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SNIE 58/1-62

31 January 1962

7 FEB 1962

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JNK LAH
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(b) (3)

SPECIAL

NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE

Number 58/1-62

(This estimate supplements and in some respects supersedes SNIE 58-62.)

Relative Military Capabilities of Opposing Forces in Laos

Submitted by the

DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

Concurred in by the

UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

As indicated overleaf

31 JANUARY 1962

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Nº 352

~~SECRET~~

The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of this estimate:

The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, Defense, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and The Joint Staff.

Concurring:

Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State
Director, Defense Intelligence Agency
Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army
Assistant Chief of Naval Operations (Intelligence), Department of the Navy
Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF
Director for Intelligence, Joint Staff
Director of the National Security Agency

Abstaining:

The Atomic Energy Commission Representative to the USIB, and the Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, the subject being outside of their jurisdiction.

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RELATIVE MILITARY CAPABILITIES OF OPPOSING FORCES IN LAOS

THE PROBLEM

To estimate the relative military capabilities of the government and antigovernment forces now in Laos.

THE ESTIMATE

1. In SNIE 58-62¹ we described substantial improvements in training, equipment, morale, and deployment of the Royal Laotian Army (FAR), which had occurred since the cease-fire in May. We estimated that the government forces would probably have a slight edge if fighting were resumed on a pattern comparable to that prior to the cease-fire. We also pointed out that lack of motivation, unstable morale, and poor leadership had been in the past critical weaknesses of the government forces, and that their steadfastness under fire was still uncertain despite the training and new equipment they had received. We also stated our belief that the antigovernment forces would be quickly and effectively reinforced from North Vietnam to the degree necessary to protect any important antigovernment position threatened by the government forces.

2. In recent weeks units of the FAR have had several military clashes with antigovernment forces and have been

¹ SNIE 58-62, "Relative Military Capabilities of Opposing Forces in Laos," dated 11 January 1962.

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forced to withdraw each time: (a) between 7 and 10 January, FAR units of Mobile Group 11 on sweeping operations in the Nam Beng Valley region southwest of the antigovernment stronghold and supply depot of Moung Sai were hit and dispersed by enemy forces; (b) on 18 January, after a series of air strikes and of probing and sweeping operations in the Nhommarath-Mahaxay area, some 70 kilometers north and east of Thakhek, government forces mounted an attack on Mahaxay. The antigovernment forces in the region counterattacked and, in the ensuing action, the 8th Infantry Battalion of Mobile Group 14 was dispersed (though later reorganized about 10 miles to the rear) and the 24th Infantry Battalion of Mobile Group 12 withdrew under enemy pressure; (c) on 22 January, government forces attacking at Ban Nam Mo—35 kilometers east of Nam Tha in northern Luang Prabang Province—were repulsed and over the following week driven back to Nam Tha. General Phoumi has airlifted a battalion of troops from Paksane to reinforce his two battalions at Nam Tha, but the position of the government forces there is still seriously threatened. Although the evidence as to the numbers involved is inconclusive, North Vietnamese cadres and combat troops supplemented the Pathet Lao/Kong Le forces, and it is likely that they played an important part in the recent operations.

3. We now estimate that there are about 9,000 North Vietnamese troops in Laos (6,000 combat; 3,000 cadre and support) as compared with about 5,000 estimated in SNIE 58-62. Two battalions of North Vietnamese (as many as 1,000 men) may have entered Laos in recent weeks; the balance is attributable to a reassessment of indications previously available, and to new evidence. Our estimates of the numbers of North Vietnamese in Laos are highly tenuous because of the various possible interpretations of the available evidence. Moreover, the numbers may change quickly; the North Vietnamese are well organized and prepared to move units easily to and fro across the Laotian-North Vietnamese border.

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4. The performance of FAR units in recent skirmishes was not as unsatisfactory as it generally was immediately before the cease-fire. It is clear, however, that problems of morale and leadership are still critical. We now believe it was too optimistic to estimate in SNIE 58-62 "that the government forces would have a slight edge if fighting were resumed on a pattern comparable to that prior to the cease-fire but intensified as a consequence of the strengthening of both sides over the past several months." In particular, we believe that the FAR is unable to deal with any substantial number of North Vietnamese forces, whom they greatly fear. The Communists are able to bring these forces into play where they wish or need to do so.

