

Dear Ed,

7/25/72

Read excellent Flowers of Evil piece in 7/72 Harper's. Thanks. I take it this is the same guy who testified before a Congressional committee recently. That got a little press attention, but not nearly enough and all out of context-law and order administration and the futility of buying out Turkish production when 70% comes from the SEAsia Golden Triangle alone and is brought out with US money and equipment and mendicants.

Properly used this could be a powerful force in the political campaign, therefore I do not expect it to be conceived.

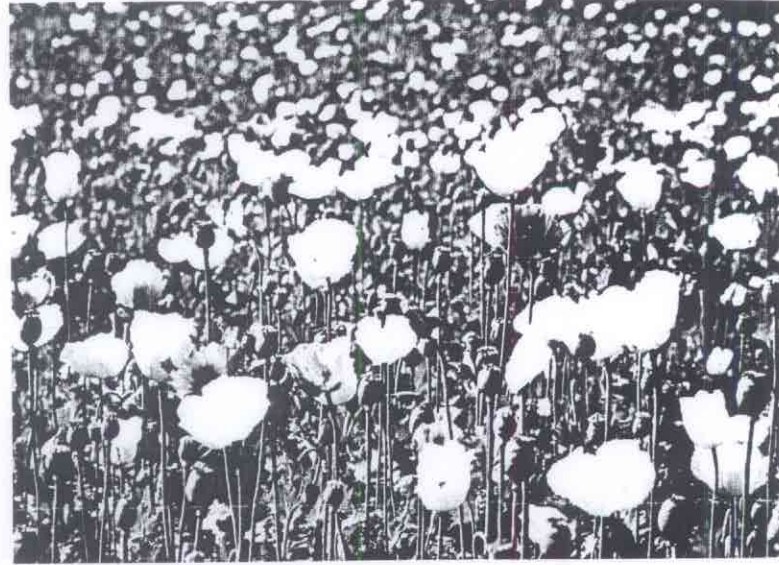
The yesterday's ~~eff~~-adulation on this subject by the Nixon administration and his stupidity of demanding a doubling of arrests which doesn't cut off supply but does increase crime by driving up the price; a choice selection of this as the administration of law and order; and a few simply introductory remarks introduced into the Congressional Record (which also means very cheap distribution) and then available for local use and speeches would cost almost nothing.

Another reason nobody will think of it today.

Thanks, HW

Alfred W. McCoy

FLOWERS OF EVIL



The CIA and the heroin trade

Ladies and gentlemen," announced the genteel British diplomat, raising his glass to offer a toast, "I give you Prince Sopsaisana, the uplifter of Laotian youth."

The toast brought an appreciative smile from the guest of honor, cheers and applause from the luminaries of Vientiane's diplomatic corps, assembled at the farewell banquet for the Laotian ambassador-designate to France, Prince Sopsaisana. A member of the royal house of Xieng Khouang, the Plain of Jars region, the Prince was vice-president of the National Assembly, chairman of the Lao Bar Association, president of the Lao Press Association, president of the *Alliance Française*, and a member in good standing of the Asian People's Anti-Communist League. After receiving his credentials from the King in a private audience at the Luang Prabang Royal Palace on April 8, 1971, he was treated to an unprecedented round of cocktail parties, dinners, and banquets. For Sopsai, as his friends call him, was not just any ambassador; the Americans considered him an outstanding example of a new generation of honest, dynamic national leaders, and it was widely rumored in Vientiane that Sopsai was destined for high office some day.

The final send-off party at Vientiane's Wattay Airport on April 23 was one of the gayest affairs of the season. Everybody was there; the champagne bubbled, the canapés were flawlessly French, and Mr. Ivan Bastouil, chargé d'affaires at the French Embassy, gave the nicest speech. Only after the plane had soared off into the clouds did anybody notice that Sopsai had forgotten to pay for his share of the reception.

His arrival at Paris's Orly Airport on the morning of April 25 was the occasion for another reception. The French ambassador to Laos, home for a brief visit, and the entire staff of

the Laotian Embassy had turned out to welcome the new ambassador. There were warm embraces, kissing on both cheeks, and more effusive speeches. Curiously, the Prince insisted on waiting for his luggage like any ordinary tourist, and when his many suitcases finally appeared after an unexplained delay, he immediately noticed that a particular one was missing. Sopsai angrily insisted that his suitcase be delivered at once, and French authorities promised, most apologetically, that it would be sent to the Laotian Embassy as soon as it was found. Sopsai departed reluctantly for yet another reception at the Embassy, and while he drank the ceremonial champagne with his newfound retinue of admirers, French customs officials were examining one of the biggest heroin seizures in French history.

