

A Summary of Ph.D. Dissertation

LAOS'S FOREIGN POLICY CHANGE: FROM 1975 TO 2000

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By the end of the Cold War, Laos's foreign policy has expanded and diversified its diplomatic relations with foreign countries around the world. After establishing the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), the comprehensive picture of Laos's foreign policy change has portrayed an image of a small country being influenced by its neighbor, Vietnam. Both regional and external powers have played a crucial role in bringing the changes to Laos, yet it does not explain in detail how and why the changes happened. Given the presumptions of the existing scholars on the heavily influenced by those socialist countries, this thesis raises the question: Did Laos's foreign policy change? How did it change? And why did it change? This thesis argues that the changes in Laos cannot be explained simply as responses to the changes of the external powers, but it should be understood as calculated responses to the nexus between domestic and external factors. This argument counters the existing literature that overlooks the domestic changes inside Laos, and Laos's foreign policy is not just a reflection of its socialist partners. This thesis analyzes the evolution of Laos's foreign policy through a historical narrative. This thesis has made its utmost efforts to give detailed descriptions and analyze domestic and external impacts on the changes of Laos's foreign policy.