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MAGJ233


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**SUBJECT: Terminology for Laotian Studies**

**SEE DISTRIBUTION**

1. Forwarded for your information is a Strategic Research and Analysis Paper (SRAP) entitled Terminology for Laotian Studies.
2. The purpose of this paper is to define terms and abbreviations currently used in Laotian studies, identify important leaders, and note significant ethnic groups in the country. The paper is designed to identify terms and people for the casual reader rather than to explain their importance for use in research and analysis. Consequently, simplicity and brevity have been stressed at the expense, no doubt, of some precision and subtlety. This paper should prove helpful to the reader, and aid in understanding Laotian affairs.
3. Comments on all aspects of this study are encouraged and should be submitted to HQ MACV J2, ATTN: MAGJ233.

1 Incl  
as

  
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## INTRODUCTION

This paper is intended as an easy reference guide to terms, abbreviations, personalities and ethnic group names found in materials dealing with Laos. The paper is designed particularly to be of use to those studying Laotian politics or recent history and will be of little use for those studying the pre-Independence period.

## ACRONYMS and ABBREVIATIONS

- ADC - Auto Défense du Choc.
- ADO - Auto Défense Ordinaire.
- ADO - Agricultural Development Organization.
- CDIN - Comité pour la Défense des Interêts Nationaux, Committee for the Defense of the National Interest.
- DEB - Development Bank of Laos.
- DNC - Directorate of National Coordination.
- FAN - Forces Armées Neutralistes, Neutralist Armed Forces.
- FAR - Forces Armées Royales, Royal Armed Forces.
- FEOP - Foreign Exchange Operations Fund.
- ICC - International Commission for Supervision and Control.
- ID - Intelligence Division (FAR).
- LDD - Lao Dong Dang, Workers' (Communist) Party of North Vietnam.
- LNP - Lao National Police.
- LPP - Lao Patriotic Front (see NLHS).
- LPLA - Lao People's Liberation Army (Pathet Lao), Kongthap Podpoy Phassason Lao.
- LPP - Lao People's Party (see PPL).
- MSS - Military Security Service.
- NLHS - Neo Lao Hak Sat (also Neo Lao Hak Xat, NLHX), Lao Patriotic Front.
- PDSP - Party for Democracy and Social Progress, see Pa Xa Sangkham.

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- PSK - Paxasanghom, see Pa Xa Sangkham.
- PPL - Phak Passason Lao (incorrectly called Phak Khom Ngan Lao, PKNL), Lao People's Party.
- PKNL - see PPL.
- PGNU - Provisional Government of National Union.
- RLG - Royal Laotian Government.
- RPL - Rassemblement du Peuple Laotien, Lao Hom Lao, Rally of the Lao People.
- SFL - Syndicat des Fonctionnaires du Laos, Lao Civil Servants' Union.
- SP - Special Police.
- UCPL - Unites Combattantes Pathet Lao, Pathet Lao Fighting Units.

## DEFINITIONS

The following terms are found in historical and political documents dealing with Laos during the period 1940-1970. When there are Laotian, French and English equivalents for an entry, only those names commonly seen in English and American publications are indexed.

Auto Défense du Choc: Guerrilla element of the Royal Lao Army established in 1958, composed primarily of Meo tribesmen and deactivated in 1969.

Auto Défense Ordinaire: Paramilitary home guard force, not a part of the Royal Lao Army, which was established in 1958. It ceased to exist as an effective organization in 1967.

Agricultural Development Organization: Joint RLG-USAID organization established in 1965 to supply farm credit and develop markets for agricultural goods.

Chao Khoueng: Provincial governor (RLG) appointed by the central government.

Chao Muong: District officer (RLG).

Chao Tasseng: Canton chief (RLG).

Comité pour la Défense des Interêts Nationaux, Committee for the Defense of the National Interest: Staunchly anti-Communist political group of young diplomats, civil servants and Army officers; founded in 1958. By 1960, it was controlled by Phoumi Nosavan, the power behind the Boum Oum regime (1960-62). Later, its name was changed to Pa Xa Sangkham. It was dissolved when Phoumi Nosavan fled the country after the unsuccessful coup of 1965.