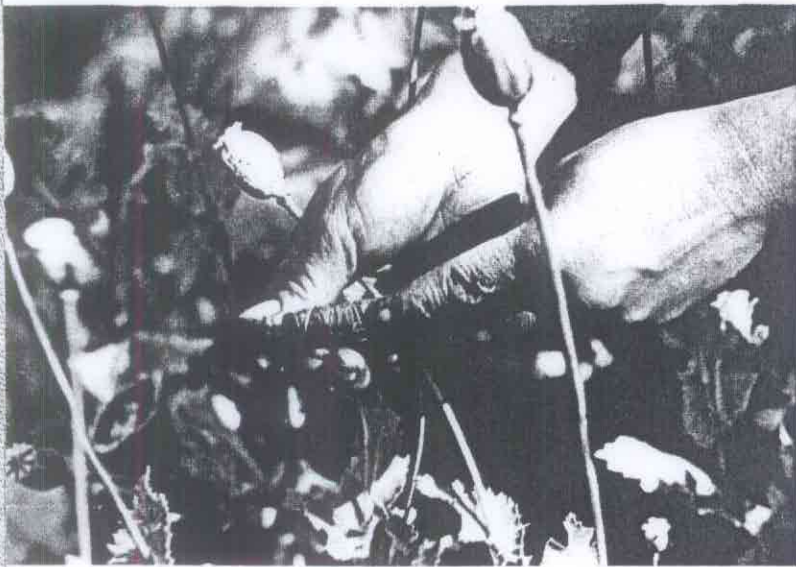
The Ambassador's suitcase contained sixty kilos of high-grade Laotian heroin — worth \$13.5 million on the streets of New York, its probable destination. A week later, a smiling French official presented himself at the Embassy with the suitcase in hand. Although Sopsaisana had been bombarding the airport with outraged telephone calls for several days, he suddenly realized that accepting the suitcase was tantamount to an admission of guilt and so, contrary to his righteous indignation, he flatly denied that it was his. Ignoring his declaration of innocence, the French government refused to accept his diplomatic credentials, and Sopsai remained in Paris for no more than two months before he was recalled to Vientiane.

Fragile flower, cash crop

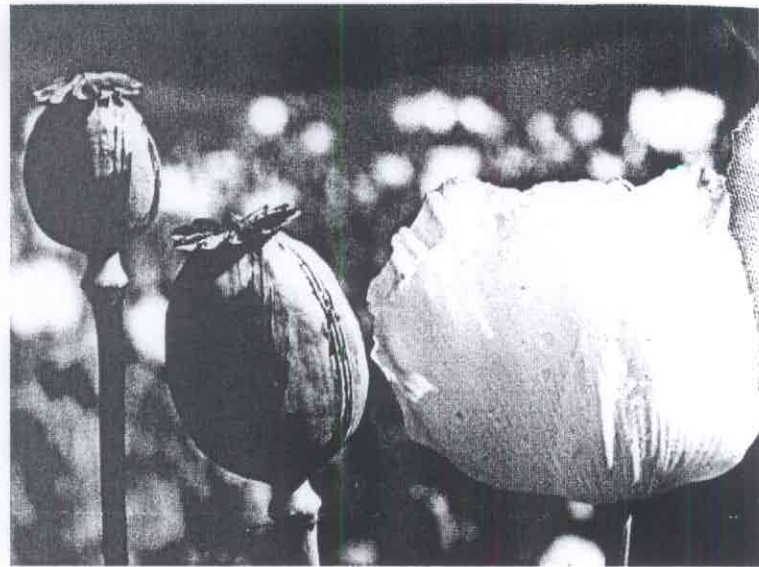
Despite its resemblance to comic opera, the Prince Sopsaisana affair offered a rare glimpse into the workings of the Laotian drug trade. That trade is the principal business of Laos, and to a certain extent it depends on the support (money, guns, aircraft, etc.) of the CIA. Unfortunately, the questions raised by the Prince's disgrace were never asked, much less answered. The French government overlooked the em-

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Adapted from a chapter in The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia, by Alfred W. McCoy with Cathleen B. Read, to be published by Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., in September. Copyright © 1972 by Alfred W. McCoy.



