

**Laos 1959–1961 –  
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documents, press clippings,  
chrono...**

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Laos - 1960

19 Feb.

Tuomioja, Sakari (U.N. Mission to Laos)

- 1 letter to D.H.
- 4 encl.



Vientiane, 19 February 1960

PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL

My dear Dag,

1. The electoral prospects remain a puzzle. More pieces are needed to create a recognizable picture.

The circonscriptions have not yet been delimited nor any regulations supplementary to the electoral law been issued. Yet prospective candidates are reported to be making the rounds and newspapers comment on bickering between the R.P.L. and C.D.I.N. over a fair division of the 59 prospective candidates on the still hypothetical "single list" - with news gossip reporting the C.D.I.N wanting considerably more than the 15 places offered. The Americans express hope that Nhouy will be able to knock the necessary heads together. The deadline for filing candidatures is 9 March.

Minister of Interior S.A. Tiao Somsanith told me last night of his satisfaction over prevailing tranquil conditions throughout the country but expressed anxious interest over what definite line Hanoi Radio would finally take. Until now, both he and Phoui, and French and American Embassy sources report that its tone has been generally moderate. There has been severe criticism of the electoral law as flagrantly partisan but nothing definite re Pathet Lao participation.

On that question the American and French are posing the same questions that Phoui raised with us, as reported in my last week's letter. This week, to Mr. de Beauvais, French Counsellor, Phoui expressed his belief that the Pathet Lao would not run. The latter reported contacts to that effect with Pathet Lao sympathizers. He also said that Quinim Pholsena, leader of the neutralist, leftist Santiphap party (7 members in the last National Assembly) had stated that he was 99% sure his party would not participate. However, Phoui expressed the opinion that in the end Santiphap would take part. Reasons for non-participation include the rigged law, expected military and police pressure and fear of reprisals.

Local news gossip reports Quinim, of Chinese blood, considering running in Vientiane against a prominent Government figure to show that his strength is country-wide - instead of sticking to such a sure area for him as ATIOPEU, isolated in the remote South-East of Laos.

Mr. Dag Hammarskjöld  
Secretary-General  
United Nations Headquarters

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2. Gaillard and I had an interesting session with Holt, American Counsellor, this morning at which we received the unclassified text of Ambassador Smith's reply to the dangerously candid and severely critical exposé of the American position and program here in spite of its praise of the current staff (Enclosure No. 1). The Lucas articles were forwarded to us by Engers.

3. At the same interview we were allowed to read the Ambassador's classified appraisal of all aspects of the situation - to be presented at a March conference at Manila of area US Chiefs of Missions. The broad theme was that gains had been registered this past year but that the gains were vulnerable, that strenuous efforts must be continued and that the U.S. could not go it alone. In the latter connexion he referred to welcome support and understanding from Washington of the radical change of policy during the year, implying that it had been recommended by him.

The most significant items outlined the Ambassador's idea that the Army should be cut to 12-14,000 from the present 29,000, with a Constabulary of 16,000 stationed locally throughout the country, plus Home Guard companies in each Muong. To a question of whether this idea would release any funds for economic projects the reply of Holt was that the Ambassador hoped so.

On this topic therefore the Ambassador's new idea will not serve to bring the U.S. position much closer to the French ideas exposed yesterday to Gaillard by de Beauvais. In essence they think a small 5-6,000 man army far more suitable for both political and military reasons with any released funds to be put into the economic infra-structure. De Beauvais indicated French reluctance to continue the expanded number of French military instructors now working with American "technicians" as teams with R.L.A. units beyond the agreed date of September 1960.

The report also referred to the successful outcome of United Nations interest in Laos and to the UN presence in the guise of an economic aid programme as a most welcome and necessary medium for maintaining quiet. He referred to the desirability of a UN coordinating role.

Also noted was a continuing possibility of a military coup. Reference was made to the two coup members of the Cabinet and the Army's ambitions growing with its improved organization.

The Ambassador expected the policy of neutralism to be continued but with general orientation of Laos to the Free World - without, however, any military alliances. Some attempt at conciliation of the Pathet Lao was anticipated which would not however include any negotiations.

