



AP Photos; LZPR archives

The leftists in the Laos war were a front for their outside backers, the communist North Vietnamese. For most of the war, they held the strategic Plain of Jars (*above*, with stone jars visible). They used caves to hide troops (*left*) and weapons (*below*) from U.S. planes. As the U.S. bombing increased, the communists' Soviet-supplied anti-aircraft guns took a heavy toll on the lives of American pilots.

A staged communist photo (*above*) shows Laotian villagers running to the wreckage of a burning U.S. plane. For both the North Vietnamese and the U.S., Laos was far less important than South Vietnam. After the U.S. agreed to withdraw from South Vietnam in 1973, peace talks in Laos followed, and the nominal leader of the Pathet Lao, Prince Souphanouvong, (*right*) met with the royalist prime minister, Prince Souvanna Phouma (*with cane*). The CIA and the Thais withdrew from Laos in 1974, but long before then the Hmong had gone on the run (*below*), fleeing the communists until there were no more mountains to go to.



LZPR archives





all photos: LPDR archives

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