5. Although outnumbered by the Lao armed forces, the antigovernment forces now in Laos have a superiority in artillery and armor. They are generally capable of maintaining their main forward positions and of conducting local operations to counter aggressive actions by the government forces. Without further external reinforcements, they could, by concentrating their forces, seize and hold certain key positions now held by government troops. If reinforced by additional combat units from North Vietnam, they could quickly overrun the remainder of Laos.

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SNIE 58-2-62
11 April 1962

(b) (3)

SPECIAL
NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE

Number 58-2-62

Consequences of Certain US Courses in Laos

Submitted by the
DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

Concurred in by the
UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

With the exception of the
Director of Intelligence and Research,
Department of State

As indicated overleaf
11 APRIL 1962

~~SECRET~~

Nº 357

~~SECRET~~

The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of this estimate:

The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, Defense, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and The Joint Staff.

Concurring:

Director, Defense Intelligence Agency
Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army
Assistant Chief of Naval Operations (Intelligence), Department of the Navy
Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF
Director for Intelligence, Joint Staff
Director of the National Security Agency

Dissenting:

Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State

Abstaining:

The Atomic Energy Commission Representative to the USIB, and the Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, the subject being outside of their jurisdiction.

WARNING

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CONSEQUENCES OF CERTAIN US COURSES IN LAOS

THE PROBLEM¹

To estimate certain reactions if the US, in order to put pressure on General Phoumi and Premier Boun Oum to cooperate in a coalition government, halted financial and military aid to the Laotian Government.

¹ The Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, dissents from this entire estimate. The reasons for his dissent are set forth at the end of the estimate.

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THE ESTIMATE

1. The members of the Royal Laotian Government (RLG), the armed forces, and the civil service, as well as most of the people in urban areas, are aware that Laos has become heavily dependent upon US assistance and support. Many of them have come to take continued US aid for granted. The termination of US economic and logistics support would cause considerable psychological shock among these key Laotian elements. Though some of the top government leaders would realize that the US action was designed solely to bring pressure upon Phoumi, most members of the government and military service would probably conclude that the US had abandoned Laos. In either case, the effect on Laotian self-confidence and morale would be a depressing one.

2. The financial impact of the US move would not be immediate. The government has enough foreign currency reserves in London, Tokyo, and New York banks to meet its basic operational needs for perhaps six months or so. Moreover, the government has approximately 600 million kip—the equivalent of some 6 million dollars—in unbacked currency in Savannakhet vaults which it would not be averse to issuing if the need arose. Upon announcement of the termination of US financial support, the RLG would probably take additional steps to economize foreign currency reserves and impose controls over the salaries of government and civil service employees. The reaction of these employees would no doubt be dismay and anger and there would be a chance of anti-US demonstrations in urban areas, especially Vientiane. Although some might defect or return to the rural areas, the majority would probably remain in the cities, hopeful of a renewal of US aid to the present government or to a new regime under Souvanna. In the countryside,

the effect of the US denial of monetary aid on the predominantly barter economy would be negligible.

3. If at the same time the US were to terminate its logistics support of the Royal Laotian Army, current stockpiles of arms, ammunition, POL, and other materiel would enable the FAR to maintain its present positions and level of operations for a maximum of about 45 days, though exhaustion of individual unit stockpiles and difficulties of bringing up reserve supplies from central supply depots would in many cases severely shorten this period. Removal of the MAAG White Star teams would have a detrimental effect on the morale of the FAR and would impair the combat effectiveness of units in front line areas. Believing that Phoumi's source of power was gone, the more opportunistic of the FAR commanders might seek other arrangements, including accommodation with Souvanna Phouma's forces or with the Pathet Lao. If military assistance, to include withdrawal of MAAG, were withheld for more than a few weeks, the combat capabilities of the FAR would so decline as to preclude their restoration by a subsequent resumption of aid. Under these conditions, if the Communist forces now in Laos should decide to take over the country by military means, they would meet with only token resistance. Phoumi's men in the field would almost certainly scatter and seek escape through surrender, defection, or a return to their native villages, and such Meo resistance as continued would be for the sole objective of survival.

4. The Communists—Moscow, Peiping, Hanoi, and the Pathet Lao—would consider that the US action had enhanced their chances of taking over Laos either by military action or by political means. Their choice of action

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would be greatly influenced by whether they believed that the US action represented an abandonment of Laos, or an attempt to force Phoumi to accept a coalition government under Souvanna. Moscow would wish to maintain the appearance of seeking in good faith the establishment of a coalition. Peiping and Hanoi would be more sympathetic to an armed takeover, since they would probably estimate that later US military intervention would be less likely than does the USSR. On balance, we believe that the Communists would not immediately attempt a military conquest of Laos.

