required on all conclusions and recommendations made by that body; this concession in effect gave the Polish ICC delegation a veto over the enforcement of the cease-fire; 9) deletion of the requirement that the ICC be provided a census of military forces and equipment; 10) deletion of the specific requirement for cooperation among the three ICCs in Southeast Asia.

The Communists, in contrast, had made no more than five concessions. They had yielded by accepting: 1) a provision requiring nations belonging to the ICC to have readily available substitute team and commission members; 2) a provision
provision giving the ICC and its teams free access to all parts of Laos and the authority necessary for the work of investigation, inspection, and verification (this article, however, was circumscribed by others); 3) a provision that ICC logistical support not available from the RLG could be obtained elsewhere; 4) the principle that prisoners of war would be permitted to go, upon release from custody, to destinations of their choice (this principle was abridged by a requirement that freed prisoners first be turned over to their "national authorities"); and 5) a provision (so far accepted only orally) renouncing the use of Laotian territory for operations against neighboring states.

The significant issues remaining to be negotiated were: 1) inclusion of a provision giving the ICC some general responsibility for overseeing neutrality declarations made by Laos and by other nations; 2) length of tenure of the ICC and the procedure for its termination; 3) time at which the articles requiring the withdrawal of US military assistance and personnel would become effective; and 4) continuation of French presence or the establishment of a neutral military training mission.

In commenting upon the current status of the Geneva Conference, the Director, FER, stated that the "net result is nearly complete acceptance of the original Soviet draft and abandonment of nearly all the original US positions." He added, however, that the US delegation considered the agreements secured thus far to be the best that could have been obtained under the circumstances. In the opinion of the delegation, he continued, the US had gained certain advantages as a result of: 1) an article making the Conference co-Chairmen responsible for the observance of the agreement by the
by the two groups, i.e., co-Chairman Pushkin for the entire Soviet Bloc; 2) a specific reference permitting the statement of disagreement within an agreed ICC report; and 3) private assurance from the Indians and the Russians that ICC reports would not be obstructed or delayed.

(For a somewhat different report on the status of the Geneva negotiations concerned with the ICC, see the following item.)

8 Nov 61 The Director, Far East Region, OASD (ISA), forwarded to the Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA) a memorandum outlining the issues which in his opinion, were still outstanding both at the Geneva Conference and in Laos.

The issues outstanding at the Geneva Conference were listed by the Director as: 1) ICC responsibilities for overseeing the implementation of a neutrality declaration; 2) the tenure of the ICC and the procedures for its termination; 3) the timing of the withdrawal from Laos of US military assistance and personnel; 4) the establishment of either a French or a neutral military mission in Laos; and 5) inclusion of a provision whereby the Conference participants would agree not to use Lao territory as a corridor for interference in the internal affairs of other nations.

The following were named as the outstanding issues in Laos: 1) the method of forming a national army, including the problems of integrating the factional armed forces and demobilizing excess personnel; 2) formation of a police force; 3) the composition of a coalition cabinet; 4) the scheduling of elections after the integration of existing forces

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forces into a national army; and 5) a detailed cease-fire agreement over which the ICC would have supervision.

The Director, PER, also noted an additional issue facing the US Government—the determination of a method by which the US could support the Lao Army during the period of integration, while at the same time withholding aid from the Pathet Lao.

During November, the OASD (ISA) arranged in order of importance those issues not yet agreed upon at Geneva. A total of 21 items were arranged as follows:

1st Category: 1) Announcement by the ICC that it had the equipment and authority to function effectively throughout the country—a condition to be fulfilled before the withdrawal of US military aid and advisers. 2) Right of the ICC, without the threat of RLG veto, to establish teams and make investigations throughout the country. 3) Right of the ICC to possess and control adequate transportation and equipment. 4) Majority rule in ICC voting. 5) ICC control over the entry and departure of military personnel and equipment. 6) Authority for the ICC to operate with two-thirds of the membership present. 7) Authority for the ICC to make investigations at the request of one member. 8) A French or neutral "presence" or training mission in Laos.

2nd Category: 9) Responsibility of the ICC not to be limited to execution of a cease-fire agreement. 10) The ICC made responsible to the Geneva Conference rather than to the co-Chairmen of the Conference. 11) Operating centers for the ICC teams to be specified. 12) Provision for a census of factional armed forces and an inventory of their armaments. 13) Provision for regular and frequent ICC reports.
ICC reports, as well as for special reports to Conference members. 14) The ICC to remain in being for at least three years. 15) The armament of the reconstituted Lao Army to be appropriate to its type and functions.


(See item 12 January 1962 for the agreed protocol on the ICC.)

Prince Souvanna on 8 November called upon Boun Oum to meet with him and Souphanouvong on the Plaine des Jarres on 17 November.

On 9 November, Ambassador Brown met with Phoumi and suggested that Boun Oum agree to the meeting, provided that Souvanna would agree to conduct future negotiations at Luang Prabang. Phoumi, according to the Ambassador, replied that he was having difficulty in winning support for his "supple" policies and that not one of his colleagues in either the cabinet or the National Assembly would agree to Boun Oum's visiting the Plaine des Jarres. Ambassador Brown thereupon planned, and later carried out, a series of conversations with some of the individuals whom Phoumi said were opposing him. The Department of State on 12 November approved
approved both the Ambassador's stand with Phoumi and his proposed conversations with Phoumi's more influential colleagues.

On 13 November, the RLG cabinet voted to reject Souvanna's offer. That same day, Boun Oum sent to Souvanna a polite message of refusal, which proposed instead that the Princes meet at Vientiane or Luang Prabang.

(S) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState, 692, 9 Nov 61, 706, 13 Nov 61, and 715, 15 Nov 61; State to Vientiane, DEPTEL 450, 12 Nov 61; (C) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 688, 9 Nov 61.

British Ambassador Ormsby Gore, acting under instructions, called upon the Secretary of State to express British concern over recent developments in Laos. The UK was concerned by the failure of the three Princes to reach agreement -- a failure which the British attributed to Phoumi's unwillingness to negotiate in good faith. The British wondered if the time had not come to tell Phoumi that if hostilities occurred, he could expect no US or SEATO support.

The Secretary of State replied that the US was exerting pressure on Phoumi and cited examples of stubbornness on the part of Souvanna and Souphanouvong. The US, the Secretary of State continued, could not accept an agreement that it did not believe would result in a neutral Laos. If no satisfactory agreement could be reached, the US might prefer to "leave the party."

Ambassador Ormsby Gore asked several times whether Phoumi might not be seeking to have the negotiations fail so that, after the resumption of hostilities, he could maintain his position with US support. The Secretary of State, however, denied that Phoumi had any such choice and pointed
pointed out that Phoumi should be aware that the US would not support his every course of action. In conclusion, the Secretary of State remarked that the US actually was doing all the UK desired to push Phoumi forward on the road toward fruitful negotiations.

(S) Msg, State to London, DEPTEL 2601, 10 Nov 61.

10 Nov 61 CINCPAC advised CHMAAG Laos that the procedures agreed to by Phoumi on 30 October (see item) for future operations of the FAR comptroller were "unsatisfactory." CINCPAC suggested that CHMAAG inform Phoumi that CINCPAC could not support the activation of FAR forces in excess of MAP authorization. Phoumi should also be told that his actions were dissipating and undermining CINCPAC's efforts adequately to equip and advise the FAR. CINCPAC has supported Phoumi's request for force augmentation "to the maximum extent feasible." CHMAAG should also advise the Laotian that if Phoumi continued to raise unauthorized forces, CINCPAC would have no alternative but to recommend that actual US support for any US-approved increase in FAR forces be withheld until a "satisfactory mutual agreement" could be reached. (see item 17 November 1961.)