In that connexion the news that the former Prime Minister and present Ambassador at Paris, Prince Souvanna Phouma, is returning very soon to run as a candidate is interesting. The French Ambassador this morning suggested that he may be the key to such conciliation. He believes that there

is general public support for such a step, except for some 40-50 diehards in Vientiane. Not even Defense Minister General Phoumi is considered averse to the idea.

4. The enclosed letter signed Les Militaires and dated 7 February was received by ordinary mail (Enclosure No. 2). Its interpretation of the UN role and its protests against continued American military intervention reflect the expectable Pathet Lao attitude. Neither the American nor French Embassies had received anything similar nor did they have any information on any such group in the Army as might be using the nom de plume Les Militaires.

5. An interview given by Phamphan Panya is enclosed (Enclosure No. 3) with his comments on the elections and the December-January crisis.

6. A survey on Economic Conditions and Prospects of Laos is also enclosed (Enclosure No. 4) forwarded to me by Ibrahim of ECAFE. In my opinion it includes some sound ideas. It might be worth your while to read it if you have the time.

7. A trip this week to the Training Center (outside Vientiane) for personnel for teams for rural development by basic education and to a specimen village was most stimulating. Our guides were the dynamic and sympathetic Director-General of Education and Mr. Frans, the Belgian UNESCO "expert extraordinaire". Not only did it provide us with live background on basic education and some understanding of what the projected four teams (of 4 specialists each) can be expected to accomplish but also with some welcome stimulus to flagging optimism. The village exhibit - where a 3-man team with wives had been at work for some time - may have been specially "arranged." The Director-General has political ambitions and was reported to be launching his political campaign. But the completed drainage ditches and school, and the connecting road being dug, the apparently cooperative, effective relation between the team, villagers and village chief afforded heartening encouragement and a demonstration of what can be usefully done on a large scale given the dedicated leadership and proper personnel. The Center has selected for its first trainees former bonzes from all over the country, no Vientiane inhabitants. The behaviour of the 60-odd docile, interested school children would have left American teachers e.g. green with envy and staring in disbelief.

8. During the trip, Frans repeatedly emphasized that village people are rather disgusted with the authorities. As he sees it, the only hope for building the country is by grass-roots work; ardent believer as he is, he is convinced that working from the top down (by training local administrators to assist villagers in such self-help) simply cannot work under Laotian conditions. He suggested that that approach was the current American line.

On our Southern trip last week we remarked the apparent gulf between administration and population so often mentioned in reports. A retired American General Townsend, now exploring all Mekong tributaries throughout their length, an odd character who cannot be tabbed definitely, tells rather alarming stories of a complete lack of Government contact with minority tribes-

tribespeople in the back country. He also reports meeting many parties of well armed men on his trips, stating that they enter villages in settled areas at night for presumably subversive purposes. These points of view are proffered simply as a possibly useful antidote to the officially expressed satisfaction with conditions in the country.

9. On Tuesday, with your permission, I visited Bangkok overnight to meet Narasimhan and numerous other ECAFE people without acquiring much additional insight.

10. We are very glad to learn the arrival date of Dr. Zellweger and his wife and of the forthcoming return visit of Roberto. With Hoffman's visit sandwiched between what more can we ask for our social calendar ?

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,

*Sakari*

Sakari Tuomioja

Enclosures:4

Vientiane, le 7 Février 1960

MONSIEUR TUOMIOJA, représentant personnel de MONSIEUR  
DAG HAMMARSJOELD, secrétaire Général des Nations Unies en  
Mission au Laos

à Vientiane

Ce sont les officiers et soldats de l'Armée Royale lao qui ont l'honneur de s'adresser à vous ici.

Nous étions très heureux que vous venez à notre pays comme représentant personnel de MONSIEUR DAG HAMMARSJOELD, secrétaire général des Nations Unies, avec la mission essentielle d'aider nos dirigeants à réaliser l'entente entre les Lao afin que la guerre civile cesse et la paix soit restaurée.

