




ASEAN Factors in the "Dual Structure" of Laos' Foreign Relations

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PART ONE

National Characteristics and Diplomatic Choices of Laos

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Geographical Environment



Landlocked country with
small territory



Surrounded by several
relatively powerful nations



The hub of Indo-
China Peninsula

National Capacity

Militarily

Economically

Country	Units	Scale	GDP 2017
Lao P. D. R.	U.S. dollars	Billions	17.069
Brunei Darussalam	U.S. dollars	Billions	12.128
Cambodia	U.S. dollars	Billions	22.225
China	U.S. dollars	Billions	12,062.28
Indonesia	U.S. dollars	Billions	1,015.29
Malaysia	U.S. dollars	Billions	314.708
Myanmar	U.S. dollars	Billions	61.386
Philippines	U.S. dollars	Billions	313.595
Thailand	U.S. dollars	Billions	455.322
Vietnam	U.S. dollars	Billions	220.376
Source: International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook Database			

Country	Available Manpower	Fit-For-Service	Reaching Military Age Annually	Total Military Personnel
Laos	3248143	2335415	144796	30000
Vietnam	51043216	41804394	1651274	548200
Cambodia	8120963	5684674	312657	125000
Thailand	35543014	27368121	1094725	605000
Myanmar	30258643	21816482	1025375	406000
China	752855402	621105706	19614518	2693000

Source:
GlobalFirepower.com

Diplomacy in History



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PART TWO

"Dual Structure" of Laos' Foreign Relations

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Before the end of the Cold War: "One-sided toward Vietnam"

1977, Friendship and
Cooperation Treaty
between Laos and Vietnam



Maintained a high degree
of unity in political,
economic, military and
diplomatic fields



Vietnamese expert and
consultants in Laos;
Vietnam troops stationed
in Laos



After the end of the Cold War: "Dual Structure"

Continued to maintain the
special relationship with
Vietnam



Economic exchanges with
China and Thailand have
become increasingly
frequent; dependence on
Vietnam weakened



"Dual Structure"-different
from the previous situation
in which Vietnam was
"dominant" in Laos

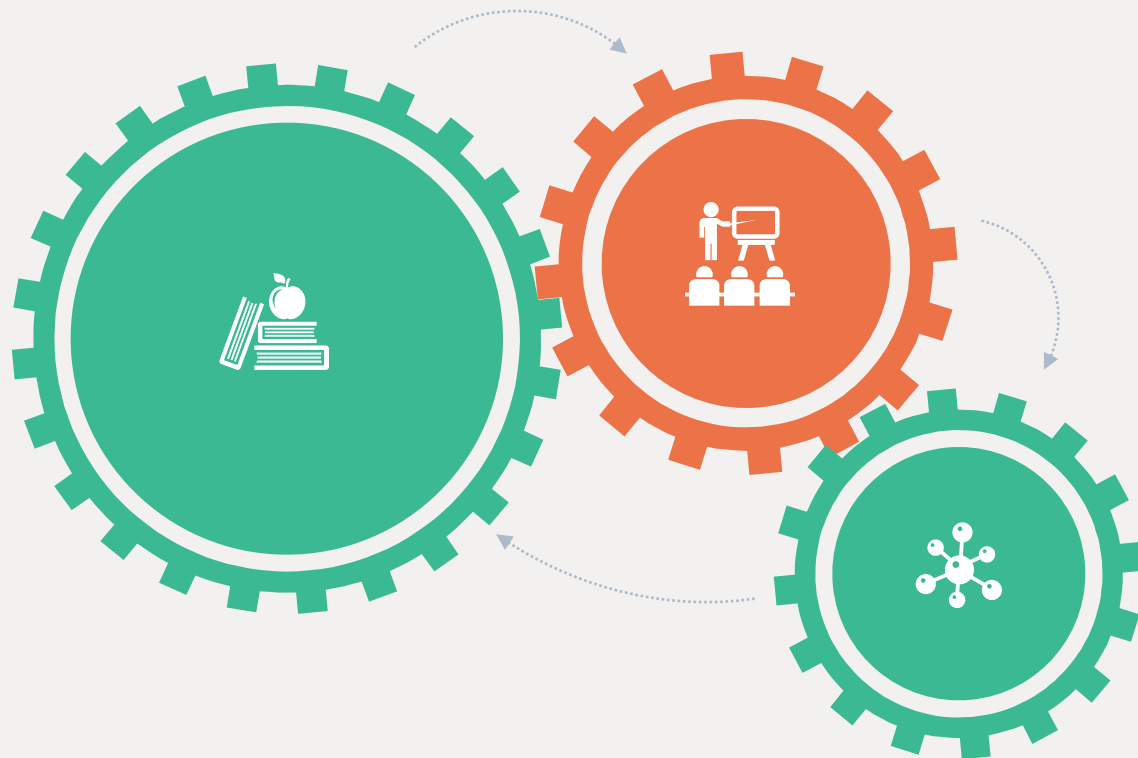


Laos' Investment Projects by Country (1989—2018)

No	Country	Unit	Value of Investment (US\$)
1	China	846	8,958,924,355
2	Thailand	755	3,996,393,158
3	Vietnam	418	3,920,538,079
4	South Korea	291	751,072,139
5	France	222	105,626,243
6	United States	114	149,800,113
7	Japan	101	158,267,441
8	Malaysia	99	794,328,773
9	Australia	88	135,152,812
10	Singapore	79	187,761,475

Source: Investment Promotion Department, Ministry of Planning and Investment, Lao PDR

Strategic Value of Laos to the Three Countries



Vietnam

seeing Laos as its backyard; securing its western border; providing a stepping board for expansion into other parts of Indo-China Peninsula

China

seeing Laos as an important economic corridor connecting Southeast Asian market; curbing Vietnam's expansionist ambitions; helping China gain greater influence over Cambodia and Thailand

Thailand

need Laos' cheap labor and raw materials to keep its economy growing steadily; seeing it as a buffer zone from direct confrontation with Vietnam

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PART THREE

The Influence of ASEAN on the "Dual Structure"

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01

Economic Relations:
Joining ASEAN has relatively reduced the influence of China, Vietnam and Thailand on Laos.



**Increasing investment
from ASEAN member
states**



**Introducing advanced
technology and
equipment**



**Expanding economic
cooperation among
member states**

02

Political and Security Relations :

- **Providing Laos with new diplomatic tools and increasing diplomatic flexibility;**
- **Conducive to the removal of the historical tendency of excessive inclination toward Vietnam**
- **Conducive to dealing with the three strong neighbors**



**Consultation and
Cooperation Mechanism
within ASEAN**



**ASEAN Collective Security
Mechanism- “Speaking with
One Voice”**

03

International Status and Influence:

- **Enhancing Laos' diplomatic visibility**
- **Enhancing Laos' international political status and influence**
- **Making "silence" and "obedience" no longer the only option for Laos' diplomacy**

2004.11

**the 10th ASEAN
summit**

**the 8th China-ASEAN
Leaders' Summit and
ASEAN-China, Japan
and South Korea (10+3)
leaders' meeting**

**the 1st ASEAN, India,
Australia and New
Zealand Summit**



PART FOUR

Conclusion



Joining ASEAN has weakened the "Dual Structure" of Laos' foreign relations, increased its diplomatic flexibility and enhanced its diplomatic visibility.





THANK YOU
