Souvanna Phouma, Prince of Laos, Papers

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress

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Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

Washington, D.C.

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Contact information: http://lcweb.loc.gov/rr/mss/address.html

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Collection Summary

Title: Souvanna Phouma, Prince of Laos, Papers
Span Dates: 1961-1970
ID No.: MSS60491
Creator: Souvanna Phouma, Prince of Laos, 1901-1984
Extent: 500 items; 5 containers; 1.8 linear feet; 6 microfilm reels
Language: Collection material in French, Lao, and English
Repository: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
Abstract: Prince and prime minister of Laos. Copies of ten volumes of diaries with inserted material such as letters, cables, memoranda, communiqués, clippings, and other printed material reflecting Souvanna Phouma's role as nationalist and conciliator of the political factions within Laos.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Personal Names
Boun Oum, Prince of Laos.
Bounleut Saycocie.
Gromyko, Anatoliĭ Andreevich.
Harriman, W. Averell (William Averell), 1891-1986.
H□, Chí Minh, 1890-1969.
Johnson, Lyndon B. (Lyndon Baines), 1908-1973.
Kennedy, John F. (John Fitzgerald), 1917-1963.
Kong Le.
Nixon, Richard M. (Richard Milhous), 1913-1994.
Norodom Sihanouk, Prince, 1922-
Phoumi Nosavan.
Savang Vatthana, King of Laos.
Siho Lamphoutacoul.
Sisouk Na Champassak, 1928-
Sisowath Sirik Matak.
Souphanouvong, Prince, 1909-
Souvanna Phouma, Prince of Laos, 1901-1984.
Vang Pao.

Organizations
International Conference on the Settlement of the Laotian Question (1961-1962 : Geneva, Switzerland)
International Control Commission.
Laos. Royal Lao Army.
Neo Lao Haksat.
Pathet Lao.

Subjects
Communism--Laos.
Vietnam War, 1961-1975--Laos.
Vietnam War, 1961-1975--Participation, Hmong.

Locations
Ho Chi Minh Trail--History.

Jars, Plain of (Laos)--History.
Laos--Armed forces.
Laos--Foreign relations--Soviet Union.
Laos--Foreign relations--United States.
Laos--Foreign relations--Vietnam (Democratic Republic)
Laos--Foreign relations--Vietnam (Republic)
Laos--History.
Laos--Politics and government.
Soviet Union--Foreign relations--Laos.
United States--Foreign relations--Laos.
Vietnam (Democratic Republic)--Foreign relations--Laos.
Vietnam (Republic)--Foreign relations--Laos.

Occupations
Prime ministers--Laos.
Princes--Laos.

Administrative Information

Provenance:

The papers of Souvanna Phouma, prince and prime minister of Laos, were lent to the Library of Congress by Moune Stieglitz, Souvanna Phouma's daughter, for reproduction in 1982 and 1986. A set of positive electrostatic prints was reproduced from microfilm in 1984. Souvanna Phouma's diaries were returned to him in Paris, France, subsequent to microfilming, and were thought to have been in his possession during his final years in Laos.

Processing History:

The papers of Souvanna Phouma, Prince of Laos, were arranged and described in 1987. The collection was expanded and revised in 1997. The finding aid was revised in 2009.

Transfers:

Photographs have been transferred to the Prints and Photographs Division where they are identified as part of the Souvanna Phouma, Prince of Laos, Papers.

Copyright Status:

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Souvanna Phouma, Prince of Laos, is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions:

The papers of Souvanna Phouma, Prince of Laos, are open to research. Restrictions apply governing the use, photoduplication, or publication of items in the microfilm version of this collection. Consult reference staff in the Manuscript Division for information concerning these restrictions. In addition, many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Microfilm:

A microfilm edition of these papers is available on six reels. Consult reference staff in the Manuscript Division concerning availability for purchase or interlibrary loan. To promote preservation of the originals, researchers are required to consult the microfilm edition.

Preferred Citation:

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Souvanna Phouma, Prince of Laos, Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Souvanna Phouma, Prince of Laos (1901-1984), span the years 1961-1970 and consist of ten volumes of diaries with inserted material such as letters, cables, memoranda, communiqués, clippings, and other printed matter.

The collection provides an important personal perspective of Laos by one of the country's primary historical figures. The diaries, written in French in Souvanna Phouma's own hand, provide a day-by-day look at Laotian internal and external affairs during a crucial period in Laotian history.

The diaries reflect Souvanna Phouma's role as nationalist and conciliator of the various political factions within Laos. The three main factions, the leftist Neo Lao Haksat led by Souvanna Phouma's half-brother Prince Souphanouvong, the rightist faction led by Prince Boun Oum, and the neutralists led by Souvanna Phouma are discussed and represented as correspondents.

The diaries also chronicle the Geneva agreement and the formation of the tripartite government in 1962, gradual polarization and descent into civil war, and the role played by the Soviets, Americans, and Vietnamese. They record various military developments including the roles of General Phoumi Nosavan, General Siho Lamphoutacoul, and Colonel Bounleut Saycocie in the Royal Lao Army coup attempts of 1964-1965 and the campaigns on the Plain of Jars led by Vang Pao and his Hmong soldiers against the North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao. Also of interest are letters by Generals Kong Le and Phoumi Nosavan while in exile.

The final years of the diaries document the increasing dependence of Laos on the West and the growing influence of the communist bloc and the Pathet Lao. Souphanouvong's communications reflect his increasing stridency and power and foreshadow the eventual toppling of the monarchy and creation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Laos) with Souphanouvong as head of state.

Other significant events and personages described in the diaries are, Anatoliï Andreevich Gromyko, W. Averell Harriman, Lyndon B. Johnson, John F. Kennedy, Sisowath Sirik Matak, Chí Minh Ḥô (Ḥô Chí Minh), Richard M. Nixon, Norodom Sihanouk, Sisouk Na Champassak, and Savang Vatthana; Souvanna Phouma's trips to the United States, Soviet Union, France, Cambodia, and North Vietnam; activities of the International Control Commission for Laos; and the American campaign against the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged chronologically by date of diary with formerly classified material appended at the end.

Container List

Container	*Contents*
BOX 1 REEL 1-2	Diaries
BOX 1 REEL 1-2	1961-1963 (9 folders)
BOX 2 REEL 2-3	1964-1965 (8 folders)
BOX 3 REEL 3-4	1966-1967 (7 folders)
BOX 4 REEL 4-5	1968-1969 (7 folders)
BOX 4 REEL 4-5	1970
BOX 4 REEL 4-5	Jan.-Mar.
BOX 5 REEL 5	Apr.-Dec. (4 folders)
BOX 5 REEL 6	Formerly classified material removed prior to filming and filmed separately, 1964-1970