

8 September 1958

TO: 25X1A8a
[REDACTED]
Attention: [REDACTED] 25X1A9a

FROM: [REDACTED] 25X1A8a

SUBJECT: Transmittal of Study of Communist Subversion In Laos.

1. Transmitted herewith is a study entitled "Communist Subversion in Laos Subsequent to the Agreements Between the Royal Laotian Government and the Pathet Lao. This study was prepared by [REDACTED] as part of the pro [REDACTED]

25X1A8a

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2. Please coordinate your outgoing dispatch with [REDACTED]

25X1A8a

**COMMUNIST SUBVERSION IN LAOS SUBSEQUENT TO THE
AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE ROYAL LAOTIAN GOVERN-
MENT AND THE PATHET LAO**

In late 1957 agreements were signed between the Royal Laotian Government (RLG) and the insurgent Communist Pathet Lao (PL) intended to end the civil war and to reunify the country and the nation. These agreements were the outcome of a long series of negotiations during which the RLG had made a number of concessions to the PL.

The agreements provided for:

- a. The restoration of the authority of the RLG in the two northern provinces which the PL had held as a base.
- b. The integration into government service of former PL troops and civil functionaries.
- c. The legalization both of the PL as a political party under the name of Neo Lao Hak Xat (NLHX) and of PL front organizations among women, youth, peasants, etc.
- d. An increase in the size of the National Assembly and supplementary elections to fill the new seats, thus giving the PL an opportunity to secure parliamentary representation without waiting for the regular elections in 1959.
- e. The immediate inclusion of two PL leaders in the government.

Many people suspected that the PL, in signing these agreements, had no intention of fulfilling them in good faith and returning to the national community as loyal citizens of a democratic Laos. Events since the end of 1957 have shown only too clearly that these suspicions were justified and that the PL, far from abandoning their intentions to overthrow the democratic government of Laos and to establish a Communist regime in its place, have simply decided to seek the same objective through political action and covert subversion

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instead of through armed struggle. At the same time, it is clear that they have retained both the capability and the will to revert to armed struggle at any moment when that course seems to offer better prospects of success.

The two provinces of Phong Saly and Sam Neua were formally handed over to the RLG on 18 November 1957 under an arrangement which divided the positions of authority between RLG and PL appointees. Each RLG official was to have a PL deputy and vice-versa. In practice, RLG officials found that they could exercise no real authority. Former PL officials continued to control affairs, paying no attention to the RLG officials who sat helpless in their offices and were themselves subjected to harassment and intimidation, including the throwing of bombs at the residence of the RLG Governor of Sam Neua.

PL propagandists and terrorists continued to visit the villages telling the villagers to refuse to obey RLG officials, that the PL would soon take over all power and punish those who opposed them, and that the refusal of the people to support the PL would mean a renewal of the civil war.

As a result the formal return of the two provinces to the RLG, which was the principal concession made by the PL in the negotiations, has been nullified in practice and the PL continue to rule the provinces except in places actually occupied by the Lao National Army (ANL).

The principal objective of the RLG in seeking a settlement with the PL was, of course, an end to civil war and the surrender of the insurgent troops with their arms. The PL have not fulfilled this condition in good faith. Some six or seven thousand did present themselves at RLG reception centers. They brought with them some arms, but far short of the number necessary to equip a force of that size. Many of the surrendered arms were obsolete and in poor or unserviceable condition. There is evidence that many of the arms furnished the PL by the Communist Vietminh were returned to North Vietnam. The ANL has also uncovered a number of arms caches left behind in the jungle by the PL. How many more remain undiscovered awaiting the future use of Communist rebels is, of course, unknown.

There is also evidence that an unknown number of PL soldiers have remained in the jungle as partisan bands. They could furnish

the nucleus of a new insurrection and in the meantime act as a terrorist force in support of the NLHX.