5. The Communist forces in Laos would, in any event, continue their recent buildup of military strength and equipment and maintain military pressure on the government forces. They would probably increase that pressure from time to time to improve their political leverage or local military positions. The more extensive the demoralization of the RLG and FAR proved to be, the more the Communists would use their opportunities to induce the defection or neutralization of RLG military and governmental figures. They would expect in this fashion to insure that the "coalition" government that eventually emerged would have a more leftist complexion.

6. The withdrawal of US financial and military aid would probably not persuade Phoumi and Boun Oum to participate in a Souvanna coalition government. Both of them regard Souvanna with suspicion and appear to think that any coalition headed by him would inevitably give way to a Communist-dominated government. Phoumi may believe that US pressure on him will not be carried to the point of seriously weakening his armed forces. A sincere Thai effort to persuade him to join a Souvanna government might be successful, but probably not. He would almost certainly not accept any role unless it gave him a dominant position with respect to the armed forces or police. If Phoumi were to acquiesce in or join a coalition government in any capac-

ity, it is doubtful that he would do so with any serious intent of cooperating with Souvanna. Rather he would seek to undercut Souvanna and his followers.

7. In past times of crisis the King has refused to accept responsibility or to take positive action. The termination of US military and financial aid would increase the chances that the King might undertake to form a government himself. We believe, however, that he would remain passive, seeking to avoid compromising the Crown's position of being "above politics."

8. There would be a number of other courses of action open to Phoumi and Boun Oum, but it is difficult to estimate with confidence the odds on any one of them. The most likely would seem to be for Phoumi and Boun Oum to preserve the existing government and maintain the loyalty and level of effectiveness of its armed forces as long as possible, hoping that the US would in time renew its support and aid. Recent indications are that the intransigent attitude of Phoumi has gained increasing support among the more vocal elements of the RLG and probably encouraged him to oppose any compromise with Souvanna.

9. Another possibility would be for Phoumi and Boun Oum to leave Laos for Thailand or Europe in self-imposed exile. If either or both were to retire from the stage, a few government and military figures with strong anti-Souvanna sentiments would be likely to follow suit. However, most of the RLG would probably stay behind and seek accommodation with Souvanna. The FAR commander in chief would seek to assert control over and maintain discipline in the army, but units in the field would become increasingly demoralized and ineffective. The King, in spite of his distrust of Souvanna, would probably remain in Laos and in due course accept a Souvanna government.

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10. It is also possible that Phoumi and Boun Oum might decide upon some form of drastic military action as the only way to dramatize their position and shock the US into a renewal of support. For example, Phoumi might seek to gather his forces at Savannakhet and attempt the partition of the country. Phoumi might also move whatever forces he could muster to the Sayaboury and Pakse regions on the west side of the Mekong River and seek to create safe havens from which to launch some later military action. In the case of a partition attempt, there would probably be a sharp military reaction by Communist forces, and Phoumi's forces would almost certainly be defeated and scattered or captured. The enemy's reaction to a move across the Mekong to the Sayaboury and Pakse regions would probably be less immediate, but eventual action against these and any other "rebel pockets" would be almost certain. As a last resort, Phoumi and Boun Oum might go to the hills and try to carry out a guerrilla war against any Laotian government which might be set up, but we believe this to be quite unlikely.

¹ The following is the dissent of the Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State:

The Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, believes that the statement of the problem has resulted in an overly-simplified consideration of the effects on General Phoumi and Premier Boun Oum of cessation of US financial and military aid. He does not believe that the actual complexities of the total context in which Phoumi and Boun Oum must act permit us to have any assurance in the sort of net judgment expressed in paragraph 6 of this estimate where it is stated that the "withdrawal of US financial and military aid would probably not persuade Phoumi and Boun Oum to participate in a Souvanna coalition government."

The estimate apparently addresses itself only to an abrupt and total termination of US economic and military support (without noting that 80 percent of US financial aid has been withheld since

February or assessing the impact thereof). The timing, sequence, and correlation of various moves the US might make in the course of withdrawing support, as well as the bearing of pressures from other sources, should be taken into account.

