

## C.I.A. Aides Reported Leading Commando Raids in North Laos

The Washington Star

VIENTIANE, Laos, July 7—A secret operation involving commando raiders, some led by employees of the Central Intelligence Agency, is reported under way against the Communist-held Plaine des Jarres in northern Laos.

According to well-informed sources, United States aircraft have been landing on the plain, and one C-123 transport was stranded with its American crew there for a night.

The informants said the commandos had penetrated as far as an airstrip in the east central part of the plain called Lima 22.

United States and Laotian officials here have refused to comment on the reported operation.

[In Washington, State Department officials said they were checking the situation and had no immediate comment.]

One American source said privately that the Meo leader, Gen. Vang Pao, whose C.I.A.-backed forces are based at Long Tieng, southwest of the plain, was "strengthening and improving his defensive position."

Some military sources suggested that the reported operation was being conducted by the Meo base of Bouam Long, north of the plain.

Informants said two Thai battalions and six Meo battalions were involved. The Pathet Lao radio said the operation was being conducted by three regiments of General Vang Pao's forces.

In 1969, a joint United States-Laotian operation took the plain from Communist



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troops briefly but this led to a large North Vietnamese counterstroke, which drove the Meos back and almost resulted in the fall of Long Tieng.

### Cambodian Plan Said to End

PNOMPENH, Cambodia, July 7 (UPI)—The United States has abandoned its secret program of training regular Cambodian troops on Laos, United States sources said today, but is continuing to train Cambodian guerrillas.

The sources said that the program, financed by the Central Intelligence Agency, ended last month when a 500-man Cambodian army battalion wound up a three-month training course in the Laotian panchandle.