# Records of the U.S. State Department

# Laos

# Political and Governmental Affairs, February 1963-1966

# **Subject-Numeric File POL**



**Primary Source Media** 



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Guide Compiled By Alissa De Rosa

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Cover photograph: 1960s map of Laos

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## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Laos, a landlocked nation in the center of the Southeast Asian peninsula, that is now the Lao People's Democratic Republic (LPDR, or Laos), is bordered by Cambodia, China, Burma, Thailand, and Vietnam (only Cambodia is smaller), neighbors which, to varying degrees, have influenced Laotian historical, cultural, and political development.

In the mid-1960s, U.S. support of Souvanna Phouma's government in the face of continuing North Vietnamese aggression did not constitute, technically speaking, a violation of the terms of the 1962 Geneva Protocol, as Radio Hanoi and Radio Pathet Lao charged. It did not involve Laos in a military alliance, and there were no U.S. military bases or ground troops in Laos. Supply flights to Royal Laotian Government (RLG) outposts were flown by civilian companies under charter to Souvanna Phouma's government.

On the periphery of the plenary sessions at Geneva in 1962, Harriman and his deputy, William H. Sullivan, had arrived at an informal understanding with Soviet deputy foreign minister Georgi M. Pushkin to the effect that as long as the U.S. did not technically violate the Geneva Protocol the Soviet Union would not feel compelled, out of consideration of its ally in Hanoi, to respond to U.S. activities in Laos. The official curtain of secrecy associated with this arrangement gave rise later to statements in Congress that the U.S. was engaged in a "secret war" in Laos, a perspective that obscured the Ho Chi Minh government of responsibility for its support of the communist-dominated resistance movement in Laos since 1945.

Souvanna Phouma was having problems of his own because of the peculiar nature of the Cold War in Laos. In April 1964, he visited Hanoi and Beijing. Premier Chou En-lai reiterated China's support for the 1954 and 1962 Geneva agreements and advised Souvanna Phouma to dissociate the Laos question from the Vietnam question, a difficult task. Hanoi seemed to have succeeded in its strategy of making "one battlefield" out of Indochina--Cambodia, Laos, South Vietnam--and the Ho Chi Minh Trail now extended through Laos and Cambodia.

After a new tripartite meeting on the embattled Plain of Jars, Souvanna Phouma returned to Vientiane without any result and announced his intention to resign. Two rightist generals took advantage of the situation, staged a coup attempt, and arrested Souvanna Phouma. Only concerted action by Western ambassadors in the capital secured his release. Souvanna Phouma pledged to merge the rightist and Neutralist factions.

There was further infighting among the generals. In February 1965, General Phoumi, whose business dealings had earned him many enemies on the noncommunist side, left for Thailand. With the formal merger of their faction with the rightists, Neutralist leaders increasingly felt their lives to be in danger. Kong Le eventually took refuge in the Indonesian embassy in Vientiane, leaving Laos soon after for the safety of Paris. He was replaced as commander of Neutralist troops by General Sengsouvanh Souvannarath.

From 1965 to 1973, the civil war seesawed back and forth in northern Laos, characterized by short but often very intense engagements.

The U.S. State Department Subject Classified Files are the definitive source of American diplomatic reporting on political, military, social, and economic developments throughout the world in the twentieth century.

This microfilm publication of U.S. State Department Subject Classified Files, for the period 1963-1965, relates to political and governmental affairs in Laos. The publication contains a wide range of materials from U.S. diplomats, including:

- special reports on political and military affairs
- studies and statistics on socioeconomic matters
- interviews and minutes of meetings with foreign government officials
- conference proceedings and other international legal documents
- full texts of important letters, instructions, and cables sent and received by U.S. diplomatic personnel
- voluminous reports and translations from foreign journals and newspapers
- countless translations of high-level foreign government documents, including speeches, memoranda, official reports, and transcripts of political meetings and assemblies

This collection consists of thousands of pages arranged topically and chronologically on crucial subjects, such as:

Political Policy Background & National Policy

Trends

Political Reports, Statistics, & Analyses

Organizations & Alignments Agreements & Treaties Prominent Personalities

Visits & Meetings

Neutralism; Non-Alignment

Intervention Nationalism Political Parties Non-Party Blocs Elections

Government Administration Diplomatic Representation

Local Government

Peace; Non-Aggression

Internal Security

Subversion

Demonstrations & Protests Coup d'états; Insurgency Military Operations Territory and Boundaries

On these subjects and more, these Subject Classified Files relating to political and governmental affairs offer authoritative, in-depth, and timely documentation and analysis that cannot be matched.

# SOURCE AND EDITORIAL NOTES

The documents reproduced in this publication are from the Records of the Department of State, in the custody of the National Archives of the United States. This publication consists of documents comprising RG 59, Records of the Department of State, Central Subject Files, Laos, POL subject category for the period February 1963 to December 1966.

All documents have been filmed in their entirety and as they are arranged at the National Archives.

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The following is a listing of the folders comprising the microfilm publication entitled *Laos Political and Governmental Affairs*, *February 1963-1966 Subject-Numeric File POL*. The Reel Index lists the folder title, as well as a listing of the major subjects and principal correspondents for each folder.