(S) Msg, CINCPAC to CHMAAG Laos, 102341Z Nov 61.

10 Nov 61 CINCPAC, commenting to the Department of Defense upon ICA's informal comments of 31 October (see item), stated that, desirable as the continued presence of Filipinos might be in a neutral Laos, he could see "no acceptable solution" if MAAG Laos was disestablished. CINCPAC agreed with ICA that a return to the PEO concept would be unsatisfactory.
If, as CINCPAC believed, the contractor (ECCOIL) would not accept any agreement which did not "commit the US" and provide for payment in US dollars, the only manner of support CINCPAC could visualize was the US foregoing all supervision, and paying the contractor in the Philippines from "Presidential determination funds."

(S) Msg, CINCPAC to OSD, 102254Z Nov 61.

In a memorandum for the President concerning South Viet Nam, the Department of State included an analysis of the relationship between US intervention in South Viet Nam and the situation in Laos. The introduction of US combat forces into South Viet Nam prior to a Laotian settlement, the State Department said, would run a considerable risk of stimulating a Communist breach of the cease-fire and a resumption of hostilities in Laos. The US would then be faced with a choice between sending combat troops to Laos or abandoning the country to full Communist control. At present, there was at least a chance that a settlement could be reached in Laos on the basis of a Souvanna Phouma government; this settlement would include, according to the prospective Geneva agreement, a provision that Laos would not be used as a base or transit area by any other power. After a settlement, therefore, the introduction of US forces into Viet Nam could serve to stabilize the situation in Laos, inasmuch as the US would thereby have served notice that the Laotian settlement was as far as the US was willing to see Communist influence in Southeast Asia develop.

(TS) Memo for Pres, 11 Nov 61, att to JCS 2343/40, 13 Nov 61; JMF 9155.3/9105 (13 Oct 61).
In the message approving Ambassador Brown's stand with Phoumi (see item 8-13 Nov 61), the Department of State also reviewed its policies concerning the position which the RLG should take during the forthcoming meeting of the Princes (see items 14 December and 27-30 December 1961). Ambassador Brown was reminded that: 1) the number of cabinet posts held by each faction was less important than the caliber of the individuals in key positions, but as many non-Xieng Khouang neutrals as possible should be included; 2) the US could not direct the negotiations concerning the distribution of cabinet posts, but the chief US objective remained to keep adherents of the Pathet Lao out of key positions while retaining Phoumi in the Government so that he could effectively rally the non-Communist forces; and 3) in selecting cabinet officers from the ranks of the non-Xieng Khouang neutrals and from the present RLG, the most competent available men should be chosen. The Department of State message also contained advice on matters which, it was believed, Boun Oum intended to discuss at the meeting of the Princes, along with a warning that renewed fighting, especially in the Xieng Khouang area, "could well be disastrous at this stage."

Finally, the Department of State advised approaching Souvanna through the British Ambassador in order to inform him of the conditions under which the US would support him. These conditions included: 1) Souvanna's entering into meaningful negotiations with Phoumi -- an essential condition; 2) Souvanna's entering into informal talks with Phoumi in order to see what could be accomplished in the absence of Souphanouvong -- a desirable condition; and 3) the necessity of holding further meetings of the Princes.
away from territory dominated by the Communists. The role of the British Ambassador would be discussed further at Washington.

On 16 November, Ambassador Brown commented upon the guidance contained in the message summarized above. Among other things, the Ambassador warned that it was "almost [a] sine qua non in Phoumi's eyes" that he be either Minister of Defense or Minister of Interior in the coalition government. If Souvanna and the Pathet Lao denied both positions to Phoumi, the US should urge Phoumi to take a lesser post rather than break off negotiations. The US, however, could not encourage Phoumi to accept a lesser portfolio unless it was reasonably certain that he could, in collaboration with other non-Communists, prevent the Pathet Lao from dominating the government. Ambassador Brown added that CHMAAG, ARMA, and the Director of the USIS felt that the US would have to support Phoumi for Minister of Defense or for some other post which he agreed was an equal safeguard "for a conservative beachhead in [the] Souvanna government." Otherwise, these men believed the RLG, PAVN, the Laotian bureaucracy, and the loose non-Communist confederation would undergo "rapid disintegration and demoralization."

In response to the Ambassador's comments, the Department of State on 18 November authorized him to advise Phoumi, at the appropriate time, to yield in his demands for the Ministries of Defense and Interior. The reply, after noting the sentiments of the other members of the Country Team in favor of stronger US support of Phoumi, concluded that it was more important to keep the Pathet Lao out of key cabinet posts than to obtain such a post.
a post for Phoumi. The Department of State also provided additional advice on the detailed composition of the cabinet and on dealing with the National Assembly. Finally, Ambassador Brown was told to work hard to convince Souvanna as well as Phoumi that the US would support "a government of genuine unification."

(S) Msgrs, Vientiane to SecState, 718, 16 Nov 61, State to Vientiane, DEPTEL 450, 12 Nov 61, and State to Vientiane, NIAC7 481, 18 Nov 61.

13-14
Nov 61

The Secretary of State, because of the possibility that Phoumi was counting upon the support of Thailand in opposing a negotiated settlement in Laos, told the US Ambassador at Bangkok to urge Prime Minister Sarit to use his influence in convincing Phoumi that US policy was "precisely what Ambassador Brown has recently reiterated to him on numerous occasions and which was clearly set forth to him earlier by Ambassador Harriman and Admiral Felt" (see item 1 October 1961). The Ambassador was to impress upon Sarit the fact that the US could not back Phoumi if negotiations were to break down because of Phoumi's refusal to negotiate in good faith.

On 14 November, the US Ambassador to Bangkok reported that, before receiving the message summarized above, he had visited Sarit in an effort, among other things, to enlist his aid in convincing Boun Oum and Phoumi that one of them should confer with Souvanna on the Plaine des Jarres. Sarit, however, stated that he honestly could not do so and that he was about to withdraw the remainder of his delegation to the Geneva Conference. According to the Ambassador, Sarit believed that hostilities soon would
would begin and that US and Thai troops would become involved. Sarit stated that the best solution would be a stalemate with neither negotiations nor fighting.

On the same day, the Secretary of State, while commending the US Ambassador for presenting the US viewpoint to Sarit, directed him to make another effort to enlist Sarit's assistance in exerting pressure on Phoumi (see item 17-20 November 1961). The Ambassador also was to inform Sarit of the adverse effect that his withdrawal of the remainder of the Thai delegation would have upon the Allied position at the Geneva Conference. Such an action on Sarit's part would lend credence to Communist charges that the US was impeding progress both at Geneva and in Laos.

(S) Msgs, State to Bangkok, DEPTEL 692, 13 Nov 61; Bangkok to SecState, 734, 14 Nov 61; State to Bangkok, DEPTEL 699, 14 Nov 61.

15 Nov 61

Ambassador Brown informed the Secretary of State that, according to one of its members, the ICC had urged Souvanna to call a meeting of the Princes at Ban Hin Heup rather than on the Plaine des Jarres. Both Souvanna and Souphanouvong were reported to have promised to give serious consideration to the ICC suggestion. According to this same account, Souvanna had promised the commission a prompt answer.