The estimate fails to assess Phoumi's intentions, but implies that he is governed solely by the view that the coalition government as presently envisaged would necessarily mean an early Communist takeover. However, it is entirely possible that he has deliberately overstated his apprehension concerning a Souvanna Government in order to affect US policy. Thus his stubbornness to date might be attributed to a conviction that if he continues to hold out, the US would not dare to withdraw military assistance. On this point it has become increasingly evident that the degree of American determination may be an important if not critical factor. Phoumi himself apparently believes that if he can hold out until Souvanna retires from the field, he can then force the US to support him. (King Vattthana said as much to former President Auriol; Phoumi himself has made clear to US officials that his objective is to get rid of Souvanna.)

Other factors might also weigh on Phoumi. A serious Thai effort to persuade him—again most likely if the Thais believe the US is determined—would have considerable influence on Phoumi. If the Pathet Lao remain relatively quiet for the next few months (as the Soviets have implied that they will, in private conversations at a high level) Phoumi's hopes for renewal of large-scale hostilities and for consequent US support of him would be reduced. If on the other hand hostilities should resume at the instigation either of Phoumi or the Pathet Lao, the probability of further military defeats for the FAR must also be a factor for Phoumi to weigh. This is particularly true since the President has personally warned Phoumi through the Lao Ambassador that the Lao must not labor under the delusion that the US would send in forces to help the FAR if hostilities break out.

Phoumi's stubbornness might also be eroded by the cumulative effect of gradually worsening economic conditions in the cities, and by concern that an alternate to him acceptable to both the US and the RLG might step forward.

The Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, believes that the complexities of the Laotian situation similarly militate against the confident judgment expressed in paragraph 3 of the estimate: "If military assistance, to include withdrawal of MAAG, were withheld for more than a few weeks, the combat capabilities of the FAR

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would so decline as to preclude their restoration by a subsequent resumption of aid." This conclusion represents a possibility which must be weighed in the light of another possibility: that Phoumi's continued intransigence may itself spark a PL-Kong Le attack. The President has already warned Phoumi, through the Lao Ambassador, that the PL are stronger than the RLG forces and if hostilities are resumed Laos will be finished.

In summary, the Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, feels that an estimate of Phoumi's position, to be useful, should take fully into account not merely the fact of withdrawing financial and military aid, but the various possibilities of collateral pressures, timing, and sequence, the correlation of moves which the US might make; as well as the realistic and diminishing range of choices which Phoumi actually faces.

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15 MAY 1962

2319

SNIE 58-4-62
14 May 1962

(b) (3)

SPECIAL NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE

THE CURRENT MILITARY SITUATION
AND OUTLOOK IN LAOS

NOTE: This is the final version of the estimate and additional text
will not be circulated.

Central Intelligence Agency

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Submitted by the
DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of this estimate: The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, Defense, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, The Joint Staff, and the Director of the National Security Agency.

Concurred in by the
UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

on 14 May 1962. Concurring were the Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State; The Director, Defense Intelligence Agency; the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army; the Assistant Chief of Naval Operations (Intelligence), Department of the Navy; the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF; the Director for Intelligence, Joint Staff; and the Director of the National Security Agency. The Atomic Energy Commission Representative to the USIB and the Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, abstained, the subject being outside of their jurisdiction.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

14 May 1962

SUBJECT: SNIE 58-4-62: THE CURRENT MILITARY SITUATION AND OUTLOOK IN
LAOS

THE PROBLEM

To assess the military situation and outlook and to estimate
Communist short-run intentions in Laos.

THE ESTIMATE

I. THE SITUATION

1. Following the rout of Nam Tha, Laotian Government influence has been virtually eliminated from all of north and northwestern Laos. Although Luang Prabang is still in government hands, its last main avenue of supply, which ran from Thailand through Ban Houei Sai and down the Mekong, has been interdicted eastward from Pak Beng. Communist units have been for some time in key positions about the city and could take it at

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will. Many of the Laotian troops defeated at Nam Tha have crossed the Mekong at Ban Houei Sai and are assembling in northern Thailand for airlift back to Laos. Among the eight Royal Laotian Government (RLG) battalions at Nam Tha were Phoumi's three best paratrooper units. The surviving troops will have to be regrouped, retrained, and largely re-equipped. Their morale has been shattered and their combat effectiveness is, at present, nil.