The harvesting of the opium crop takes place between January and early March. When the opium is ready, the petals fall away, leaving the bare bulb. In late afternoon or early evening the Meo women cut striations in the bulb with the three-pronged knife shown below. The following morning the congealed opium sap is collected from the bulb's surface with a small shovel-like tool and carried in a small container worn around the neck.



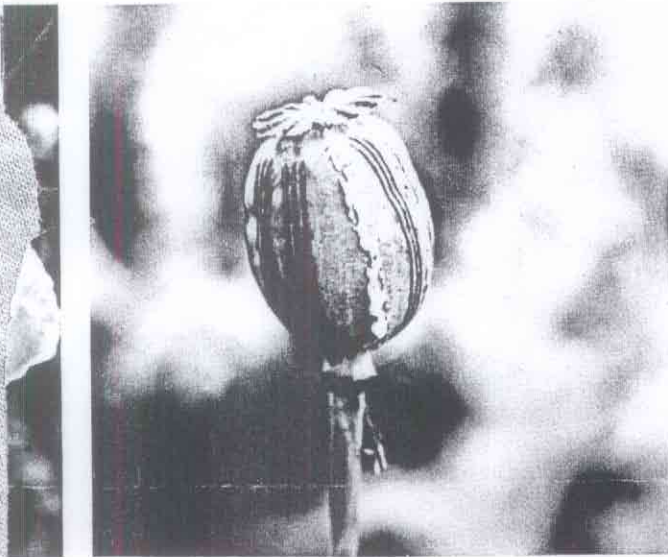
barrassment for diplomatic reasons, the international press ignored the story, and the United States Embassy demonstrated a remarkable disinterest in the entire subject.

Over the past fifty years, Laos has become something of a free port for opium. The delicate opium poppy grows abundantly at high elevations in the northern mountains, and under a sequence of different regimes (French, American, Laotian), the hill tribesmen have been encouraged to cultivate the poppy as the principal cash crop. Opium dens can be found in every quarter of Vientiane, and the whereabouts of the opium refineries are a matter of common knowledge. The leading citizens, whether princes, generals, or politicians, zealously control the drug traffic and regard it, with good reason, as a strategic industry.

The Laotian indifference to Prince Sopsaisana's misfortune therefore becomes easily understandable. The reticence of the American Embassy, however, requires a few words of explanation. Sopsai had allegedly received his sixty kilos of heroin through the kind offices of a particularly aggressive Laotian general named Vang Pao. Vang Pao also happens to be the commander of the CIA secret army in northeastern Laos. He has commanded that army since 1961, and during the past eleven years he has become an increasingly notorious entrepreneur in the Laotian drug trade.

But the American Embassy remains curiously unaware of his involvement in the narcotics traffic. Nobody has any information on the operation of the Laotian drug business, and Embassy officials appear to have adopted an attitude of benign neglect. That attitude was characteristically expressed in a letter written in December 1970 by Ambassador G. McMurtrie Godley to a journalist inquiring about the opium traffic. Godley wrote:

The purchase of opium in Southeast Asia is certainly less difficult than in other parts of the world, but I believe the Royal Laotian Government takes its responsibility seriously to prohibit international opium traffic... However, latest information available to me indicated



John Everingham

that all of Southeast Asia produces only 5% of narcotics which are, unfortunately, illegally imported to Great Britain and the U.S. As you undoubtedly are already aware, our government is making every effort to contain this traffic and I believe the Narcotics Bureau in Washington D.C. can give you additional information if you have some other inquiries.

Ambassador Godley did not deem it worthy of mention that the latest information available to him should have indicated that the great majority of heroin being used by American GIs in Vietnam was coming from Laotian laboratories. Nor did he deem it necessary to mention two other facts:

- In 1967 the United Nations reported that poppy farmers in northeastern Burma, northern Thailand, and northern Laos — a region known as “the Golden Triangle” — were producing 1,000 tons of raw opium annually, which was then about 70 per cent of the world’s supply. The available evidence indicates that the exports have increased, and that heroin from the Golden Triangle is now being shipped into the United States through Europe and South America.