Some 1500 of the surrendering PL troops were organized into two battalions of the ANL, this being one of the terms of settlement. These troops have resisted all reindoctrination, refused to obey regular ANL officers, carried on Communist propaganda activities in the neighboring districts and in general manifested their determination to remain Communist fighting units even though they are now paid and supplied by the RLG.

Also according to the agreement, PL civil functionaries have been taken into various departments of the RLG. A PL defector in 1955 described what the role of such individuals was to be if a settlement were eventually arrived at. They were to establish themselves in their positions, work to bring more Communist sympathizers into the service and eventually to take over control of the government. There have been reports that PL leaders have been pressuring the RLG to accept more former PL, both civil and military, in the police. Police forces are always, of course, primary targets for Communist infiltration.

PL soldiers who were not integrated into the ANL and many PL civil functionaries who did not accept jobs in the RLG administration were returned to their villages throughout Laos at government expense. Here they have served as propagandists and terrorists. They have served as members and leaders of clandestine Communist cells within the NL_HX party organization. Their activities contributed heavily to the success of the NLHX in the supplementary elections held on 4 May 1956.

In these elections the NLHX and its "neutralist" allies won almost two thirds of the additional seats in the assembly--an unexpected success which shocked the anti-Communist elements in Laos. Among the several factors which contributed to this success, not the least was the campaign of propaganda and intimidation carried on throughout the country by former PL personnel. Besides intensive propaganda to discredit the RLG, these former PL members systematically intimidated the villagers into voting for the NL_HX candidates. Besides the threat of individual reprisals upon persons who voted for the government candidates, the PL propagandists have declared their intention of renewing civil war if they should lose the election. With the support of the Vietminh,

they said, they could not fail to win such a war, when all who opposed them would be put to death. They also interfered in the elections themselves, switching labels on voting urns, stopping up the openings of the urns of the RLG candidates, taking down the names of voters who put their ballots in the government urns, and other similar devices designed to ensure the victory of the NLHX.

These tactics have been continued since the elections, apparently with a considerable degree of success. RLG officials in the north have been resigning due to the impossibility of carrying out their functions and fear for their personal safety. Members of the village defense forces have been turning in their arms, having been told by PL propagandists that since they were armed they would be the first to be killed when the war started again and the Vietminh invaded Laos.

A considerable portion of the PL troops consisted of members of the minority groups in Laos, particularly the Meo. Since the agreements the PL have continued their efforts to exploit these minorities, both for political advantage and for subversive activities, by stirring up their latent distrust of the dominant Lao majority and promising them greater autonomy and privileges under a PL government.

The NL^HX, besides having proved itself as a well-organized and effective political party posing a threat to the non-Communist regime, also serves as a cover organization for the clandestine Communist Party apparatus. Within each NL^HX committee, from the national level down to the villages, is a covert Communist Party cell. The committees are often ostensibly headed by respectable non-Communists, but the real control is exercised by the Communist Party cell which often includes PL cadres who are not members of the Committee. These cells, besides controlling the NLHX organization, are also responsible for organizing other Communist clandestine activities in their areas.

PL leader Prince Souphanouvong, as Minister of Plans and Reconstruction in the coalition government, has been in a position to monitor all the government projects for rehabilitation and development, and even to claim for himself and his party the credit for any benefits received by the people. He also has influenced the RLG into giving him a virtual veto power over the appointment of RLG officials in the north and has urged the admission of more former PL into government services, particularly into the police.

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Phoumi Vongvichit, the other PL leader in the cabinet, as Minister of Religion has been able to propagandize and pressure the Buddhist monks and has used this opportunity so effectively that recent reports indicate that a large majority of the bonzes in Laos have become supporters of the NLF X with more than 2000 of them accepting Communist ideology.

It has become abundantly clear that the Communist Pathet Lao regard the agreements with the Royal Government as a means of improving their capabilities for attack upon the democratic government of Laos through both political action and clandestine subversion; that they never had any intention of leaving the jungle to become loyal citizens of a democratic nation or of abandoning their avowed purpose to overthrow the government of Laos and replace it with a Communist regime.

Distribution:

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