2. The defeat at Nam Tha and the subsequent forced withdrawal into Thailand following the military reverses during January further undermine the morale of the Laotian Government forces as a whole. Extensive North Vietnamese troop participation and unfounded government claims of direct Chinese Communist military involvement have almost certainly contributed to the demoralization of the Lao Army. Events of the past week demonstrate the ineffectiveness of the Laotian Army and emphasize its lack of motivation and will to resist. They underscore the continuing weakness of army leadership on all levels of command. The most effective element in fighting the Communists is the Meo guerrilla whose harassing efforts are pinning down several Communist battalions in northeastern Laos. We believe that the Laotian Army is not capable of resisting a determined enemy attack anywhere in the country.^{1/}

^{1/} (See next page for footnote)

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1/ DEPLOYMENT OF GOVERNMENT AND ANTIGOVERNMENT GROUND FORCES
(before Nam Tha attack)

DRV - North Vietnamese regulars
KL - Kong Le (Souvanna Phouma)
KO - Kham Ouane (Souvanna Phouma)
PL - Pathet Lao

	<u>Government</u>	<u>Antigovernment</u>
Northwestern Laos	18 bns	19 bns (3 DRV, 9 PL, 7 KO)
Northeastern Laos	7 bns	19 bns (3 DRV, 9 PL, 7 KL)
Vientiane Area	9 bns	8 bns (4 PL, 4 KL)
South Central Laos	16 bns	15 bns (4 DRV, 10 PL, 1 KL)
Southern Laos	9 bns	7 bns (PL) (2 DRV bns shown in south central Laos may have shifted to southern Laos.)

In addition to the units mentioned, the antigovernment forces have numerous artillery or mortar support units and smaller infantry units which operate generally as guerrillas. The government also has several artillery batteries -- comprising 3 battalions -- and a reconnaissance battalion, as well as the Meo irregulars operating behind the enemy lines in northeastern Laos.

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3. Over the past few months, the termination of US financial aid has had a considerable psychological impact on the Laotian Government leadership. It has also had an adverse effect on the urban economy. The Boun Oum government probably could limp along financially for a few months longer. Nevertheless, this US action and the US attitude since Nam Tha probably have convinced some key Laotian elements of the US determination to withdraw support from Phoumi and to bring about a coalition government. Moreover, we believe that the course of recent events must lead to some diminishing of Phoumi's prestige. Whereas his intransigent attitude had gained considerable support among the more vocal elements of the Laotian Government during the earlier part of the year, his failure to rally support abroad, particularly in Thailand, and his recent military defeats, particularly the one at Nam Tha, must result in considerable loss of confidence in his leadership. There is little chance that the present Laotian Government is capable of mustering sufficient enthusiasm or strength to overcome its recent military and political reverses. No opposition element has yet emerged, and Phoumi's control still appears to be intact. He will seek to salvage his position by pointing out that he was absent from Laos during the Nam Tha affair, that the rout was due to Chinese Communist and North Vietnamese military participation, and that the US has progressively withdrawn support from him and applied sanctions which have diminished his capability to act. Many Laotians will be disposed to accept

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these explanations. On the other hand, dissatisfaction may reach such a point that there may be an attempt within the government and/or army to decrease the influence of Phoumi and his followers by a move to form a government more willing to come to an agreement with the neutralist and Communist elements.

II. COMMUNIST INTENTIONS

4. The Communist attack in the north was a calculated, well-planned move. It almost certainly was concurred in by the three Communist powers concerned -- Hanoi, Peiping, and Moscow. In reaching their decision to mount the attack the Communist powers almost certainly considered that the risk of US intervention in Laos had lessened significantly and that they could increase the level of military operations in pursuing their objectives. They probably were fully confident that the military capabilities of the Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese forces in Laos were superior to those of the Laotian Government forces. They had probably become impatient with the lack of progress toward the establishment of a coalition government. Furthermore, they are probably concerned over the implications of the sharply increased role of the US in South Vietnam.

5. We believe that the attack probably was designed to take advantage of a local tactical opportunity in northwest Laos. The Communists

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probably calculated that the defeat of the Nam Tha garrison and the loss of the town would contribute to the demoralization of the Laotian Army and RLG. Moreover, Nam Tha is strategically critical for the control of north and western Laos. In addition, the Communists, particularly the Chinese, probably considered Nam Tha in Laotian Government hands as an impediment to the expansion of their influence in Phong Saly and among the hill peoples of northwestern Laos and northern Thailand.

