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leaving the country open to early domination by the Communists.

27. If no political settlement is reached between Phoumi and Souvanna, the US may soon be faced with the following situations:

(a) A Souvanna solution, which would gravely risk ultimate Communist supremacy. This would involve serious adverse consequences for the US position in Southeast Asia, and over the longer run, would greatly facilitate Communist subversion, infiltration, and expansion in Southeast Asia. (b) A widespread civil war in which the Phoumi forces almost certainly could not prevail or even survive without extensive outside assistance. Such assistance to Phoumi in a civil war situation would probably prompt a Souvanna appeal to the UN and would risk the introduction of North Vietnamese or even Chinese Communist "volunteers." While at least initially, extensive assistance to Phoumi in a civil war would not have the support of the Western members of SEATO or possibly of most Free World opinion, if successful it would strengthen the SEATO area against further Communist aggression.

28. Even if the various non-Communist factions surmount the immediate crisis by a political settlement, the fundamental politi-

cal and social problems of Laos will remain and, as a result of recent events, will probably be more acute than before. Pathet Lao armed strength will be greater and more Communist footholds established in villages throughout the country. Solutions to the fundamental problems, if indeed there are solutions, can be worked out only over a long period of time. Meanwhile, the urgent threats of the Pathet Lao on one hand and the centrifugal force of non-Communist disunity on the other, will operate against the solution of long-term problems.

29. Consequently, we believe that any non-Communist government assuming power in the wake of the present crisis would, in time, face very heavy pressure to move toward a neutralist position and Pathet Lao integration into the political life of the country, or face the likelihood of the situation gravitating again toward civil war. It will be extremely difficult for the non-Communist leaders of Laos to resist this pressure and to contain the Pathet Lao unless they develop a much greater degree of unity, determination, and nationalism than they have in the past, take effective measures to win the loyalty of the peoples of Laos, and receive extensive outside assistance to this end.

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