

**Form No. (4)**

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*Towards Laos From the Independence to fall of the Monarchy*  
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***ABSTRACT***

This study critically examines American policy toward Laos between 1954 and 1975. The United States waged an unsuccessful counterinsurgency effort in Laos against the North Vietnamese-directed Pathet Lao insurgency from 1954 to 1975. This mainly covert mission intensified in the first half of the 1960s and was part of the American effort to check communist expansion in Indochina and elsewhere in the world. Seen by policymakers in the 1950s and 1960s as the keystone of Southeast Asia, Laos was deemed vital to the overall stability of the region. The Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson Administrations all saw the Pathet Lao as a communist organization that sought to take over the Lao government. In the eyes of Washington, such an eventuality clearly would have tilted the balance of power in Southeast Asia to the communists and made defense of the region extremely difficult. The American policymakers sought to keep Laos in friendly hands, or at least keep it neutral, so that it would not interfere with U.S. operations in South Vietnam.

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