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Council of Ministers: The Prime Minister's cabinet, chosen by him, approved by the National Assembly, and invested by the King. (Approval by the Assembly has not, in fact, been requested since 1962.)

Council of the Cabinet: The Council of Ministers and several Secretaries of State, through whom the Prime Minister wields executive power.

Defenists: Dissident Neutralists loyal to COL Deuane Sipasout who defected from Kong Le's Neutralist force and joined the Pathet Lao in early 1963.

Development Bank of Laos: A bank specializing in the economic development of Laos through loans to local governments, quasi-public utilities, and industry. The bank is financed by foreign aid through the RLG.

Directorate of National Coordination: A police organization, controlled by Siho Lamphoutacoul, which ran the National Police from 1961 until 1965, when Siho was expelled from Laos.

Forces Armées Neutralistes, Neutralist Armed Forces: Remnants of troops under Kong Le who fought against Rightists in 1960. They were put under the operational control of FAR military commanders on 29 June 1969.

Forces Armées Royales, Royal Armed Forces: The Laotian Government's primary military organization.

Foreign Exchange Operations Fund: A multi-lateral fund supported by foreign exchange grants from the United States, Japan, the United Kingdom, France and Australia. The fund is the most important stabilizing factor in the Laotian economy.

Intelligence Division: Division of FAR charged with the collection of intelligence and maintenance of security.

International Commission for Supervision and Control: Representatives of India, Canada and Poland, responsible for supervising the implementation of the 1962 and 1954 Geneva Accords on Laos.

Jeunesse: The name given a group of young, nationalistic civil servants who followed the leadership of Sissouk na Champassak in the 1965 elections. The Jeunesse did not become a political party as was expected by some, but fell apart after the elections of 1967.

Khoueng: Province headed by a governor.

King's Council: Upper house of the legislature, composed of six representatives chosen by the King and six by the lower house. It has considerably less power than the National Assembly.

Lao Dong Dang, Lao Dong Party: The Communist Party of North Vietnam which, reportedly, affords membership to certain high-ranking Lao Communists.

Lao Hom Lao: See Rassemblement du Peuple Laotien.

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Lao Issara, Free Lao: Patriotic committee formed under Prince Phetsarath to resist the return of the French after World War II.

Lao Patriotic Front: See Neo Lao Hak Sat.

Lao People's Liberation Army, Kongthap Podpoy Phassason Lao: The military organization attached to the NLHS; often called the Pathet Lao.

Lao People's Party: See Phak Passason Lao.

Military Security Service: A police service attached directly to the Ministry of National Defense, having as its primary mission the detection and elimination of subversive elements within the military.

Muong: A district (part of a khueng) headed by a district chief.

National Assembly: The lower house composed of 59 elected representatives and having vast legislative power under the Constitution.

Neo Lao Hak Sat, Neo Lao Hak Xat, Lao Patriotic Front: Prince Souphannouvong's pro-Communist political front which has been allied, since its founding, with the Vietnamese Communists. It has been a legally recognized Laotian political party since 1956.

Neo Lao Issara, Free Lao Front: A faction of the Lao Issara, led by Prince Souphannouvong, which subsequently took the name Pathet Lao, and later Neo Lao Hak Sat.

Neo Lao Pen Kang, Lao Neutralist Party: Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma's official party which is dominated by Minister of Interior, Pheng Phongsavan, and Secretary of State for Veterans' Affairs, Soukan Vilaysarn.

Pathet Lao, Land of Lao: Name often used to refer both to the Neo Lao Hak Sat and the Lao People's Liberation Army. It was originally the name for Prince Souphannouvong's rebel government in 1950.

Pa Xa Sangkham, Paxasangkhom, Party for Democracy and Social Progress (PDSP): The name used officially by the now defunct CDIN in the early sixties.

Party for Democracy and Social Progress: See Pa Xa Sangkham.

Phak Passason Lao, Lao People's Party: A group of Communist cadre reportedly manipulating the NLHS. It was once called by Westerners, perhaps incorrectly, the Phak Khon Ngan Lao (PKUL).