On the same day, the Secretary of State advised Ambassador Brown to await Souvanna's response to the ICC suggestion and to maintain pressure on the RLG by withholding funds for the FAR's November expenses until a site and date for the meeting of the Princes had been explicitly
explicitly agreed upon.

(8) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState, 716, 15 Nov 61; State to Vientiane, DEPTEL 468, 15 Nov 61.

15 Nov 61 The Southeast Asia Study Group completed its final report on force requirements in Southeast Asia. The final report was identical to the preliminary report (see item 18 September 1961) except as follows:

1. In introducing the concepts of operation, the final report added the affirmation that a nonnuclear war of significant scope in Southeast Asia could be won by US and allied forces. (This statement had been strongly averred by CSA in his comments on the preliminary report; see item 5, 6, 7, 10 October 1961).

2. The report responded to the suggestions of the Deputy Secretary of Defense (see item 12 October 1961), on facets of the preliminary report that merited further study, by adding an appendix to the logistics section and a supplement to the study. The suggestions of the Deputy Secretary, (underlined below) were explored as indicated:

"a. The analysis of the patterns of military operations that might develop following the intervention by US and other external forces in the area. . . .

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

These
These suggestions were analyzed in "scenario" form, by the postulating of two situations - one with and one without a Laotian settlement - and modified "war gaming" of them.

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

The Study Group concluded that the Communists would have three nuclear options for response to the US' selective use of nuclear weapons in Southeast Asia:

1. To launch ICBM or air attack from the USSR against Allied forces in Southeast Asia. This course of action was "unlikely," the Group said. The Soviets would inaugurate such a course only if they were convinced that the US was "paralyzed by fear of escalation" and therefore effectively deterred from striking the Soviet launch bases.

2. To launch missile or air attack from Communist China against allied forces in Southeast Asia. This course too was "unlikely," as the Soviet and Chinese would have to be convinced of a similar US "paralysis."

3. To introduce battlefield nuclear weapons for employment within Laos and South Viet Nam. The Communists must, to inaugurate this course, conclude that the US would choose to ignore the source of the weapons and choose to fight locally. Moreover, the Communists must be sure that the US could not win decisively in such circumstances. That the Communists would reach such conclusions was "improbable," although "past and current failure of the US to attack the source of sizeable conventional forces in Southeast Asia could lead the Communists to conclude that the
the same US attitude would prevail if battlefield nuclears are introduced."

The US actions that would be necessary if the Communist opted for one of the above courses of action would be, respectively: (1) to strike Soviet launch bases; (2) to strike Chinese Communist launch bases; or (3) to expand the conflict by selective nuclear attacks on North Viet Nam and, if necessary, China, to force the enemy to desist.

"d. The development of alternative logistics proposals for the area . . . ."

The Study drew up a program substantially similar to that submitted by the JCS to the Secretary of Defense on 6 October 1961 (see item). It differed significantly from that earlier program only by relocation of some Army airfields and reduction in the estimated need for rolling stock in Thailand.

(The final report was submitted to the Secretary of Defense on 22 November 1961. By JCS decisions of 2 November and 7 December, no JCS or Service comments, on either the preliminary or final reports, were forwarded to the Secretary of Defense.)

(CINCPAC submitted his "thoughts," on procedures to be implemented if the support of NCO operations became a Department of Defense responsibility (see items 28 July, 6 and 29 September 1961).)

In the case where hostilities between the RLG and PL/Kong Le
PL/Kong Le forces had resumed, but US or SEATO counter-insurgency plans had not yet been implemented, the support of the Meo would be controlled by CHMAAG Laos, with CHMAAG would continue all his other functions and would, in order to fulfill the additional task, activate a Joint Staff Section composed of permanently assigned personnel qualified in all phases of counter-insurgency support. Logistic support of the Meo would remain separate from support for the PAR.

In essence, CHMAAG Laos would assume command control over Meo support operations.

If a US or SEATO counter-insurgency plan were executed support of the Meo would be undertaken by CINCPAC through a designated US Operational Commander.

In operations beyond this scope, such as overt intervention by the DRV or Communist Chinese, CINCPAC would expect the activation of "force Pacific."

(See item 14 February 1962.)

Ambassador Brown informed the Secretary of State that he was disturbed by the steady deterioration of the RLG financial position and the Lao Government's apparent inability or unwillingness to undertake effective remedial action. The situation, however, did not seem sufficiently grave to require drastic action, such as blocking foreign exchange accounts.
In reply to the Ambassador's message, the Secretary of State on 27 November noted that the Department of State had been unable to agree to a DOD request for $4.5 million for the "revision of the FAR," because such a grant would have constituted approval of Phoumi's unilateral increase of FAR force levels (see items 19 October and 18 November 1961). Concerning the Laotian financial crisis, Ambassador Brown was told to use his own discretion on whether or not to inform Phoumi that the RLG must "live with [the] present $23 million release rate." The Secretary of State agreed that drastic action was not desirable at present and expressed the belief that the US should accept the risk that the RLG would refuse to make the necessary reforms and continue to live beyond its means.

(S) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState, 714, 15 Nov 61; State to Vientiane, DEPTEL 509, 27 Nov 61.

16 Nov 61

In response to Boun Oum's latest refusal to go to the Plaine des Jarres (see item 8-13 November 1961), Souvanna, with the concurrence of Souphanouvong, proposed that a meeting of the Princes be held at Vientiane from 24 to 27 November. The RLG was invited to send representatives to the Plaine des Jarres on 20 November to work out details of the meeting.

(Boun Oum replied on 18 November, expressing pleasure that Souvanna had agreed to come to Vientiane. On 20 November delegations from the RLG and from Souvanna's faction met on the Plaine des Jarres to make arrangements for the meeting.)

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 744, 22 Nov 61; (C) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 721, 17 Nov 61.
CHMAAG Laos informed CINCPAC that he and Phoumi had "come to grips" with the question of FAR strength levels (see items 23 and 30 October, 10 and 29 November 1961). CHMAAG had delivered CINCPAC's 10 November warning (see item), and had pointed out the budgetary, equipment, and leadership problems brought on by Phoumi's unauthorized enlargement of the FAR. Phoumi had been, CHMAAG said, "in complete agreement"; he was issuing an order to stop recruiting and he had agreed to work with the MAAG in designating units for deactivation (see item 2 December 1961).

(S) MSG, CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC, DA IN 174323, 17 Nov 61.

On 17 November, the US Ambassador in Bangkok handed to Foreign Minister Thanat, for forwarding to Prime Minister Sarit, a letter which stated that the US was unwilling to back Phoumi if hostilities were to result from his failure to negotiate, and which urged the Thai Government to help make sure that Phoumi understood this policy. The letter also expressed Secretary Rusk's hope that the Thai delegation would remain in Geneva. (See item 13-14 November 1961.)

Foreign Minister Thanat on the following day informed the US Ambassador that Thailand had no intention of withdrawing from the Geneva Conference. When the conversation turned to the question of Phoumi's willingness to negotiate, Thanat, the Ambassador reported, seemed to doubt the wisdom of pressuring Phoumi into negotiating with Souvanna.

In another interview on 20 November, Thanat expressed annoyance with the US for pressing the Thai Government to use its influence with Phoumi. Thanat also stated that the
RTG was annoyed by the inconsistent US policy, which was exemplified by, among other things, the abandonment of the position that Phoumi should hold a key cabinet post in favor of a position that would enable Souvanna to control the Ministries of Defense and Interior.