- During the last several months of 1970 more American soldiers were evacuated as casualties from South Vietnam for drug-related reasons than for reasons having to do with war wounds.

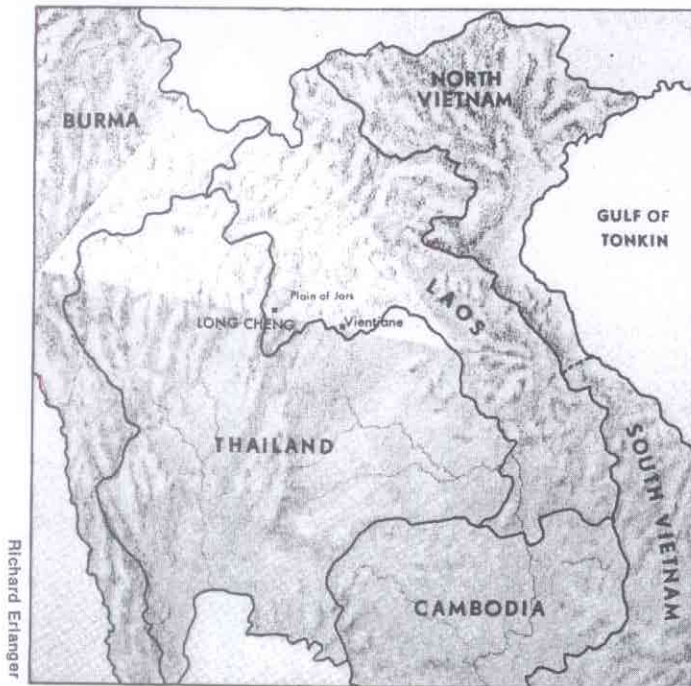
To Americans living in cities plagued by heroin, it may seem controversial, even shocking, that any U.S. Government agency would ignore the international drug traffic. But when considered in the perspective of historical precedent, and conceding the demands of mountain warfare in northern Laos, the U.S. Embassy’s tolerant attitude seems almost inevitable.

Rather than sending U.S. combat troops into Laos, four successive American Presidents and their foreign-policy advisers worked through the CIA to build the Meo guerrillas of northern Laos into the only effective army in Laos. The fundamental reason for American involvement in any aspect of the Laotian opium traffic lies in these policy decisions, and they can be understood only in the context of the secret war in Laos, a war in which Vang Pao emerged as one of the principal figures.

CIA operations with Meo guerrillas began in 1959 as part of a regional intelligence-gathering program. Noting with alarm renewed guerrilla activity in South Vietnam and Laos in the late 1950s, American intelligence analysts interpreted these reports as the first signs of communist plans for the “subversion and conquest” of Southeast Asia. General Edward G. Lansdale, who directed much of the Defense Department’s strategic planning on Indochina during the early years of the Kennedy Administration, recalls that these hill-tribe operations were set up to monitor communist infiltration: “The main thought was to have an early warning, trip-wire sort of thing with these tribes in the mountains getting intelligence on North Vietnamese movement. This would be a part of a defensive strategy of saving the rice-producing lowlands of Thailand and Vietnam by sealing off the mountain-infiltration routes from China and North Vietnam.”

While the U.S. military sent half a million troops to fight in South Vietnam, the mountain war has required only a handful of U.S. personnel. “I always felt,” General Lansdale told me, “that a small group of Americans organizing the local population was the way to counter communist wars of national liberation.” In South Vietnam, computerized command decisions and automated firepower dehumanized the fighting, while the rapid rotation of U.S. personnel made military commanders seem like replaceable parts in a giant machine. However, American paramilitary personnel serving in Laos have tended to serve long tours of duty, some a decade or more, and have been given an enormous amount of personal power.

Since there were too few U.S. operatives to assume complete responsibility for daily operations in the hills of Laos, the CIA usually selected one leader from every hill tribe as its surrogate commander. The CIA’s chosen ally recruited his fellow tribesmen as mercenaries, paid their salaries with CIA money, and led them in battle. Because the CIA had only as much influence with each tribe as its surrogate commander, it was in the agency’s interest to make these men local despots by concentrating military and economic power in their hands.