Provisional Government of National Union: The coalition government led by Souvanna Phouma since 1962. It originally incorporated Phoumi Nosavan's rightists, Souvanna's neutralists, and Souphannouvong's NLHS in an extra-legal stop-gap regime, appointed directly by the King without approval by the National Assembly. Since 1963, the PGNU has included no active NLHS officials, although otherwise it functions as before.

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Rassemblement du Peuple Laotien, Rally of the Lao People, Lao Hom Lao: A conservative party formed in 1958 and controlled by the Samnanikone family of Vientiane.

Samakhom: Village-level communist mass organizations for men, women, and youth, designed to facilitate party authority over the populace.

Santiphab, Peace and Neutrality Party: A political party allied to the NLHS in the late fifties and early sixties. Under the leadership of Quinim Pholsena, onetime foreign minister, it won four seats in the 1958 elections. After Quinim's assassination in 1963, the party lost much of its power, although it still functions as a bridge between some neutralists and the NLHS.

Special Police: A Lao National Police (LNP) element, designed primarily to counter the Communist movement in Laos by covert intelligence collection, preparation of political and economic studies, and the screening of LNP candidates.

Tasseng: Canton (division of a Muong) headed by a chief.

## KEY PERSONALITIES

The following personalities include important Royal Government figures, military leaders, Neo Lao Hak Sat officials and exiles. The underlined portion of a name is that portion used when the individual is referred to by a single name. (Ex: Khamouane Boupba becomes GEN Khamouane, Pheng Phongsavan becomes Pheng.) The hereditary honorific title of Tiao (Prince) is, of course, used before the name. (Ex: Souk Vongsak (Tiao) becomes Tiao Souk Vongsak, Prince Souk Vongsak, Tiao Souk, or Prince Souk).

Boun Om na Champassak (Tiao): Minister of Religious Affairs (RLG) since 1965; brother of Boun Oum.

Boun Oum na Champassak (Tiao): Head of the royal house of Champassak, Inspector General of Laos (RLG), and Prime Minister (1960-1962).

Bounpone Makthepharak: Commanding General (FAR) of MR III since 1968.

Deuane Soumnarath: Colonel, leader of Deuane Dissidents, who are nominally neutralist but actually pro-NLHS.

Inpeng Suryadhay: Minister of Justice (RLG).

Kamtay Siphandone: Commander-in-Chief of the LPLA (NLHS).

Kaysone Phomvihane: Secretary-General of the LPP Central Committee.

Khamouane Boupba: Brigadier General and commanding officer of dissident neutralist forces in Phong Saly Province, northern Laos.

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Kong Le: Former Commander-in-Chief of FAN and leader of 1960 coup d'etat which installed Souvanna Phouma as Prime Minister. Exiled in France since 1966.

Kouprasith Abhay: Commanding General, MR V and head of the wealthy and influential Abhay family of Vientiane.

Leuan Insiengmay: Deputy Prime Minister (RLG) since March, 1965; brother-in-law of Boun Oum.

Ngon Sananikone: Minister of Public Works and Transport (RLG) since 1962; younger brother of former Prime Minister Phoui Sananikone.

Nouhak Phoumsavan: Deputy Secretary-General of the LPP Central Committee.

Ouan Rathikone: Commander-in-Chief (FAR).

Oudone Sananikone: Chief of Staff (FAR); nephew of former Prime Minister Phoui Sananikone.

Outhong Souvannavong: President of the King's Council and head of the influential Souvannavong family. His brother-in-law is Ngon Sananikone.

Phasouk Somly: Commanding General (FAR) of MR IV; closely related to Boun Oum.

Pheng Phongsavan: Minister of Interior (RLG) and leader designate of the RLG delegation to preliminary Laotian Peace Talks at Khang Khay.

Phoui Sananikone: President of the National Assembly, Prime Minister (1958-1960), and head of the influential and wealthy Sananikone family of Vientiane.

Phoumi Nosavan: Strongman in Boun Oum regime (1960-1962) and leader of 1964 attempted rightist coup d'etat. Exiled in Thailand since 1965.

Phoumi Vongvichit: Secretary-General of NLHS Central Committee.