The Ambassador replied that the US had consistently followed a policy of being prepared to support a coalition only if satisfied that such a coalition offered a reasonable chance of keeping Laos independent, truly neutral, and "not an easy prey for Communists." Thanat, in the opinion of the Ambassador, remained annoyed with the US for exerting pressure on Phoumi while allegedly overlooking Communist outrages.

(S) Msgs, Bangkok to SecState, 756, 18 Nov 61, 758, 18 Nov 61, and 771, 21 Nov 61.

18 Nov 61

Deputy Under Secretary of State Johnson informed the Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA), Bundy, that the augmentation of the FAR proposed by the Department of Defense (see item 19 October 1961) had been disapproved. In addition to the obvious problem of obtaining additional AID funds, Johnson said, the Defense request raised a difficult political problem. Phoumi, he said, by integrating large numbers of poorly trained irregulars into the regular combat forces of the FAR, had unilaterally increased the FAR force level well beyond its present authorized strength. Approval of the Defense request for augmentation would constitute a belated US recognition of these unilateral changes. In view of Phoumi's recent reluctance to follow US advice "on matters of greatest urgency," the US could not afford to accede in this fait accompli.

However,
However, the Under Secretary concluded, if Phoumi evinced greater willingness to follow US advice, if he abolished the unauthorized forces, and if he demonstrated a willingness to consult with and obtain the approval of CHMAAG Laos on matters concerning the structure and organization of the FAR, then the Department of State would be willing to reconsider the Defense request.

(The Acting Assistant Secretary, in informing the JCS of the above action on 22 November, requested their views on the "present need" for such an augmentation so that, if necessary, the Department of State could be asked to reconsider the Defense request. See items 2 and 18 December 1961.)

Ambassador Harriman, in a message from Geneva for the Secretary of State, said "emphatically" that in his judgment Phoumi should abandon his position of demanding for himself the posts of Minister of Defense and Interior and for the non-Xieng Khouang neutrals four of the eight cabinet posts reserved for the center group. Souvanna, the Ambassador continued, was determined to control Defense and Interior and also was intent upon having six of his Xieng Khouang faction in the government. Mr. Harriman then pointed out that Souvanna had suggested additions to the cabinet which could give up to four places to non-Xieng Khouang neutrals. The Ambassador suggested that this enlargement, as well as the over-all composition of the cabinet, "be made an area of trading, both in numbers and quality."

In conclusion
In conclusion, Ambassador Harriman stated that the only US hope for a neutral Laos lay in strengthening Souvanna and expressed his belief that Phoumi was an "inadequate instrument to further US policy in a government of national unity." Although aware of the obvious risks of supporting a Souvanna government, the Ambassador believed that these risks could be reduced if the US were to convince Souvanna of its intention to support him, provided he remained free from Communist domination.

(S) Msg, Geneva to SecState, CONFE 866, 19 Nov 61.

20 Nov 61

The Office of Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA) prepared for its own use another summary of the situation in Laos (see item 20 July 1961). After examining various facets of the Laotian problem, the summary concluded that:

1. The Communists had probably achieved most of their immediate objectives in Laos and could not be expected to give up, as a result of negotiations, the territory that they had seized.

2. The Soviets, although expressing a willingness to negotiate seriously at Geneva, had made few concessions, while the US had made many. The agreements reached, however, probably represented the best that could be obtained without resort to force.

3. Unless the US could convince the Communists that it was prepared to use force, it was doubtful that Phoumi could become Minister of Defense or of Interior in a government headed by Souvanna. Should the US force Phoumi to yield either of these posts, he might also yield on issues which the US considered vital to its interests.

4. To
4. To achieve a political settlement that would insure a neutral Laos, the US should, at the least, obtain safeguards for a "conservative beachhead" in the Souvanna government, insist on a neutral center group representing all of Laos, and obtain for Phoumi a major cabinet post. In addition, the US would have to win acceptance of a Geneva accord embodying the following fundamental points:

a) The US would not terminate its military assistance program until the ICC was fully effective. b) The ICC would have authority to make investigations throughout Laos at the request of any member and without being subjected to an RLG veto. c) The voting procedure within the ICC would be at least as favorable to the West as under the 1954 agreement. d) The ICC would be reorganized to assist the RLG in preventing the use of Laos as a military base or route of transit for purposes of aggression. e) The RLG would be allowed the services of either French or neutral military missions.

The conclusions were based upon a study of 1) negotiations among the three Princes, 2) the projected formation of a coalition cabinet, 3) the meetings at the Geneva Conference, 4) the expected reorganization of the FAR, 5) the unauthorized increase in the FAR and the resultant financial difficulties, and 6) the Lao clandestine army. These topics were summarized as follows:

**Negotiations among the three Princes.** Although the King had chosen Souvanna to head the coalition government, the Princes had been unable to agree on the site at which to discuss carrying out this royal mandate. At any such meeting, the US would have to try to convince both Phoumi and Souvanna that their survival depended upon mutual cooperation.
Formation of a coalition government. Although the Princes had agreed on a 4-8-4 distribution of cabinet posts, there was no agreement on the assignment of portfolios or on the composition of the eight-man neutral center. Since Souvanna had indicated willingness to expand the size of the cabinet, thus affording representation to neutrals from outside his own camp, the US was urging Phoumi to hold out for a balanced center group rather than to demand a fixed numerical ratio. It remained imperative, however, that critical portfolios be denied to the Pathet Lao.

The Geneva Conference. The principal issues under discussion thus far were the powers and functions of the ICC, its voting procedures, the relationship between a neutral Laos and SEATO, and the continued French presence in Laos.

The US desired that the ICC have free access to all Laos, operate a network of permanent inspection posts, and possess its own supply centers. The USSR objected to or offered counterproposals to all these demands, and the US delegation had been authorized to abandon its position on ICC-controlled supply points. In addition, the West had accepted, in place of the ICC's right of free and unrestricted access, a provision stating that the ICC's rights of access would be determined in relation to the requirements of a particular investigation. (See item 12 Jan 62.)

On the subject of the ICC's internal procedures, the USSR, while agreeing that members might file minority reports, insisted that the commission's conclusions and recommendations have the unanimous endorsement of the membership. The Soviets also maintained that the ICC, when "in agreement
agreement with" the Lao government, could initiate investigations upon a majority vote.

The issue of the Laotian relationship to SEATO could best be settled, according to the Soviets, by the adoption of a resolution under the terms of which the SEATO powers would agree to respect a Laotian declaration renouncing the protection of military alliances. In return for this "satisfactory solution" of the SEATO question, the USSR would agree to the inclusion in the declaration of Lao neutrality of a clause prohibiting the use of Laos as an invasion corridor.

The Soviets, addressing the question of French presence in a neutral Laos, stated that the French could remain during a brief period of transition, after which they would have to abandon their installations.

The issues yet to be decided at Geneva were the time limit for the withdrawal of foreign military personnel, provision for ICC assistance in the implementation of the declaration of neutrality, and the elimination from Laos of private armies. The USSR, however, had stated that discussion by the conference of this last issue was "absolutely unacceptable."