In the Meo region of northern Laos, the CIA had the good fortune to find, in Vang Pao, a man with unlimited ambitions and a willingness to take battlefield casualties. For Vang Pao, peace is a distant, childhood memory. He saw battle for the first time in 1945 at the age of thirteen, while working as an interpreter for French commandos who had parachuted onto the Plain of Jars to organize anti-Japanese resistance. In April 1954 he led 850 hill-tribe commandos through the rugged mountains of Sam Neua Province in a vain attempt to relieve the doomed French garrison at Dienbienphu.

When the first Indochina war ended that same year, Vang Pao returned to regular duty in the Laotian Army. He advanced quickly to the rank of major and was appointed commander of the Tenth Infantry Battalion, which was assigned to the mountains east of the Plain of Jars. While he had a good record as a wartime commando leader, it was in his new command that Vang Pao first displayed the personal corruption that would later make him such a despotic warlord.

In addition to his regular battalion, Vang Pao was also commander of Meo self-defense forces in the Plain of Jars region. Volunteers had been promised regular allotments of food and money, but Vang Pao pocketed these salaries, and most volunteers went unpaid for months at a time. When one Meo lieutenant demanded that the irregulars be given their back pay, Vang Pao shot him in the leg. That settled the matter for the moment, but several months later the rising chorus of complaints finally came to the attention of the provincial army commander, Col. Kham Hou Boussarath. In early 1959 Colonel Kham Hou called Vang Pao to his headquarters in Xieng Khouang, confronted him with the accusations, and ordered him to pay up. Several days later Colonel Kham Hou was driving back from an inspection tour of the frontier areas and was approaching the village of Lat Houang, when a burst of machine-gun fire shattered his windshield. More than thirty of Vang Pao's soldiers hidden in the brush alongside the road were shooting frantically at the automobile. But it was twilight, and most of the shots went wild. Kham Hou floored the accelerator and emerged from the gauntlet unscathed.

As soon as he reached his headquarters, Colonel Kham Hou radioed a full report to Vientiane. The next morning Army Chief of Staff Ouan Rathikun arrived in Xieng Khouang and summoned Vang Pao.* Weeping profusely, Vang Pao prostrated himself before Ouan and begged for forgiveness. Perhaps touched by this display of emotion or influenced by the wishes of U.S. Green Beret officers working with the Meo, Ouan decided not to punish Vang Pao. However, most of the Laotian high command seemed to feel that his career was finished.

But Vang Pao was to be rescued from obscurity by unforeseen circumstances that made his services invaluable to the Laotian right wing and the CIA. In the weeks that followed, Laos blundered into one of its chronic civil wars. Vang Pao volunteered his Meo irregulars to the cause of the tottering regime, and, as a reward, he was pardoned and promoted.

In January 1961 the CIA began sending Green Berets, CIA-financed Thai police commandos, and a handful of its own agents to Vang Pao's headquarters at Padong, a 4,000-foot mountain due south of the Plain of Jars. The object was to build up an effective secret army that would keep the Pathet Lao bottled up on the Plain of Jars by recruiting all of the eligible young Meo in the surrounding mountains as commandos. Using Padong as a base of operations, Vang Pao's officers and CIA operatives flew to scattered Meo villages in helicopters and light Helio Courier aircraft. Offering guns, rice, and money in exchange for recruits, these advance men leapfrogged from village to village around the western and northern perimeter of the Plain. Under their supervision, dozens of crude landing strips for Air America aircraft were hacked out of the mountain forests, and scattered villages were linked with CIA headquarters at Padong. Within several months, Vang Pao's influence extended from Padong north to Phou Fa and east as far as Bouam Long.

One local Meo leader in the Long Pot region west of the Plain of Jars says that Meo officers who visited his village following General Kong Le's capture of the Plain used threats as well as inducements to win a declaration of loyalty. "Vang Pao sent us guns," he recalled. "If we did not accept his guns, he would call us Pathet Lao. We had no choice. Vang Pao's officers came to the village and warned that if we did not join him he would regard us as Pathet Lao, and his soldiers would attack our village."