Votre présence est ainsi très utile, car elle peut prévenir les interférences étrangères. Mais en fait, elle n'arrête pas l'intervention américaine.

En effet, à Samneua, dans les régions nord de la province de Luangprabang (à Ban Sè, Ban Sopsang sur la rivière de Nam Suong) à Phongsaly, à Xiengkhouang, ce sont les officiers américains qui dirigent nos PC et ce sont les avions américains pilotés par les aviateurs américains qui transportent les blessés de ces régions vers Saigon et, de retour, transportent les armes et munitions américaines qui sont déposées au terrain de Vientiane pour être acheminées ensuite dans les autres régions du Laos.

En dehors de cela, les Américains recommandent à l'Armée d'incendier les villages et surtout les greniers de paddy de nos pauvres compatriotes sous le faux prétexte de couper le ravitaillement des rebelles communistes. En fait, ce sont les populations qui souffrent de misères. Cela c'est pour réduire le peuple lao à la pauvreté et à la mendicité des Américains qui cherchent à nous assujettir à leur obéissance.

Devant ces manoeuvres inamicales des Américains, en votre présence, nous sommes très vexés.

Nous vous prions ainsi d'intervenir plus énergiquement et plus efficacement pour arrêter cette immixtion américaine qui

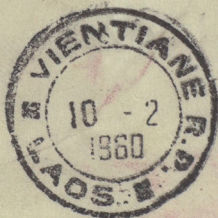
(T.s.v.p.)

Vientiane, le 7 février 1960

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Avec nos grands remerciements et sentiment de profonde reconnaissance.

Signé: LES MILITAIRES.



MONSIEUR TUOMIOJA

de l'ONU en mission au Laos

à Vientiane

(ຜູ້ຮັບກະບາດກັອກ)



COPIE

Confidentiel

Vientiane, le 7 Février 1960

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CONFIDENTIALEconomic conditions and prospects of Laos

1. I was in Vientiane from 14 to 20 January 1960. Although my main purpose was to understand the Mekong Project and associate myself with the Australian experts' team, I took the opportunity to study the economic situation in Laos. I met Laotian Ministers (Foreign, Planning and Defence), officials (Governor of Central Bank, Inspector-General of Ministry of Finance, Director of Statistics) and non-officials (President, Chamber of Commerce and others) as well as foreign experts and advisers (USOM, French Mission, UNESCO, FAO). I studied the Tuomioja Report and literature available in English with Laos Government, USOM, French Mission, etc.

2. The Tuomioja Report gives an excellent and comprehensive (even if brief) picture of the present economic position and problems of Laos. My only fear is that it may not have the desired impact in all quarters concerned (partly because it is a classified document). On my part, I would like to highlight certain points --

- (a) The biggest obstacle in future progress is the weakness of the administrative framework and the lack of confidence and enthusiasm in the people.
- (b) Both export earnings and internal revenues are hopelessly meagre and foreign aid in large quantities is essential for a long time to come: in fact, with the known resources and their present exploitation, the economy could not be considered as viable.
- (c) In the past, foreign aid was not well co-ordinated (or well-spent) and provided essentially for hand-to-mouth existence. The present atmosphere, when all agencies are willing and anxious to work with, and under the guidance of, the United Nations, augurs well for future work. By far the largest aid is from the United States of America, and co-ordination is mainly required with (and within) U.S. aid. Foreign aid could and should acquire greater meaning. It should now be directed more towards national economic and social rather than international strategic purposes.
- (d) There have been too many experts. Expert "advisers" can be more of a burden than help in the Laotian conditions as the Government finds it difficult to provide 'counterparts' and other facilities required. Besides, there has been duplication and overlapping in expert advice from different sources.

/(e) Priorities

(e) Priorities will be most difficult to determine: the need for giving a proper basis and momentum to the economy would require all investment to go into economic overheads and productive sectors, whereas political and social considerations would require large expenditures on medical, educational and welfare needs.