Reorganization of the FAR. A general plan of integration had been agreed upon by the Allied Ambassadors at Vientiane (see item 20 October 1961). However, the Departments of State and Defense believed that the plan, when presented to Phoumi, would have to specify the following:

1) that the formula for the integration of factional armed forces into a new national Army would have to be decided upon before the process of integration began; 2) that no elections could be held until the armies had been integrated and
and the surplus personnel demobilized; 3) that the agreement of the three parties on the reconstitution of a Lao national Army should be included in the Geneva agreement; and 4) that an early agreement should be reached on the composition of the Army (preferably with the police under control of the Ministry of Interior rather than Defense), its relative strength, and the nation's military policy.

The UK and France, reluctant to present a detailed plan to Phoumi and Souvanna lest the over-all negotiations be further complicated, preferred that a "general plan" be presented to the two Laotian leaders.

Unauthorized FAR increase and resultant financial difficulties. The Department of Defense on 19 October had requested the Department of State to authorize an increase in FAR strength from 38,487 to 46,921. Phoumi, however, without US approval had already increased his force to 53,981, thus incurring a monthly deficit of $360,000. It was feared that Phoumi would resort to borrowing from the National Bank of Laos, and he had been warned that such a course of action could lead to the collapse of the Laotian financial structure. The US also was concerned that RLG foreign exchange resources might be appropriated by officials of that government if it appeared that the US was withdrawing its support. As a result, the Department of State was considering closer controls over Lao finances.

The Lao clandestine army. Rather than an army, this was merely a grouping of auto defense companies, guerrilla units, and minority tribes. Phoumi intended to use these units in the event that hostilities were resumed or if, after the formation of a coalition government, Pathet Lao forces managed to evade the process of integration and demobilization.
The US Ambassador in Vientiane on 27 November forwarded to the Secretary of State a series of comments on the various problems that had been raised concerning the re-establishment of a Lao national police force. Among the more important of these comments were the following:

1. It was necessary to reach, as soon as possible, a detailed but informal understanding with the French concerning the organization, strength, role, training, and equipment of a national police force.

2. The French former director of the Lao national police, a Major Deuve, had established good relations with the USOM and would be available for any discussion of police problems that might be held at Vientiane.

3. Although French primacy in both training and operations would have to be recognized, the US, if it was to contribute funds, should retain some influence over police policy and operations.

4. The Lao police, though it was understood that they must be loyal to Souvanna as Prime Minister, should be oriented to respect the kingdom, its government, and its laws, rather than to fix their allegiance upon any individual.

5. A goal of 6,000 men, including gendarmes, was more realistic than the 10,000 desired by Souvanna.

6. Police personnel should not be recruited from among all three factions. (It was hoped that the better elements of the existing RLG police could be incorporated into the new organization.)

7. All
7. All civilian internal security forces should be grouped under one ministry, presumably that of Interior. If the French insisted upon military control of the gendarmerie, the US should maintain that the gendarmes were not properly police and could not, except under conditions of martial law, have police jurisdiction over civilians. In rural areas, the French-trained gendarmerie, with its heavier weapons, would support the US-trained police.

8. During discussions with the French, the US should strive for French acceptance of the maximum share possible of the costs of the police program. There seemed, however, to be no need for the US to set forth at this time the basic concepts, including the estimated costs, of the Ryan Plan.

On 14 December, the Department of State, in commenting upon the views of Ambassador Brown, agreed that the ideal solution, regarding which it was hoped the Ambassador could reach an understanding with the French, was a program jointly administered and organized by the US and France. The Department's message also expressed hope that the US Ambassador could establish a close working relationship with Major Deuve.

Several basic factors, however, were to be considered by Ambassador Brown in negotiating an understanding with the French. First, the Department of State warned that US position and influence under Souvanna's regime would be "vastly different" than in the past and that an attempt to re-establish this past position might result in a further weakening of Souvanna's undoubtedly fragile coalition. In addition, the police and gendarmes should be composed mainly of Souvanna's followers. Although the Department of State had
had no objection to including elements of the RLD police loyal to Souvanna, elements opposed to him should not be recruited. Furthermore, the Department raised no objection to the use of a French-trained gendarmerie to support the US-trained provincial police, provided that both the gendarmerie and the police were separate organizations within the Ministry of Interior and provided also that Souvanna would accept such an arrangement. Finally, the Ambassador was informed that his proposed negotiating tactics were concurred in by the Department of State, although it was not considered necessary to withhold from the French the basic concept of the Ryan Plan.

(On 30 December, Ambassador Brown reported that Major Deuve, having studied the Ryan Plan in its entirety, was in full agreement with its basic concepts. The French officer did, however, believe that the force goals were slightly too high and that the large amount of automotive equipment was unrealistic. Revisions along these lines were already underway.

As for the French concept of the Lao gendarmerie, Ambassador Brown had received no indication that this organization would be other than a special force of military personnel, under the control of the Minister of Defense and charged with the task of supporting the police in maintaining internal security.

The British military attache, Ambassador Brown also reported, had studied the Ryan Plan, had expressed approval, and had stated his belief that the UK would be fully prepared to support such an undertaking.)

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 770, 27 Nov 61; (S) Msg, State to Vientiane, 557, 14 Dec 61; (S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 904, 29 Dec 61.
The meetings at which delegations from the Xieng Khouang and Vientiane factions were attempting to agree upon arrangements for the visit of Souvanna and Souphanouvong to Vientiane (See item 16 November 1961) came to an abrupt end on 28 November, when Souvanna's delegate broke off the negotiations. The principal differences that occasioned the break were the number of armed retainers for the visiting Princes and the demilitarization of the meeting site.

Later that day, Souvanna sent to Vientiane a message proposing that the meeting of the Princes be shifted to Hin Heup. On 29 November, however, the RLG refused Souvanna's latest offer and called instead for a meeting at Vientiane.

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 785, 1 Dec 61.

The Director, FER/SEA Branch, prepared for use by OASD (ISA) a comparison of currently agreed articles pertaining to the role of the ICC in Laos with those equivalent articles originally proposed in the US/French and Soviet drafts submitted to the Geneva Conference. This comparison showed that neither the conference co-chairmen, the drafting committee, nor restricted meetings of key delegations to the conference had been able to reach agreement on Laos-SEATO relations, the reconstitution of Lao forces, or the link between the declaration of neutrality and its accompanying protocol.

The drafting committee, however, had agreed upon: a preamble; a definition of the term "military personnel"; a method of controlling the withdrawal of foreign troops; controls over the introduction into Laos of foreign troops and arms; a method of repatriating prisoners; the role of the International Control Commission in controlling the
the cease-fire, the withdrawal of foreign troops, and the "non-entry" of foreign military personnel; the manner of RLG cooperation with the ICC; the duration of the ICC; and the date of entry into force of the agreement. (Although the drafting committee was agreed concerning the cooperation between RLG and ICC, the Lao representatives had expressed reservations on this issue.)

In addition, the drafting committee had reached provisional agreement concerning the costs of the ICC.

The co-chairmen had reached tentative agreement on the deadline for the withdrawal of foreign troops, the continued French presence, the role of the ICC in controlling the introduction of arms into Laos, ICC voting procedures, ICC machinery, ICC investigations, and the relationship between the co-chairmen and the ICC (cf. item 16, 18 September 1961).

Finally, the co-chairmen and the principal delegations at the conference had agreed to the text of an article dealing with ICC equipment. (See items 8 November 1961 and 2 December 1961.)

(c) "14-Nation Agreement, Terms of Reference for ICC," 29 Nov 61, OASD (ISA), PER/SEA Br files.

