

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Laos

S - Z

▶ Scott, Peter Dale. *Air America: Flying the U.S. into Laos*. Boston: 1970.

▶ Secord, Richard V., and Jay Wurts. *Honored and Betrayed: Irangate, Covert Affairs, and the Secret War in Laos*. New York: John Wiley, 1992.

Armstrong, *WPNWE*, 19-25 Oct. 1992, believes that Secord's version of Iran-Contra adds "little that is new" and "is marred by myriad mistakes of fact.... [I]t is difficult to take seriously Secord's protestations that he is blameless and upright."

▶ Stevenson, Charles. *The End of Nowhere: American Policy Toward Laos Since 1954*. Boston: 1972.

▶ Stockinger, Edwin. "Five Weeks at Phalane." *Studies in Intelligence* 17, no. 1 (Spring 1973): 11-19.

Westerfield: "A 1971 siege in CIA's secret war in Laos."

▶ Tovar, B. Hugh.

1. "Chronicle of a Secret War." *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 8, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 245-254.

Tovar was the CIA's senior representative in Laos from September 1970 until May 1973. This is a "Review and Commentary" article on Jane Hamilton-Merritt's *Tragic Mountains*, and warrants reading on its own merits.

2. "Managing the Secret War in Laos." *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 8, no. 3 (Fall 1995): 367-378.

This is a "Review and Commentary" article on Timothy Castle's *At War in the Shadow of Vietnam*, and should be consulted to balance some of Castle's presentation.

▶ Usowski, Peter S. "Intelligence Estimates and U.S. Policy toward Laos, 1960-63." *Intelligence and National Security* 6, no. 2 (Apr. 1991): 367-394.

"On the whole, the assessments, judgements, and forecasts contained in the estimates were clear, well-founded, reliable, and, for the most part, accurate.... The available record shows that during Kennedy's three years of dealing with Laos the impact of intelligence estimates on major decisions was limited.... In specific policy areas, however, the CIA's assessments were influential."

▶ Warner, Roger.

1. *Back Fire: The CIA's Secret War in Laos and Its Link to the War in Vietnam*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995.

According to **Uhl**, *WPNWE*, 16-22 Oct. 1995, *Back Fire* is "a useful, if somewhat anecdotal, contribution to the literature on the U.S. 'secret war' in Laos, which is rooted substantially in the recollections of former CIA operatives who were there.... Warner's extensive profiles of many of the agency's old hands in Laos reveal them to have been idealists ... [who] imagined they could beat the Communists at their own game by winning hearts and minds."

Surveillant 4.3 recommends *Back Fire*, noting that "Warner shows how the secret war in Laos was connected to Vietnam, and how Vietnam was central to the shifting alliances of Cold War geopolitical rivals."

McGehee (from alt.politics.org.cia), comments that *Back Fire* shows "the inside of this major covert operation, describe[s] the varied CIA personnel involved and to some extent detail[s] the consequences of the secret operations of the CIA."

To **Finney**, *WIR* 14.6, this book "is easy to read and well cushioned with personality sketches, photographs, and some useful maps.... As an engagingly superficial account of the Laos war, *Back Fire* has its good points. For a serious account of the entire war, the reader would do better with Kenneth Conboy's *Shadow War*."

2. *Shooting at the Moon: The Story of America's Clandestine War in Laos*. South Royalton, VT: Steerforth Press, 1996. [pb]

Tovar, *CIRA Newsletter* 22.2, notes that this is a "slightly modified version" of *Back Fire*. Warner's book is "highly readable," but "reiterates old charges made by other writers." In particular, the "depiction of [Ted] Shackley follows the David Corn stereotype, but is less vicious.... There seems to be an underlying assumption ... that Ted Shackley was a power unto himself in Laos. That is not so.... There is no way the chief of station could have controlled the course of events without the ambassador's full concurrence and without Washington's endorsement." The author's "coverage of the ground war in 1970-1972 is weak.... On the war in south Laos, his coverage is sound but skimpy." A similar review by Tovar appears in *IJI&C* 10.3.

► Wetterhahn, Ralph. "Ravens of Long Tieng." *Air & Space/Smithsonian*, Oct./Nov. 1998. [<http://www.airspacemag.com/ASM/Mag/Index/1998/on/rolt.html>]

Long Tieng was in the north central highlands of Laos, and served as Hmong leader Vang Pao's headquarters from 1962. It was also a Lima Site from which U.S. Air Force forward air controllers (known by the radio callsign of Ravens) flew in support of the covert war in Laos. The article includes some oral history (reminiscences) by former Ravens, which makes it worth a read.

Four photos of Long Tieng base are available at:

<http://www.airspacemag.com/ASM/mag/supp/on98/ravens.html>.

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