3. I venture to make the following suggestions:

- (i) The UN Co-ordinator should himself function as the planning and development adviser, though he may get an assistant to help him in this basic responsibility. The Five-Year Plan 1959-64 (which was prepared before the currency reform of October 1958) should be reviewed in the light of Tuomioja Report recommendations and suggestions for priorities, firmer forecast of resources (the aid agencies, particularly the USA, should give broad indication of likely amounts), economic merit and technical feasibility of individual projects (the provisions shown in the Plan should be translated into schemes and schemes should be worked out into projects capable of implementation) and present day cost estimates. However, action should not be held up while seeking a 'perfect' plan.
- (ii) All future developmental and economic activity should then be geared to the Plan. The Plan need not be a rigid concept and may be modified from time to time, but the modifications should precede any expenditure and the annual budgets must be based on and related to the Plan.
- (iii) In order to ensure that internal as well as external resources are pressed fully into the service of the Plan, a Co-ordination Committee should be established with the Minister of Planning as the Chairman and representatives of all aid agencies and of the Ministry of Finance as members. The UN Co-ordinator should be the convenor. In this Committee (which should meet at least once a month) should be considered --- (a) the contents of the Five-Year Plan and its broad modifications; (b) the development provisions in the annual budgets, keeping in view the Plan, and the military and other requirements which also should be adjusted to what the economy can bear; (c) the allocation of projects to different aid agencies; (d) the training programme of Laotian
- /personnel;

personnel; (e) the programme for importing foreign experts and (f) the progress in implementation of foreign aid and other development projects. The UN Co-ordinator should be in a position to review and co-ordinate all economic policies, and where necessary, report to the Committee.

- (iv) A comprehensive training programme (vide iii(d) above) should be formulated urgently and it should cover operational as well as administrative personnel. It should take into account current and future 'Plan' requirements. It should provide for (a) training in adjoining countries where conditions are similar, particularly in the field of administration, (b) training in western countries, mainly in technical fields, and (c) setting up of training institutions within Laos in order to provide easier and cheaper training facilities and to cover lower grades personnel. For formulating and supervising the training programme, the UN Co-ordinator might well have a separate assistant.
- (v) A realistic programme for importing foreign experts (number and type)(vide iii(e) above) should be drawn up and their supply should be co-ordinated from all sources --- international and bilateral, including USOM and French technical advisers. To the extent possible (and acceptable to the Laos Government) the experts should in practice function as operators making as well as 'detailing' and implementing proposals rather than as advisers writing reports and giving impractical suggestions. They should roll up their sleeves and work wholetime rather than be casual visitors to Ministries, etc., and working space should be provided to them in the office or field where they are actually needed. Above all, their number should be the minimum consistent with needs. The provision of experts is regarded as no favour these days, unless they can function effectively and produce results. I find that several experts are proposed under UN assistance: special care should be taken to see that experts in these fields are not already provided/programmed by USOM, French Mission, etc. To saddle a country depending for its administrative budget on

/foreign

foreign aid, with unnecessary and ineffective experts, would be unkind.

- (vi) If any industries are sought to be established, a corporation should be set up (with participation by private capital, if possible) which should engage foreign consultants, secure turnkey jobs, and sell the enterprises as soon as private sector is willing and able to buy. As things are, it is futile to expect private entrepreneurs taking up all that is needed or doing it efficiently.
- (vii) As ECAFE is the UN economic body of the region, it should be associated more fully, and should be enabled to provide necessary consultations and "back-stopping". With its existing staff strength, it could not undertake any large additional work, but it would be incorrect not to make use of it to the extent possible.

4. I shall conclude by mentioning certain measures which could have an impact on Laotian economy within the foreseeable future:

- (i) The freight on Thai railways on transit goods meant for Laos, should be rationalized and customs facilities and charges in Bangkok should be reviewed. This is a matter of international understanding and co-operation with Thailand.
- (ii) While bigger projects are necessary for long-term growth, a large number of small irrigation and drainage works should be undertaken immediately. Some small dams have been built under US and French aid: their number needs to be multiplied.
- (iii) Community development, with production rather than social welfare bias, should be undertaken with missionary zeal. Social improvement will automatically follow the increase in incomes.
- (iv) Forests are a resource immediately and most easily available for exploitation and priority should be given to their use (as well as conservation).
- (v) Other measures mentioned in Tuomioja Report as first priority projects should be pursued e.g., elimination of rice imports through provision of rice mills and easier transport between 'surplus' and 'deficit' areas; elimination of vegetable and fruit imports through production within Laos; regulated exploitation and export of opium; etc.