By 1964 Vang Pao had extended his authority northward into Sam Neua Province, openly attacking Pathet Lao

*Gen. Ouan Rathikun deserves passing memorialization in this account. A former commanding officer of the Royal Laotian Army — the only army in the world apart from our own that is wholly financed by the American taxpayer — he so brilliantly acquitted himself in that post to earn his country's highest decoration, the Grand Cross of the Million Elephants and the White Parasol. A round and genial man, the General has also controlled, since 1962, an elephant's share of that part of the opium traffic through Laos that originates in Thailand and the Shan states of northern Burma. Tithing this traffic has been immensely profitable to the various right wing governments that Ouan has served so faithfully over the years, yielding revenues of almost \$100,000 a month even as early as 1962. And, like his subordinate Vang Pao, General Ouan also readily perceived the splendid opportunities available to entrepreneurs of opium refining. By 1970 he allegedly controlled the largest laboratory in Southeast Asia, refining some of the purest heroin in the world.

Air America helicopter lands at a Meo village in northern Laos. The local military commander asserts that General Vang Pao's Meo officers have been shipping opium out of the village on Air America helicopters since 1970.



strongholds with the continued assistance of the CIA. (His offensives took place after the United States had signed the Geneva agreements whereby it promised not to interfere in Laotian military affairs.) As soon as a village was captured and Pathet Lao cadres eliminated, the inhabitants were put to work building a crude landing strip, usually 500 to 800 feet long, to receive the airplanes that followed in the conqueror's wake, carrying "refugee" supplies of rice and guns. These goods were given away in an attempt to buy the hearts and minds of the Meo and eliminate any remaining loyalty to the Pathet Lao. Within a matter of months a fifty-mile-long strip of territory — stretching from the northeastern rim of the Plain of Jars to Phou Pha Thi mountain, only fifteen miles from the North Vietnamese border — had been added to Vang Pao's domain. More than twenty new aircraft landing strips dotted the conquered corridor, linking Meo villages with the new CIA headquarters at Long Cheng. Most of these Meo villages were perched on steep mountain ridges overlooking valleys and towns controlled by the Pathet Lao. The Air America landing strip at Hong Non, for example, was only twelve miles from the limestone caverns near Sam Neua City where the Pathet Lao later housed their national headquarters, a munitions factory, and a cadre training school.

Airlining opium

As might be expected, the fighting on the Plain of Jars and the opening of these landing strips produced changes in northeastern Laos's opium traffic. For over sixty years the Plain of Jars had been the hub of the opium trade there. After every winter's opium harvest, Chinese merchants would leave their stores on the Plain and ride into the surrounding hills to barter for Meo opium. During the colonial era, Chinese traders sold opium to the French Opium Monopoly or to smugglers headed for northern Vietnam. When the French military became involved in the opium traffic in the early 1950s, the Chinese sold opium to French commandos for shipment to

Saigon on military transports. After the French departure in 1954, Chinese merchants dealt with Corsican charter airlines, which made regular flights to Vietnam and the Gulf of Siam.

No longer able to land on the Plain of Jars, the Corsican airlines began using Air America's mountain landing strips to pick up raw opium. As Vang Pao circled around the Plain and advanced into Sam Neua Province, the Corsicans were right behind in their Beechcrafts and Cessnas, paying Meo farmers and Chinese traders a top price. Rather than deliver their opium to trading centers on the Plain, most traders brought it to Air America landing strips serviced by the Corsican charter lines.

But when the Laotian government forced the Corsicans out of business in 1965, a serious economic crisis loomed in the Meo highlands. The war had in no way reduced Meo dependence on opium as a cash crop and may have actually increased production. Assured of food supplies from the CIA, the Meo had given up growing rice so that they could allot more land to the growing of opium.

While Meo villages on the southern and western edges of the Plain were little affected by the transport problem, the end of the Corsican flights made it impossible for villages on the northern perimeter and in Sam Neua Province to market their opium. Air America was the only form of air transport available, and, according to Gen. Ouan Rathikun and Gen. Thal Ma, then commander of the Laotian Air Force, it began flying Meo opium to markets in Long Cheng and Vientiane.