Chairman Sen of the ICC sent Souvanna a message expressing concern over the breaking off of the talks dealing with arrangements for a meeting of the Princes (see item 28-29 November 1961). According to the Chairman, the only solution to the existing impasse was for Souvanna and Souphanouvong, each with a 110 or 120-man escort and civilian staff, to visit Vientiane on a specified date.

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 792, 1 Dec 61.

The
The US Country Team in Laos replied to the State-Defense-ICA queries of 23 October (see item) regarding FAR budgetary practices. According to the Country Team, Phoumi had been using the money budgeted for nonexistent ADO units to activate additional volunteer companies; the total amount expended for this purpose from 1 January through 1 October had been $396,231. At present Phoumi was diverting funds from all other chapters of the FAR budget to pay his overstrength.

The Country Team stated that the Ambassador and CHMAAG would inform Phoumi that he was defeating all efforts to make the FAR more effective by increasing his force levels without US approval. He had already been told, in a 24 October letter from CHMAAG, that the US could not recognize force levels in excess of those currently authorized; he had at that time been asked to stop recruiting new troops. (See, however, items 17 November and 2 December 1961.)

(S) Msg, CHMAAG Laos to OSD, DA IN 177724, 29 Nov 61.

In evaluating "Chinese Communist Capabilities and Intentions in the Far East," Special National Intelligence Estimate 13-3-61 envisioned the probable Chinese Communist reaction to SEATO or US combat forces coming to the defense of Laos or South Viet Nam. Echoing an earlier estimate (see item 5 July 1961), the SNIE believed that the Chinese would initially increase their aid to the PL and DRV while deploying substantial forces along the South China border. In the more extreme case where a SEATO or US action constituted a threat that the DRV forces could not counter, the Chinese would "almost certainly" intervene overtly; the Chinese would
would "probably" intervene even if the threat was only against the Communist position in northern Laos.

(S) SNIE 13-3-61, 30 Nov 61; J-2 Sect.

30 Nov 61

The Department of Defense, with JCS concurrence, requested that the Department of the Army deliver seven L-20 aircraft and appropriate spares to CHMAAG Laos, for use as administrative airlift. (See item 28 September 1961)

(S) Msg, OSD to DA et al., DEF 906415, 30 Nov 61.

30 Nov 61

According to CHMAAG's daily situation report, the Northern Command of the FAR was continuing its clearing sweeps, the Central Command remained in a defensive posture, and the Southern Command continued anti-guerrilla operations. The above dispositions had remained relatively unchanged since the "intensified efforts" directed by Phoumi (see item 4 November 1961).

In the Northern Command, the clearing sweeps begun on 6 November, were four-pronged: 1) along a front from the southeast to the northeast of Luang Prabang; 2) northeast from the Muong Houn front toward Muong Sai; 3) southeast from the Nam Tha front toward Moung Sai; and 4) north and south along the Mekong Valley in Sayaboury Province. No significant progress was reported during November.

The Central Command remained in defensive posture except for a two battalion sweep conducted northward from Paksane from 21 to 25 November.

In the Southern Command, there was no evidence that Lao guerrilla units had begun to harass Viet Cong routes. The principal reported actions were sweeps. GM 14, operating southwest of Thakhek, and GM 15, east of Savannakhet, conducted
conducted relatively uneventful local patrols. GM 18, however, conducted a successful clearing operation through Attopeu province, reaching its objective of Ban Hin Lat on 13 November, destroying while on patrol a Pathet Lao training compound of approximately 50 buildings.

(TS) JCS SEA Sitreps 1-61 to 5-61, 2 to 30 Nov 61; (S) Msgs, CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC; DA IN 170561, 4 Nov 61; DA IN 171180, 6 Nov 61; DA IN 171848, 7 Nov 61; DA IN 171846, 8 Nov 61; DA IN 173443, 14 Nov 61; DA IN 175849, 21 Nov 61; DA IN 176709, 25 Nov 61; DA IN 177082, 26 Nov 61; DA IN 178749, 28 Nov 61; DA IN 178764, 30 Nov 61.
1 Dec 61

The Director of Military Assistance, OASD (ISA), raised the authorized MAP-supported US personnel for MAAG Laos from 253 to 280 (see item 26 June 1961). In so acting, the Director was adopting, with some modification, a 21 September recommendation by CINCPAC, endorsed to the Secretary of Defense by the JCS on 15 November.

(C) Ltr, CINCPAC to JCS, w/encls, 21 Sep 61, att to JCS 1849/581, 26 Sep 61. (C) JCSM-789-61 to SecDef, 15 Nov 61, derived from JCS 1849/617, 3 Nov 61. (C) 1st N/H of JCS 1849/617, 8 Dec 61. All in JMF 1040.1 (14 Apr 61).

1, 4 Dec 61

After observing that Phoumi had thus far resisted US pressure to force him into negotiating for the establishment of a coalition government, Ambassador Brown on 1 December informed the Secretary of State that Phoumi, if he chose to do so, could confront the US with any of several difficult situations. If Phoumi refused to accept a settlement satisfactory to the US, he could: 1) withdraw entirely from Laotian politics and create in his followers feelings of bitterness toward the US; 2) establish a rebel state in southern Laos; or 3) remain in office and seek to block negotiations.

In response to Ambassador Brown's message, the Secretary of State on 4 December offered comments and instructions concerning Phoumi's possible courses of action. Should Phoumi withdraw from the political arena, the US would make the best possible deal with Souvanna concerning the establishment of a coalition government. The Secretary of State agreed with Ambassador Brown that the US should attempt to forestall any separatist movement and try to avoid allowing Phoumi to involve the US in military action contrary to national policy.

If
If Phoumi chose, as seemed most likely, to thwart negotiations while remaining in office, the US Ambassador was to approach Souvanna directly and inform him that the US would support his government in maintaining the genuine neutrality of Laos. Should Souvanna, with the advice of the US Ambassador, succeed in forming a satisfactory cabinet, Phoumi would be given the choice of either cooperating or being abandoned by the US.

(S) Msgs, Vientiane to SecState, 789, 1 Dec 61; State to Vientiane, NIACT 524, 4 Dec 61.

Souvanna on 1 December informed Boun Oum of his willingness to hold a meeting of the Princes at Vientiane, provided that both he and Souphanouvong were permitted security escorts of 110 men and civilian staffs numbering 30, and provided that a demilitarized zone was established at the meeting site.

On 4 December, in what Ambassador Brown termed a "piece of gamesmanship designed to put [the] other side in [the] wrong and to avoid [a] three Prince meeting in Vientiane," Boun Oum countered with an offer to visit the Plaine des Jarres, relying on the ICC to provide for his security, if Souvanna, also without personal military escort, would come to Vientiane for future meetings.

Souvanna on 6 December invited Boun Oum to meet with him and Souphanouvong on the Plaine des Jarres on 8 December. Boun Oum was to be allowed to bring with him a 110-man escort and a personal suite of 30 men. Boun Oum, however, responded on 8 December by repeating his offer of 4 December. In spite of Boun Oum's reply, Phoumi informed the US Ambassador that he would agree to Souvanna's visiting Vientiane.
Vientiane on the terms specified in that Prince's message of 1 December.

Souvanna on 11 December repeated his offer to bring Souphanouvong with him on an escorted journey to Vientiane. Although Souvanna repeated in substance the conditions stated in his message of 1 December, the RLG, in spite of Phoumi's assurances to the contrary, chose to ignore the suggestion. Thus, in a message released on 12 December, Boun Oum merely repeated his offer to go unescorted to the Plaine des Jarres.