6. It is possible that the Nam Tha attack may indicate that the Communist side has lost interest in a negotiated settlement and written off the idea of a coalition government under Souvanna Phouma in favor of a de facto partition, a campaign of gradual military conquest, or an all-out offensive. Peiping and Hanoi have been somewhat less willing than Moscow to settle for a coalition government. Moreover, in the light of the increased US commitment in South Vietnam, Moscow may have become convinced that more aggressive Communist military action in Laos was necessary. However, we continue to believe that the Nam Tha attack and the pursuit of the fleeing Laotian Army troops did not mark the beginning of an immediate military drive to seize all of Laos. Nor do we believe that the Communist side would, in terms of the present line-up of forces, be willing to settle for a de facto partition.

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7. In the Communist view, the attack on Nam Tha probably did not foreclose further negotiations for a political settlement or compromise Souvanna as a potential leader of a coalition government. They could argue that Souvanna was not in Laos; he publicly "disapproved" of the attack; and his troops did not participate. Indeed, the Communists may have estimated that a victory at Nam Tha would enhance the possibilities of renewed negotiations and, in addition, improve their bargaining position.

8. Although the rout of the government forces at Nam Tha and thereafter may have been more sweeping than the Communists expected, their victory will very soon be reflected in their military and political policies. With respect to the resumption of negotiations and the terms for agreement, the Communists will probably leave the initiative to the other side and assume a stiffer attitude. In the absence of effective military response to the Nam Tha action, which we believe is beyond the capabilities of the Laotian Government forces, or of significant progress toward a coalition government, there will be an increasing likelihood that the Communists will undertake offensive operations on the scale of Nam Tha elsewhere in Laos.

9. The Communist forces will probably follow up their capture of Nam Tha by clearing the entire area of north and northeast Laos of government forces and consolidating their control over the area. The Communist

- 7 -

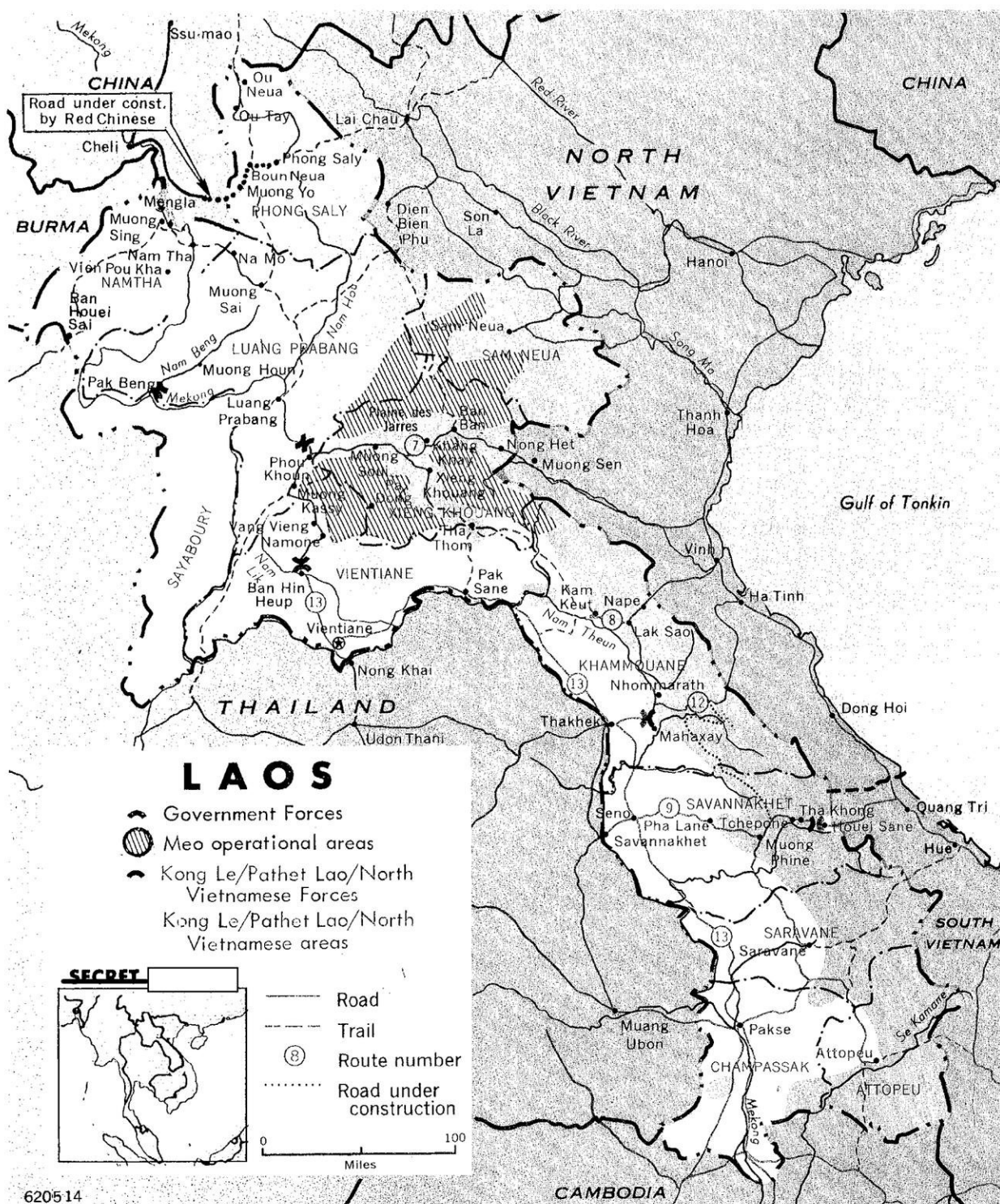
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forces, perhaps with the Kong Le troops playing some role, may further tighten their circle around the lightly-held royal capital, Luang Prabang, increasing the pressure on the King who has, thus far, supported Phoumi. It is possible that Communist forces may cross the Mekong west of Luang Prabang and occupy Sayaboury province which lies between the Mekong and the Thai border. Such a move would sharply raise the level of Thai concern. Troop movements and attacks on outposts recently reported in south Laos suggest that Communist forces may soon seize Saravane and Attapeu to further secure the overland route between North and South Vietnam. These major outposts are already virtually surrounded and neither would be likely to hold out long under attack. We still do not believe, however, that the Communists will seize the major towns along the Mekong remaining in Laotian Government hands, at least until they have had time to assess the political and military effects in Laos of the recent moves and any US reaction.