Air logistics for the opium trade were further improved in 1967 when the CIA and USAID (United States Agency for International Development) gave Vang Pao financial assistance in forming his own private airline, Xieng Khouang Air Transport. The company's president, Mr. Lo Kham Thy, says the airline was formed in late 1967 when two C47s were acquired from Air America and Continental Air Services. The company's schedule is limited to shuttle flights between Long Cheng and Vientiane that carry relief supplies and an occasional handful of passengers. Financial control is shared by Vang Pao, his brother, his cousin, and his father-in-law. According to one former AID employee, AID supported the

project because officials hoped it would make Long Cheng the commercial center of the northeast and, thereby, reinforce Vang Pao's political position. The USAID officials involved apparently realized that any commercial activity at Long Cheng would involve opium, but decided to support the project anyway.

Everybody continued to profit from the various arrangements until early 1968, when the Pathet Lao began the first of the dry-season offensives that eventually, by late 1971, forced Vang Pao's army into a narrow stretch of hill country within a relatively few miles of Vientiane. But the only people who lost by the military retreat were the Meo hill tribesmen. According to reliable Laotian sources, despite the drop in Meo opium production after 1968, Vang Pao was able to continue his role in Laos's narcotics trade by opening a heroin laboratory at Long Cheng, the CIA headquarters town.

The loss of Sam Neua Province in 1968 signaled the first of the massive Meo migrations that transformed much of north-

eastern Laos into a depopulated free-fire zone and drastically reduced hill-tribe opium production. Before the CIA initiated Meo guerrilla operations in 1960, northeastern Laos had had a hill-tribe population of about 250,000 people, most of whom were Meo opium farmers scattered evenly across the rugged highlands.

When Vang Pao began to lose control of Sam Neua in early 1968, the CIA decided to deny the population to the Pathet Lao by evacuating all the Meo tribesmen under his control. By 1967 U.S. Air Force bombing in northeastern Laos was already heavy, and Meo tribesmen were willing to leave their villages rather than face the daily horror of life under the bombs. By early 1970 an estimated 50,000 hill tribesmen were living in Sam Thong and Long Cheng while 100,000 more were crowded into a crescent-shaped piece of territory lying between these two cities and the Plain of Jars.

During their 1970 offensive, North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao troops jumped off from the Plain of Jars, drove across the Meo "refugee" areas, and by March were on the heights overlooking Sam Thong. As the attacks gained momentum, Meo living west of the Plain fled south, and eventually more than 100,000 were relocated in a forty-mile-wide strip of territory between Long Cheng and the Vientiane Plain. When the Pathet Lao and the North Vietnamese attacked Long Cheng during the 1971 dry season, the CIA was forced to evacuate some 50,000 mercenary dependents from Long Cheng valley into this overcrowded resettlement area. By mid 1971, USAID estimated that almost 150,000 hill-tribe refugees, of whom 60 per cent were Meo, had been resettled in the Ban Son area south of Long Cheng.

After three years of constant retreat, Vang Pao's Meo followers were at the end of the line. Once a prosperous people living in small villages surrounded by miles of fertile, uninhabited mountains, 90,000 Meo, almost a third of all the Meo in Laos, were now packed into a forty-mile-long dead end perched above the sweltering Vientiane Plain. Traditionally the Meo have built their villages on mountain ridges more than 3,000 feet in elevation where the temperate climate is conducive to poppy cultivation, the air is free of malarial mosquitoes, and the water is pure. Since most refugee villages in the Ban Son resettlement area are less than 2,500 feet in elevation, many Meo, lacking normal immunities, have been stricken with malaria and have become seriously ill. The lower elevation and crowded conditions make opium cultivation almost impossible, and the Meo are totally dependent on Air America's rice drops. If the North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao capture Long Cheng and advance on Vientiane, the Meo will probably be forced down onto the Vientiane Plain where their extreme vulnerability to tropical disease might result in a major medical disaster.

The Ban Son resettlement area is the guardian at the gate, blocking any enemy advance on Vientiane. If the Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese choose to attack the Laotian administrative capital after they have taken Long Cheng, they will have to fight their way through the resettlement area. Meo leaders are well aware of the danger and have pleaded with USAID to either begin resettling the Meo on the Vientiane Plain on a gradual, controlled basis or shift the resettlement area to the east or west, out of the probable line of an enemy advance. Knowing that the Meo fight better when their families are threatened, USAID had refused to accept either alternative and seems intent on keeping them in the present

General Vang Pao, commander of the CIA's mercenary Meo army in Laos's Military Region II.



area for a final, bloody stand against the North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao. Most of the Meo have no desire to continue fighting for Vang Pao. They bitterly resent his more flamboyant excesses—his habit of personally executing his own soldiers, his willingness to take excessive casualties, and his massive grafting from the military payroll—and regard him as a corrupt warlord who has grown rich from their suffering. But since USAID decides where the rice is dropped, the Meo have no choice but to stand and fight.