On the 13th, however, the RLG acted as Phoumi had indicated it would; Boun Oum informed Souvanna that he and a small group of advisers would visit the Plaine des Jarres on the following day (see item 14 December 1961). Future visits by Souvanna and Souphanouvong to Vientiane, the message continued, would be conducted under the conditions set forth by Souvanna on 1 December.

Ambassador Harriman reported to the Secretary of State that during the past week the US, UK, Soviet, Indian, French, and Communist Chinese delegations had agreed on the text of articles dealing with ICC voting procedures, investigations, inspection teams, and the relationship between the Geneva co-chairmen and the ICC. The issues yet to be resolved in restricted meetings were the relationship between a neutral Laos and SEATO, a time limit on the withdrawal of foreign troops, the French presence, and the integration of factional armies (see item 29 November, 11 and 15 December 1961).
Phoumi informed an "AEG representative" that he would not "capitulate" to Souvanna, even at the risk of losing US military and economic support as a result of his intransigence. Should the US cut off its aid, Phoumi continued, he would:

1) establish a dictatorship;
2) attack toward Muong Soui, Xieng Khouang, and Mahaxay; and
3) in the event the Viet Minh reacted in force, retreat into Thailand. Phoumi said that he had discussed this strategy with both Sarit and King Savang. Sarit had not committed the Thai Government to support the plan, but he had inquired into the war capability of the FAR in the event US aid was halted. (Phoumi did not disclose the King's reaction.)

The RLG Minister of Defense also stated that he had learned from various sources that the US was eager to withdraw from Laos and leave the training of the FAR to the French.

Turning to the plan for the integration of the Lao armed forces (see items 20 October and 3 November 1961), which had been presented to him the week before, Phoumi declared that the scheme was unrealistic.

CHMAAG, in reporting this conversation to CINCPAC, stated that the threat to renew hostilities "could be a Phoumi bluff in an attempt to change US policy on a Souvanna government and to safeguard his own position."

General Boyle believed that Phoumi "must realize" that his plan would "thwart the US effort to have a strong anti-Communist element within the coalition government," that the FAR would become ineffective without US aid, and that certain FAR generals probably would not remain loyal to a Phoumi dictatorship.

(S) Msg, CHMAAG, Laos, to CINCPAC, DA IN 179127, 2 Dec 6
2 Dec 61
CHMAAG Laos and the Lao Ministry of National Security, in accordance with the MAAG-Phoumi agreement of 17 November (see item) completed a plan to reduce the strength of the FAR by about 9,000 men in four monthly increments. (See item 18 December 1961)

(S) Msg, CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC, DA IN 179237, 2 Dec 61.

5 Dec 61
The Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA), Bundy, informed the JCS that contingency planning for the withdrawal of all US military forces and equipment from Laos should commence at once. If the current progress of the Geneva Conference continued and the "Three Princes" meetings in Laos were successful, Bundy said, a peaceful settlement might be obtained within a few weeks. In such an agreement the US would be required to withdraw all its military forces, perhaps within 60 days after the entry into force of the agreement. Mr. Bundy requested the recommendations of the JCS on this matter. (See items 26 December 1961 and 14 February 1962.)

(S) Memo, OASD(ISA) to CJCS, 5 Dec 61, att to JCS 2344/24, 7 Dec 61; JMF 9155.2/3100 (5 Dec 61).

11 Dec 61
At a restricted meeting in Geneva, the continued French presence in Laos was agreed upon and a time limit fixed for the withdrawal of foreign troops (see item 12 January 1962).

(S) Msg, Geneva to SecState, CONFE 971, 17 Dec 61.

14 Dec 61
Ambassador Brown reported to the Secretary of State that he had persuaded Phoumi to call off a "substantial attack" on Tha
on Tha Vieng and Tha Tom, to have been conducted by FAR and Meo forces on 16 December. When Ambassador Brown had learned of the planned attack, he had first sought and received verification from Phoumi. He had then told Phoumi "this simply could not happen"; such an attack might destroy and chance for successful negotiation. If Phoumi allowed the planned attack to proceed, the Ambassador had told the Lao leader, "all MAAG teams would be called away, there would be not one helicopter, not one aircraft and no munition in support of the operation . . . ." Phoumi replied that he would try to call off the operation. (He obviously did so.) (See item 2 January 1962.)

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 840, 14 Dec 61.

Boun Oum visited the Plaine des Jarres and conferred with Souvanna and Souphanouvong. The communique issued after the meeting merely stated that they had reaffirmed the need to establish a coalition government and that they would meet as soon as possible in Vientiane to take concrete steps toward the formation of such a government.

In a conversation with the US Ambassador, Boun Oum elaborated on this terse communique. He reported that the Princes had talked of a cabinet composed of four RLG conservatives, four members of the Pathet Lao party, and eight neutrals -- half from the Vientiane and half from the Xieng Khouang neutralists. The key portfolios of Defense, Interior, Foreign Affairs, and Finance also were discussed. The Princes agreed to meet again on 26 December at Vientiane.

(S) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 846, 15 Dec 61; (C) Msg, Vientiane to SecState, 842, 14 Dec 61.
14 Dec 61  CHMAAG Laos informed CINCPAC that, in view of the possibility that a neutral RLG might successfully be formed, he was planning for the removal of excess MAP materiel and equipment from Lao territory. CHMAAG, postulating future FAR force structure at 20,000 men, planned to attempt the recovery of excesses in:

1. Items with a "war making potential," such as individual and crew served weapons.
2. High dollar-value items, such as late model vehicles and communications equipment.
3. Items in short supply in US supply channels.

(On 23 December, CINCPAC authorized CHMAAG to continue to plan along the above lines. See item 24 January 1962.)

(S) Msgs, CINCPAC to JCS, DA IN 187345, 23 Dec 61; CINCPAC to JCS, 2404202 Jan 62.

16 Dec 61  The Secretary of Defense, CJCS, and other DOD officials met with CINCPAC and US officials from Saigon in Hawaii, to review the progress of US action in South Viet Nam. During the review of Viet Cong operations, the Secretary asked what number of the 17,000 Viet Cong in South Viet Nam had come overland by way of Laos. CHMAAG South Viet Nam estimated that 25% had come this way; the major point of infiltration from Laos was just south of the 17th parallel (near Tchepone in Laos).

(TS) Record of SecDef Conf at Hq. CINCPAC, 16 Dec 61, att to JCS 2343/60, 26 Dec 61; JMF 9155.3/9109 (16 Dec 61).

18 Dec 61  The JCS recommended to the Secretary of Defense that the Department of State again be urged to approve FAR force augmentation (see items 9 September and 4 October 1961). The JCS stated the requirement for augmentation was still valid; and they noted that the attitude and actions
actions of Phoumi, which had been the principal reason for the original State disapproval (see item 18 November 1961) had recently changed for the better (see items 30 October, 17 November, and 2 December 1961). Moreover, CINCPAC had, on 28 November, again strongly endorsed the augmentation. The JCS considered, in addition, that failure to approve this augmentation might be construed as a lessening of US efforts to stabilize and improve the military situation in all of Southeast Asia.

(On 17 January 1962 the Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA) informed the JCS that "soundings" taken at the Department of State on FAR augmentation had indicated that "a formal request would at best elicit a formal rejection on grounds of overriding political considerations." At the first opportune moment, however, the Acting Assistant Secretary said, the Department of Defense would be prepared to lay the request again before the Department of State.)

