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demonstration of what support he could expect from the US if a Communist coup against his government were to occur. Thus far, he has been most disillusioned by US policy in the Laotian crisis, feeling it to be indecisive and ambiguous.

5. As a result of the developments in Laos and the 11 November coup attempt in Saigon, President Diem of South Vietnam probably has lost some of his confidence in US willingness to support fully his anti-Communist position. He may believe that the Saigon coup effort was at least partly stimulated by Kong Le's coup and the failure of the US to extend General Phoumi full and immediate support. Moreover, these events, coming on the heels of US efforts to convince him to hold less tightly the reins of power in his own government, have probably further undermined his confidence in US judgment. From Diem's point of view, an anti-Communist Laos provides some shield against a North Vietnamese attack, and southern Laos, at least, must be kept in anti-Communist hands to avoid critically exposing his own borders to infiltration and attack.

6. The outcome of the immediate crisis, insofar as internal considerations apply, rests primarily with the interplay of the intentions and capabilities of the major Laotian elements: Souvanna, Phoumi, the King, Kong Le, and the Pathet Lao.

7. *Souvanna*. Compared with other Laotian politicians, Souvanna has considerable personal prestige and appeal among the peoples of Laos. He is still Prime Minister, but he controls no organized political apparatus, he lacks administrative control of the countryside and command of the Laotian military, and he is not trusted by the King. A quorum of the National Assembly, chosen in highly corrupt elections in May of 1960, remains in Vientiane, but almost certainly a number of its members, if free of duress, would oppose Souvanna or defect to the Phoumi group.

8. Souvanna is neutralist and leftist, but we do not believe that he is a Communist. Souvanna's leadership qualities are weakened by his impulsiveness, willful disregard of un-

pleasant facts, and over-weening self-confidence, particularly with regard to his ability to deal with and control the Pathet Lao. He believes most of the Pathet Lao to be patriots who, once reintegrated into Laotian political and social life, would lose their Communist coloration. Those few hardcore types who would remain Communists, he states, could be kept in check. Accordingly, the only feasible solution for Laos, in Souvanna's mind, is a negotiated settlement with the Pathet Lao along the lines of the 1957 agreement, and a neutral foreign policy. Souvanna is moving Laos in the direction that he has maintained for several years it should move. However, we believe that it is moving at a faster pace than Souvanna would countenance if he were master of his government and free from the pressures Kong Le and the Pathet Lao exert on him in Vientiane.

9. Early in the crisis, Souvanna apparently had hoped to strengthen his negotiating position vis-a-vis the Pathet Lao. He was unable to use Kong Le to this end because Kong Le tended to be more amenable to the Pathet Lao than to Souvanna. At one time Souvanna probably believed that a combination of Kong Le and Pathet Lao military pressure on the one hand, and US political pressure on Phoumi on the other, would force the latter to capitulate, thus restoring his government's authority over the troops and areas controlled by the Revolutionary Committee. Although he has attempted to open negotiations with the Boun Oum-Phoumi group, his conditions have been unattractive to Phoumi, and, at times, seemed to be calculated insults. Recently Souvanna has attempted to strengthen his position by recruiting several new battalions of troops in Vientiane. However, these units are probably infiltrated by the Pathet Lao.

10. Souvanna also hoped to win over the troops in the Luang Prabang area which had attempted to maintain a neutral position. However, this hope was dashed by the pro-Savannakhet coup of 10 November and the subsequent defection of General Ouan to Savannakhet. This was a serious blow to Souvanna, and he attempted to compensate for it by drawing closer to the Communists in

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