(vi) Financial control over revenue collection as well as expenditure should be tightened up, both by improving organizational structure and by establishing necessary regulations and procedures.

5. What is needed, most of all, is the toning up of administration and infusing confidence and enthusiasm. Laos has a great opportunity just now when all foreign aid agencies are anxious to co-operate in the cause of stability and progress and the UN has undertaken special responsibility, and it would be a pity if this opportunity were not made full use of.

A. Rashid Ibrahim  
Deputy Executive Secretary, ECAFE

Bangkok  
23 January 1960

A recent series of three newspaper articles by Scripps-Howard reporter Jim Lucas contains serious errors and misrepresentations about country of Laos and American Aid effort.

Little question Laos is one of most underdeveloped nations in Southeast Asia or, for that matter, the world. Admitted that American effort has not speeded development Laos as much as could be desired. But, contrary to Lucas articles, following facts exist:

1. Every qualified observer does not concede that Laos would Landslide to communism in an early election. While articles were being written an April 24, 1960 election date was already being favorably considered and has now been set with full approval most observers.

2. U S representatives in Laos are not "writing off" all aid effort to date.

3. Lao Army, while still far below top western standards in many respects, has made important progress during its few years of existence.

4. There are roads in Laos. The road system is still for most part primitive and inadequate to needs of country - but it does exist.

5. Laos' national communications hookup also is still inadequate to meet country's needs - but hookup exists. Significant progress has been made.

6. Student population has almost doubled in four years USOM has been in Laos. Teachers are needed to keep up with this growth. A new training center to provide them will be open soon.

7. No one pretends health conditions in Laos are anything but relatively bad. However, progress has been made in control of certain serious diseases, rural health and sanitation, training of public health personnel and construction of medical facilities. Much remains to be done.

8. It does not cost "Uncle Sam a dollar to spend a dollar in Laos." Due to country's landlocked isolation housing shortage and lower living standards, it is expensive to provide adequate working and living conditions for American personnel. But a figure of one dollar for each six to seven dollars of aid is more accurate.

9. Lao Army is large in relation to country's population and economy. But Laos is only Asian country with more than 700 miles of border touching not one but two aggressive communist powers - North Vietnam and China. Also, as in many other Asian nations, Lao Army is called upon to perform police and community development functions that in a western society would be job of other agencies.

Following are some of quotes from Scripps-Howard series and counter-facts provided by USOM, PNO and Embassy personnel (these facts were available to the reporter).

("In all Laos, there was one high school. So we build a \$500,000 'University.'") Actually in all Laos there are six institutions equivalent to American junior high schools and one equivalent to a junior college.

However, one of country's greatest needs and certainly one of its greatest desires is for more widespread elementary education. In 1955, at beginning of USOM program, there were 49,000 students enrolled in 972 elementary schools. In 1959 there were 96,000 elementary students in 1,463 schools. All schools in Laos - elementary, secondary and private - now number 1,475, with a total enrollment of 103,501. More than 400 new schools have been constructed on a "village self-help" basis - USOM provides cement, nails, roofing, sometimes simple tools, and villagers provide labor. Textbooks and schools supplies also have been provided. Two technical school, teaching such things as carpentry, masonry, mechanics, have been established in Vientiane and Savannakhet.

All this requires qualified teachers. Out of 2,600 teachers in Lao schools, less than 150 have a sixth grade education. It is estimated that 500 new teachers are needed every year, but USOM educational advisers believe economy can handle only 200 a year. In 1958 the French-directed Ecole Normale graduated 15 teachers.

What Lucas described as a \$500,000 university is in reality a teacher training center that when finished in April this year will have cost \$350,000. Instruction is to be in grades 7, 8, 9, 10. It is geared to begin turning out 100 additional village school teachers a year within four years. By 1963, with addition of model elementary and secondary units, total enrollment is expected to hit 2,000.