Phoum Sipraseuth: General (LPLA) and chief NLHS delegate designate to preliminary Laotian Peace Talks at Khang Khay.

Savang Vatthana: King of Laos.

Sayavong: Commanding General (FAR) of MR I.

Sissouk na Champassak: Minister of Finance and Delegate for National Defense (RLG); cousin of Boun Oum.

Sisoumang Sisaleumsak (Tiao): Minister of Posts and Telecommunications (RLG) since 1962.

Sithone Komdam: Vice Chairman of the NLHS Central Committee.

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Sophsaisana (Tiao): Member of the Royal House and Vice President of the National Assembly (RLG).

Soth Petrasy: Member of the NLHS Central Committee and Representative of the NLHS in Vientiane.

Souk Vongsak (Tiao): Member of the NLHS Central Committee and Special Envoy to Souvanna Phouma on Peace Negotiations, 1970.

Souphannouvong (Tiao): Chairman of the Central Committee of the NLHS, half-brother of Souvanna Phouma and Deputy Prime Minister of the RLG, in absentia.

Sourith Don Sasorith: Commander-in-Chief, Royal Lao Air Force.

Souvanna Phouma (Tiao): Prime Minister of RLG on four occasions since independence, most recently from 1962 until the present.

Vang Pao: Commanding General of MR III and an influential leader of the Meo tribe.

Vong Savang: Crown Prince of Laos.

## ETHNIC GROUPS

Tai (61 percent of the Laotian population).

Lao (Laotian Tai) (47 percent of the Laotian population): Closely related to the neighboring Thais, the Laos are wet-rice farmers living in the valleys of Laos. They are Theravada Buddhists.

Tribal Tai (14 percent of the Laotian population): Living chiefly in the mountain valleys of northern Laos, these tribes are composed primarily of wet rice growers. Their religion is basically animistic with vague additions of Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism. The more important of these tribes are the:

Black Tai (Tai Dam)	Tai Phong
Lu	Tai Noua
Phou Tai	White Tai (Tai Khao)
Pou Eum	Tounes
Red Tai (Tai Deng)	

Meo-Yao (9 percent of the Laotian population).

Meo (Miao): These people are among the most recent migrants from China, first appearing in Laos in the 1850's. They practice slash-and-burn agriculture more intensively than any other Laotian ethnic group, and do not live at altitudes of less than 3,000 feet.

Yao (Man): The less numerous Yao live at lower altitudes than the Meo (2,000-3,000 feet), and are found generally only in Northwestern Laos.

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Mon-Khmer (25 percent of the Laotian population): These aboriginal inhabitants of Laos are divided into sixty tribes. There is little sense of unity among them, although they all have been exploited at various times by the Lao, Tai and other groups. They have no writing system. They practice slash-and-burn agriculture on the mountain slopes of Laos. The more important tribes are:

Alak	Kattang	Seng
Bit	Lamet	So
Bo	Love	Souei
Boloven	Mou (Khmu)	Tahoi
Halang	Nghe	
Kasseng	Phouteng	

Tibeto-Burman (4 percent of Laotian population): These tribes, found in the northern mountains of Laos, originated in Yunnan Province, China. The two most prominent tribes are the Lolo and the Kha Kho.

Foreign nationals (1 percent of the Laotian population): Most of these groups are concentrated in urban areas, although many Chinese are found in rice growing areas working as millers, moneylenders, and traders. Although there are still sizeable communities of Vietnamese craftsmen and merchants remaining in the larger urban centers, most of the Vietnamese brought in by the French as administrators have left the country. In 1958, the ethnic totals were estimated to be:

Europeans - 6,000  
Chinese - 30,000  
Vietnamese - 9,000  
Pakistanis and Indians - 1,000

## OTHER ETHNIC TERMS

Kha: Pejorative term for Mon-Khmer highland tribesmen, meaning "slave."

Leo Loum: Lowland Lao or ethnic Lao.

Leo Soung: Meo.

Leo Theung: Mon-Khmer highland tribesmen.

Phouthung: A word meaning either a particular Mon-Khmer tribe, or all Mon-Khmer highland tribesmen.