

The 'Secret War' in Laos

Laos is the most heavily-bombed country per capita in the world. The U.S. bombing of Laos (1964-1973) was part of a clandestine attempt by the CIA to wrest power from the Pathet Lao, a communist group allied with North Vietnam and the Soviet Union during the Vietnam War. Laos was critical to Dwight D. Eisenhower's Domino Theory of keeping communism at bay, and presidents John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson and Richard Nixon all escalated the bombings, which largely targeted North Vietnamese supply routes along the Ho Chi Minh Trail that stretched from Vietnam into Cambodia and Laos.

While the U.S. invasion and bombing of Cambodia drew international protests, The Secret War in Laos remains largely shrouded in secrecy even as it marked the beginning of a more militarized CIA that would go on to fight proxy wars in Latin America and the Middle East.