("Laos lacked hospitals (country has one native doctor and three dentists). We have yet to build a hospital.") Actually, with USOM support Philippine Junior Chamber of Commerce sponsored Operation Brotherhood program has opened eight small hospitals, mostly in isolated areas where none existed before. These teams also operate mobile clinics to reach villages too far from hospitals. During a 22-month period 380,161 patients were treated by these Filipino doctors and technicians.

According to figures collected by USOM Public Health Division, there are 31 Lao physicians who have been trained in Indochina, one trained in France and one trained in Thailand. However, it is extremely doubtful if 10 of these could be accurately termed physicians by standards of western medicine. Figures also list following physicians of other nationalities: one Thai, one Japanese, 16 French (13 Army and three private), 19 Filipino (OB), one Austrian and one French with World Health Organization, one Iranian (USOM) and three Americans (one USOM, one Embassy, and Thomas Dooley of Medico).

Royal Lao Government operates six hospitals, 11 infirmaries and 117 dispensaries. American aid has provided material for construction and improvement of many of these dispensaries. However, it is true that more hospitals are needed.

Yaws, once a prevalent disease in Laos, has been virtually wiped out by a joint USOM-WHO program, and a DDT spraying program has brought protection from malaria to an estimated 700,000 people. By end 1960 this expected to cover 1,200,000 people. Smallpox vaccinations now available in all parts of country.

Training has been provided in U.S., Philippines and Thailand for doctors, hospital administrators, nurses, public health and anti-malaria workers. Presently 33 are in training, and more than 100 have already completed out-of-country training.

("...Laos had no roads. It still has none.") Flat statement there were and are no roads in Laos is false. Laos inherited French-built road system oriented toward Saigon and Hanoi. However, this system suffered from damage and neglect of two wars. USOM recognition of problem shown in high priority awarded road construction and improvement.

According to USOM Public Works Division, there are approximately 6,500 kms of "roads" in Laos. Less than 1,000 kms of this total, however, is paved or in all-weather condition. "Roads," in country where large amount of travel by ox-cart, horseback and foot, often is equivalent of "trails" in U.S. Many open all or part of year to four-wheel drive vehicles only. But travel from Cambodian border in south to central Laos city of Savannakhet possible year around. In dry weather trip can be extended to Vientiane and, by four-wheel drive vehicles, on to northern cities of Luang Prabang and Xieng Khouang. USOM and French aid mission working along with Lao public works currently engaged in maintenance and improvement of approximately 600 kms of these roads, much of work being done by village labor. Lao Army, with assistance of PEO, currently has seven road projects underway that are from 19 to 80 percent completed. When completed, more than 600 kms of jeepable roads and trails will have been added to system. Numerous other short routes have been hacked out by self-help program.

("Laos had no national communications hookup. It has none now.") Poste, Telephone et Telegraphe (PTT) system also inherited from France. It provides communications between national capital of Vientiane and 11 provincial capitals. In some provinces connections are possible with secondary population centers. Lao Army has radio communications with all five military regions, and subsidiary communications exist within regions down to company level. A similar radio network, also maintained with American assistance, is run by Lao National Police. A USOM radio network, covering four points in different parts of Laos, available to all units of American Mission and Lao Government.

("Laos needed power plants, dams and public works. We may have some such projects in mind, but they are still in blueprints.") While it is true that all these things are needed in Laos, and it is true that many projects are still in planning stage, this Lucas statement again is a misrepresentation. Among accomplishments are: 1) Construction of new powerhouse equipped with three renovated generators

totaling 2,200 KW in city of Vientiane; 2) construction of modern ferry system linking Vientiane with Thai railhead at Nongkai, a major port of entry for Laos; 3) construction of eight small irrigation dams and distribution systems (seven more just coming out of "blueprints").