Deranged priorities

The chronicle of American complicity in the Laotian drug trade ends with one final irony. When President Nixon issued his declaration of war on the international heroin traffic in mid-1971, the U.S. Embassy in Vientiane was finally forced to take action. Instead of trying to break up drug syndicates and purge the government leaders involved, however, the Embassy introduced legal reforms and urged a police crackdown on opium addicts. A new opium law submitted to government ministries for consideration on June 8 went into effect on November 15. As a result of the new law, U.S. narcotics agents were allowed to open an office in early November—two full years after GIs started using Laotian heroin in Vietnam and six months after the first large seizures were made in the United States. Only a few days after their arrival, U.S. agents received a tip that a Filipino diplomat and a Chinese businessman were going to smuggle heroin directly into the United States. U.S. agents boarded the plane with them in Vientiane, flew halfway around the world, and arrested them with 15.5 kilos of high-grade heroin in New York City. Even though these men were carrying a large quantity of heroin, they were still only messenger boys for the powerful Laotian drug merchants. But, so far, political expediency has been the order of the day, and the U.S. Embassy has made absolutely no effort to go after the men at the top.

In the long run, the American effort seems to be aimed at closing Vientiane's hundreds of wide-open opium dens and making life difficult for the average Laotian drug user (most of whom are opium smokers). The Americans are pressuring the Laotian police into launching a massive crackdown on opium smoking, and there is evidence that the campaign is getting under way. Since almost no money is being made available for detoxification centers or outpatient clinics, most of Vientiane's opium smokers will be forced to become heroin users. (Opium's cumbersome smoking paraphernalia and strong smell make its addicts much more vulnerable to arrest.) Vientiane's brand of low-grade heroin seems to be particularly high in acid content and has produced some horribly debilitated zombie addicts. No less an authority than General Ouan believes that Vientiane's brand of low-grade heroin can kill a healthy man in less than a year. It would indeed be ironic if America's antidrug campaign drove Laos's opium smokers to a heroin death while it left the manufacturers and international traffickers untouched.

After pouring billions of dollars into Southeast Asia for over twenty years, the United States has acquired enormous power in the region. And it has used this power to create new nations where none existed, to handpick prime ministers, to topple governments, and to crush revolutions. But U.S. officials in Southeast Asia have always considered the opium traffic a

quaint local custom and have generally turned a blind eye to official involvement. A Laotian or Vietnamese general who whispers the word "neutrality" is likely to find himself on the next plane out of the country, but one who tells the international press about his role in the opium trade does not even merit a raised eyebrow. However, American involvement has gone far beyond coincidental complicity; embassies have consciously covered up involvement by client governments, CIA contract airlines have reportedly carried opium, and individual CIA men have abetted the opium traffic.

As a result of direct and indirect American involvement opium production has steadily increased, high-grade heroin production is flourishing, and the Golden Triangle's poppy fields have become linked to markets in Europe and the United States. Southeast Asia's Golden Triangle already grows 70 per cent of the world's illicit opium and is capable of supplying the U.S. with unlimited quantities of heroin for generations to come. Unless something is done to change America's policies and priorities in Southeast Asia, the drug crisis will deepen and the heroin plague will continue to spread. □



Above: Label for Tiger and the Globe brand No. 4 heroin (90 to 99 per cent pure) manufactured in the Golden Triangle region. Each package contains 7/10 of a kilogram. Both this brand and the Double U-O Globe brand are purchased for export to the United States and for sale to American GIs serving in South Vietnam.

Below: Label for Double U-O Globe, also No. 4 heroin manufactured in the Golden Triangle region. Almost all bulk heroin seizures in South Vietnam are of this brand. On November 11, 1971, the U.S. Bureau of Narcotics seized \$13 million worth of Double U-O Globe brand heroin at the Lexington Hotel in New York City.