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TELEGRAM INFORMATION REPORT TELEGRAM

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: JUN 2001

CONFIDENTIAL
(When Filled In)

CLASSIFICATION — DISSEMINATION CONTROLS

EO 12958
3.4(b)(1)>25Yrs
(C)

COUNTRY LAOS

REPORT NO. [REDACTED]

SUBJECT MILITARY ACTIVITY IN NAM THA, LUANG PRABANG, XIENG KHOUANG, AND SAM NEUA PROVINCES

DATE DISTR. 4 OCTOBER 1962

PRECEDENCE ROUTINE

EO 12958
3.4(b)(1)>25Yrs
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DATE OF INFO. 20 - 29 SEPTEMBER 1962

REFERENCES [REDACTED]

PLACE & DATE ACQ. LAOS, VIENTIANE (3-4 OCTOBER 1962)

APPRAISAL 3

FIELD REPORT NO. FOV 5984

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EO 12958
3.4(b)(1)>25Yrs
(C)

SOURCE [REDACTED]

~~SMITH-BUNDY~~
DUNGAN
KAYSEN
KILDUFF
PETERSEN
SCHLESINGER

1. ON 27 SEPTEMBER 62 AN ENEMY UNIT AT PHOU MA (TG 9945) SHELLED A FRIENDLY UNIT AT BAN OR (TG 9142) WITH THREE ROUNDS OF 81MM MORTAR FIRE.

2. ON 20 SEPTEMBER A FRIENDLY PATROL FROM PC 7385 REPORTED HAVING OBSERVED APPROXIMATELY THREE ENEMY BATTALIONS AT QD 5119. THE ENEMY WAS EQUIPPED WITH ABOUT 20 MORTARS, TEN ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS, AND 30 LIGHT MACHINE GUNS. THE FRIENDLY PATROL ALSO REPORTED THAT ON 20 SEPTEMBER AT 1630 HOURS THREE WHITE AIRCRAFT (UNIDENTIFIED) FLEW FROM THE NORTHEAST TO THE SOUTHWEST OVER QD 5119 WHERE THEY MADE AN AIRDROP.