Work is underway on expansion of Vientiane airport to international CAA standards and improvement of 12 other airports around country. Five other small airports have been built by villagers with USOM and Lao government assistance. USOM also cooperating in financing of regional survey of the lower Mekong River basin as step toward flood control, improved navigation, irrigation and hydroelectric development. In cooperation with French Mission, survey underway to explore economic possibilities of coal deposits in southern plateau region.

("It costs Uncle Sam a dollar to spend a dollar in Laos.") This proposition was "proven" with faulty arithmetic. Lucas multiplied \$25,000 estimated cost of one American employee per year by 199. January 1960 records show only 88 regular USOM employees in Laos. If Lucas added in 86 regular PEO employees and multiplied by \$25,000 and then divided the \$32.4 million budget by that amount, correct answer would be one dollar personnel costs for each seven dollars aid.

The articles' remarks on housing also need correction. Due to a severe housing shortage in Vientiane, low housing standards and high rents, U.S. government has constructed three "compounds" for American families of USOM, PEO, Embassy and USIS. One consists of 25 houses, one of 18 and one of 14. Number of houses in last group due to be enlarged, and this project eventually will become faculty housing for previously described National Education Center. None of these areas "dwarf" the city of Vientiane. More than half American community lives in houses or apartments leased in city proper.

Certain statements about the Lao Army in Lucas articles also are contrary to fact. Other statements appear to merely express an impression of the writer without much supporting evidence.

A Lao Army private earning equivalent of US \$8.25 to \$10.83 a month basic pay probably does not consider himself one of the best-paid segments of Lao community. Average wage of a coolie in Laos is 75 cents per day. A Lao second Lieutenant makes approximately \$40, as compared to a US Army Lieutenant's \$222.30 a month.

During Lao-Viet invasion of northern provinces in Fall 1959, some small Lao units did lose their weapons in retreat. Others held fast or retreated in disciplined order. But, in subsequent actions, the Army has reasserted RLG control over large areas and had captured more weapons than were lost, according to PEO officials. Recoilless rifles, a weapon the article deprecates for use in Southeast Asia, were among the captured enemy equipment.

("Only recently did the Army get around to building a rifle range.") According to records, a range was in operation in 1936. American advisers found six ranges in existence, plus other training facilities constructed by French military. These facilities have been repaired and improved. While the basic weapons of the Lao Army are the rifle, carbine and machine gun, the soldiers are also taught mortars, light artillery and bazookas. These are weapons used by both sides during the 1947-54 fighting. There is no argument that Lao marksmanship needs improvement; this is one of primary objectives of the French-US training program.

The "latest equipment" flown into Laos originally consisted of World War II surplus that had been turned over to the French Army and from the French to the Laos. According to then existing law, this material had to be assessed at its original cost, even though much of it was of little value. Later military assistance material has been of newer make but, for the most part, still World War II design. The exact amount of military equipment in Laos is classified on the basis that the information has military value to an enemy.

Many Americans in Laos do consider it true that the Lao Army has attracted a large percentage of the country's "brains," although few if any would want to call it a virtual monopoly. True, the Army is considered one of the most cohesive forces in this new nation that was formerly several small kingdoms. This is reflected in the mission of the Volunteer Battalions - one battalion to a province and one company to a county. Besides having the usual military mission of protecting the province's borders against invasion, these 12 battalions guard against internal subversion, form a protection against banditry in isolated areas, and assist in such governmental development activities as improving sanitation, building roads, improving irrigation and repair and construction of village public buildings. All this is done in full cooperation with the civil government officials, from the village headman to the provincial governor.

The number of American personnel in Laos is not large in relation to the magnitude of the job to be done. Laos had no army of its own prior to 1954. A handful of Lao had risen to the rank of captain in the French Army, but there was no administrative staff and no trained technicians. From a most primitive starting point, Laos is trying to do in a few years what other countries have done in 20 to 50 years. Were Lao staff officers and commanders of requisite technical and administrative know-how available, fewer Americans would be required to insure proper protection and application of American materials and dollars furnished under the Mutual Security Program. Indeed the number of Americans here for this purpose is not yet up to the minimum required for proper performance of the task.

The country needs help, and it is getting it, but hardly on an extravagant basis.