(S) JCSM-872-61 to SecDef, 18 Dec 61, derived from JCS 2344/25, 13 Dec 61; (S) 1st N/H of JCS 2344/25, 22 Jan 62. Both in JMF 9155.2/3100 (9 Sep 61). (S) Msg, CINCPAC to JCS, DA IN 177087, 28 Nov 61.

18 Dec 61 CHMAAG Laos reported to CINCPAC that Phoumi had, in a recent conversation, come down hard against a future French presence in Laos. Phoumi thought that the Soviet support of a French presence was based on their belief that the FAR would be weakened by French indifference and inefficiency and that the weakened FAR could be infiltrated and would offer no obstacle to continued infiltration of South Viet Nam. Phoumi also believed that the FAR would not welcome the French who had, in the past, done nothing to improve the economic or military situation of Laos.
CHMAAG believed that Phoumi was more disturbed by the possible continuance of a French presence than by any other agreement likely to issue from Geneva. Phoumi believed and CHMAAG thought him "probably right," that the French resented US influence in Laos, and would attempt, as they had in the past, to undermine it.

(S) Msg, CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC, DA IN 185095, 18 Dec 61.

18 Dec 61

At a restricted meeting in Geneva, general provisional acceptance was given to all texts that earlier had been provisionally agreed upon. (The major issues not yet resolved by the end of the year were the integration of factional armies and the Laos-SEATO relationship.) (See item 12 January 1962.)

(S) Msg, Geneva to SecState, CONFE 981, 23 Dec 61.

20 Dec 61

In a message to CINCPAC, CHMAAG Laos set forth the assets the RLG would carry to the approaching three-princes meeting and ensuing negotiations (see item 27-30 December 1961). In the opinion of CHMAAG, an opinion in which USARMA Vientiane, and the Ambassador concurred, the RLG approached the negotiations in a better position than it would have, had the meeting been held at the time of the cease-fire. He advanced the following reasons:

1. The combat potential of the FAR had increased. Five battalions had completed EKARAD training in Thailand, and a new program to strengthen and retrain the ADC was underway. The first officer training class would graduate 195 leaders in February; specialist training programs were turning out communications, medical, logistics, and maintenance technicians; and the Lao T-6 pilots
had increased their proficiency. The FAR logistical situation had also improved. Finally, the acceptance by the Lao of US advisors was "at a new high" and the expanded US advisory effort itself had stimulated new aggressiveness in unit commanders, and inspired better performance under fire by both officers and men.

2. The FAR military situation had greatly improved. The FAR was carrying the battle to the enemy in many areas where the cease-fire did not hamper operations. The volunteer, ABC, and Meo irregular forces under Vang Pao had virtually isolated the Plaine des Jarres and could, if authorized, expand their operations into Sam Neua and the "Thai-Lao autonomous zone" of the DRV. The enemy had been forced to divert larger and larger numbers of troops to the protection of lines of communication. Additional guerrilla organizations were now being formed in Sayaboury province, in the area north and east of Thakhek, and among the Kha tribesmen of the Bolovens plateau. All gave promise of success.

3. The RLG had increased its popularity among the people. The Communists were feared and unpopular among the people because of their harsh treatment of the peasantry. On the other hand, RLG information and aid programs had had their effects; moreover Prince Boun Oum was very popular throughout Laos. The Prince had travelled widely and fearlessly to the "grassroots" of Laos, winning the populace to the RLG cause.

4. There was an apparently widening rift between the PL and the Kong Le forces. The number of defectors to the RLG from Kong Le's forces had increased during November and should, because of lack of pay, food shortages, and the incessent
Incessant propagandizing of the Pathet Lao, continue to increase. In addition, significant numbers of civilians were attempting to transfer themselves from Kong Le/PL to RLG protection.

(See items 23 December 1961 and 5 January 1962.)

(S) Msg, CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC, DA IN 185983, 20 Dec 61.

22 Dec 61

The JCS approved CINCPAC OPLAN 93A-61, one of the "family of plans" directed by the JCS on 28 September against the contingency that the USSR would block allied access to Berlin. OPLAN 93-61 submitted by CINCPAC on 14 October 1961, had as its mission the conducting of US air operations in support of Laotian efforts against the Communist airlift in Laos. CINCPACAF would conduct the operations, but CHMAAG Laos would effect the necessary liaison with RLG officials and establish the requirements for missions.


22 Dec 61

CHMAAG Laos informed CINCPAC that the MAAG was organizing, equipping, and beginning to train one Kha guerrilla unit for operations in the eastern Plateau des Bolovens.

Approximately six more Kha units could be formed in the area, CHMAAG said; and additional tribesmen might eventually be organized further to the north and east. The Kha presently were anti-PL but not pro-RLG; they were concerned principally with preservation of their traditional areas. They were, however, aggressive people who would form, CHMAAG hoped, into "light, hard hitting guerrilla units." It planned a combined program patterned after the Meo program to bring the Kha into the RLG camp.
was providing the initial weapons stocks for the Kha, CHMAAG said. Phoumi had cooperated by recognizing the first unit as a bona fide FAR ADC unit.

(S) Msg, CHMAAG Laos to CINCPAC, 221540Z Dec 61.

22 Dec 61

Under Secretary of State Ball asked the US Ambassador in Vientiane for Country Team comments on draft instructions for a discussion with Souvanna of the economic aid that the US was willing to grant to a neutral Laos. Ambassador Brown was authorized, if he deemed it desirable, to present this program to Souvanna when the latter visited Vientiane for the meeting of the Princes.

The Ambassador was to explain that the US was prepared to share with other nations in a program of economic aid for Laos. For the time being, however, the US would continue to maintain the kingdom's financial stability. Souvanna's government would be expected to "make the maximum contribution from its resources" and to use American aid in a responsible manner.

Although the US was willing to continue, as interim measures, its support of the Lao currency and its cash grants for specific purposes, some more effective form of assistance would have to be found. No longer would the US guarantee the Lao military budget. Instead, a specific amount would be granted for "general budgetary purposes." The Lao government would then be responsible for allocating funds "according to its own evaluation of all competing needs." In addition, an acceptable remedy would have to be found for the ills caused by excessive RLG borrowing from the National Bank of Laos.

As to
As to the kingdom's economic development, which was considered "our primary joint objective," the US was willing to continue its present activities in education, rural development, construction, and relief, so that Laotian "human resources" might be developed concurrently with the "economic infrastructure." The US believed, however, that an intensive survey of the Lao economy was needed to provide guidance for a "realistic program of economic development." In addition, the US was prepared to assist in obtaining aid from other nations and from international organizations.

(On 27 December, Ambassador Brown replied that the aid program was "in line with our thinking." He believed, however, that the US should concentrate for the present on the formation of a coalition government. If Souvanna succeeded in forming a government, the offer of assistance could then be made. The Ambassador also noted that to "negotiate" with Souvanna at this time would jeopardize US relations with the existing RLG. Instead of discussing a detailed program, Ambassador Brown would "reassure Souvanna in a general way that the US was ready to give generous assistance to a truly neutral government."

(S) Msgs, State to Vientiane, DEPTEL 563, 22 Dec 61; Vientiane to SecState, 887, 27 Dec 61.

CINCPAC cabled to the JCS that, "if the Communists were to sit down now and assess the progress of their plans for Southeast Asia, . . . their appraisal would closely approximate the following":

1. The situation in Southeast Asia had never been more favorable for the advancement of Communist aims.

2. "Things