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[1]	POL	Political Affairs and Relations  Topics: Auschuetz, Norbert L.; Geneva Agreements; Harriman, W. Averill; International Control Commission (ICC); Kennedy, John F.; Nuclear test ban treaty; People's Republic of China; Phoui Sananikone; Press, Laos; Propaganda; Quinim Pholsena; Sri Savang Vatthana; Treaties; Unger, Leonard; USSR; Vietnam War.
[2]	POL 2	General Reports and Statistics  Topics: International Control Commission (ICC); Phoumi Nosavan; Souvanna Phouma; Unger, Leonard; United States Information Agency (USIA).
[3]	POL 2-1	General Reports and Statistics: Joint Weekas  Topics: International Control Commission (ICC); Quinim Pholsena; Souvanna Phouma.
[4]	POL 2-3	<b>General Reports and Statistics: Politico-Economic Reports</b> <i>Topic:</i> Souvanna Phouma.
[5]	POL 2-4	<b>General Reports and Statistics: Politico-Military Reports</b> <i>Topic:</i> Air Force, U.S.
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[7]	POL 7	Visits, Meetings  Topics: de Gaulle, Charles; Phoumi Nosavan; Souvanna Phouma; Unger, Leonard.

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[7]	POL 7	Visits, Meetings cont.  Topics: International Control Commission (ICC); Khamphan Panya; Souvanna Phouma; Sri Savang Vatthana.
[8]	POL 7-1	Visits, Meetings: Arrangements Topics: Sri Savang Vatthana; Tiao Khampan.
[9]	POL 8	Neutralism, Non-Alignment Topics: Chaffard, Georges; Souvanna Phouma.
[10]	POL 12	Political Parties Topics: Poland; USSR.
[11]	POL 13	Non-Party Blocs Topics: Pheng Phongsavan; Phoumi Nosavan.
[12]	POL 15	Government  Topics: Geneva Agreements; Ministry of Information, Laos; Phoumi Nosavan.
[13]	POL 15-1	Government: Head of State, Executive Branch [Folder Empty]
[14]	POL 15-2	Government: Legislature  Topics: Geneva Agreements; International Control Commission (ICC); National Assembly, Laos; Parliamentary Group; Phoumi Nosavan; Souvanna Phouma; Sri Savang Vatthana.
[15]	POL 15-4	Government: Administration of Government
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[19]	POL 17-4	Diplomatic and Consular Representation: Ceremonial and Social Affairs  Topics: Geneva Agreements; Lao Constitution Day.

[20]	POL 17-5 Laos-U.S.	Diplomatic and Consular Representation: Arrival and Departure, Change in Status  Topics: Tianethone Chantharasy; U.S.
[21]	POL 18	Provincial, Municipal and State Government  Topics: Phong Saly Province; Sayaboury Province; United States Information Agency (USIA).
[22]	POL 21	Peace, Non-Aggression Topics: American Bar Association; Conferences and conventions.
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[26]	POL 25	<b>Demonstrations, Protests, Riots</b> <i>Topics:</i> Khanthi Siphanthong; Quinim Pholsena; Souvanna Phouma.
[27]	POL 26	<b>Rebellion, Coups, Insurgency</b> <i>Topics:</i> International Control Commission (ICC); Phoui Sananikone; Phoumi Nosavan.
[28]	POL 26-1	<b>Rebellion, Coups, Insurgency: Counter-Insurgency</b> <i>Topics:</i> Souvanna Phouma; Unger, Leonard; Vang Pao; Viet Minh.
[29]	POL 27	Military Operations  Topics: Amkha Soukhavong; Demonstrations; Geneva Agreements; Military aid/assistance, U.S.; Phoumi Nosavan; Souvanna Phouma; Unger, Leonard; Viet Minh.

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[34]	POL 27-14	Military Operations: Truce, Cease-Fire, Armistice <i>Topics:</i> Conferences and conventions; Geneva Agreements; International Control Commission (ICC); Poland; Souvanna Phouma; UK; Unger, Leonard; USSR; Vietnam War.
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[47]	POL Laos-Pol POL Laos-SViet	Topics: Geneva Agreements; International Control Commission
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File# Subject Numeric File	Subject
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Topics: Democratic Republic of Vietnam; France; Neutralists forces; Phoumi Nosavan; South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO); Unger, Leonard; USSR.

## **REEL 11**

File# Subject Subject Numeric File

#### [90] **POL 27** Military Operations cont.

Topics: Communism; Conferences and conventions; Geneva Accords; Geneva Agreements; International Control Commission (ICC); Kong Le; Pathet Lao; Souphanouvong; South East Asia; Souvanna Phouma; Unger, Leonard.

[90]

File# Subject Numeric File

**POL 27** 

Military Operations cont.

*Topics:* Conferences and conventions; Geneva Agreements; International Control Commission (ICC); Kong Le; Pathet Lao; Phoumi Nosavan; Rusk, Dean; Souvanna Phouma; Unger,

Leonard; USSR.

Subject

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File# Subject Numeric File Subject

[90] POL 27 Military Operations cont.

*Topics:* Communism; Conferences and conventions; de Gaulle, Charles; Geneva Accords; Geneva Agreements; International Control Commission (ICC); Kong Le; Military Assistance

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File# Subject Numeric File Subject

[90] POL 27 Military Operations cont.

*Topics:* Communism; Geneva Agreements; International Commission for Supervision and Control in Laos; International Control Commission (ICC); Phong Saly Province; Phoumi Nosavan; Refugees, Laos; Rusk, Dean; Souphanouvong; South

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