3. ON 23 SEPTEMBER A VILLAGER FROM BAN HUOT (UG 5964)

~~JOHN B. KIM~~
KIM
KORNER
SAUNDERS

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GROUP 1
Excluded from automatic
downgrading and
declassification

STATE/INR	DIA	ARMY/ACSI	NAVY	AIR	JCS	SECDEF	NSA	NIC	AID	USIA	OCI	ONE	OCR	ORR	OBI	EXP
STATE/DIR																

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REPORTED HAVING OBSERVED ENEMY IN THE AREA AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATIONS:

A. UG 5071 - APPROXIMATELY 300 VIETNAMESE COMMUNISTS (VC) AND 500 PATHET LAO (PL).

B. UG 5966 - 150 VC AND 100 PL EQUIPPED WITH ONE 60MM MORTAR.

C. UG 6763 - 50 VC AND 400 PL EQUIPPED WITH ONE 60MM MORTAR.

D. UG 6367 - 150 VC AND 50 PL

E. UG 6863 - 100 VC EQUIPPED WITH ONE 60MM MORTAR.

F. UG 4273 - 100 VC

G. UG 4472 - 200 VC

H. UG 4572 - 100 VC

COMMENT: NUMBERS OF VC ARE POSSIBLY EXAGGERATED.

LOCATIONS CANNOT BE CONFIRMED AS THIS IS THE FIRST DETAILED INFORMATION TO DATE ON EMPLACEMENTS IN THIS PARTICULAR AREA.

EO 12958 3.4(b)(1)>25Yrs
(C)

4. ON 26 SEPTEMBER A FRIENDLY [REDACTED] VISITED MUONG TAE (UG 4861). HE MADE THE FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS THERE:

EO 12958
3.4(b)(1)>25Yrs
(C)

A. 12 VC ARRIVED IN MUONG TAE FROM SAN TIAU (UG 4955) AND BOUGHT A BUFFALO FOR 5,000 KIP.

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B. EIGHT PL AND 140 COOLIES WERE AT MUONG TAI PREPARING TO TRANSPORT SUPPLIES TO IS TIAU. 30 COOLIES CARRIED 100 ROUNDS OF 57MM RECOILLESS RIFLE SHELLS; 20 COOLIES CARRIED 60 ROUNDS OF 81MM MORTAR SHELL; AND TEN COOLIES CARRIED RICE. [REDACTED]

EO 12958
3.4(h)(1)>25Yrs
(C)

C. [REDACTED] THERE WERE 15 VC GUARDING A RICE STORAGE DUMP AT BAN PIET (UG 5761), AND THAT THE GUARDS HAD ARRIVED ON 17 SEPTAMBER FROM PA KOUM (UG 5261). [REDACTED]

EO 12958
3.4(h)(1)>25Yrs
(C)

5. FRIENDLY PATROLS REPORTED HAVING OBSERVED THE FOLLOWING ENEMY LOCATIONS AS OF 29 SEPTEMBER:

A. MUONG HIEM (UG 2825) - 50 KONG LE (KL) TROOPS EQUIPPED WITH ONE 60MM MORTAR AND ONE 81MM MORTAR.

B. PHOUNG HAI (UG 2816) - AN AIRFIELD LOCATION WHERE THERE WERE 60 PL EQUIPPED WITH ONE 60MM MORTAR. AT THE AIRFIELD WERE FOUR WHITE DOUBLE WING AIRCRAFT.

C. PIAN LAW (UH 2808) - 85 KL ARMED WITH ONE 60MM MORTAR.

6 ON 29 SEPTEMBER A FRIENDLY PILOT OBSERVED ACFT WITH "HIGH VERTICAL STABLIZERS SIMILAR TO A MIG" FLYING NORTH

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ALONG THE RIVER VALLEY OVER ABOUT TG 0069 TOWARD LUANG PRABANG.
ON 30 SEPTEMBER THE SAME PILOT OBSERVED AN IL-14 MAKING DROP
PASSES AT ABOUT QA 8345. IT COULD NOT BE DETERMINED ON
WHICH SIDE OF THE RIVER THE DROPS WERE MADE. [REDACTED] COMMENT.
THE PILOT HAD NO FURTHER DETAILS TO ADD ABOUT THE JET,
AND NO INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE TO CONFIRM OR DENY THE
EXISTENCE OF JET AIRCRAFT IN THE AREA.)

EO 12958 3.4(b)(1)-25Yrs
(C)

7. [REDACTED] DISSEM:STATE ARMY USOM CINCPAC PACFLT PACAF
ARPAC

EO 12958 3.4(b)(1)-25Yrs
(C)

END OF MESSAGE

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