

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910452306703321
Autore	Jacobs Seth <1964->
Titolo	The universe unraveling [[electronic resource] ] : American foreign policy in Cold War Laos // Seth Jacobs
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Ithaca, : Cornell University Press, 2012
ISBN	0-8014-6451-X 0-8014-6404-8
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (327 p.)
Collana	The United States in the world
Disciplina	327.730594090/04
Soggetti	International relations Electronic books. United States Foreign relations Laos Laos Foreign relations United States United States Foreign relations 1953-1961 United States Foreign relations 1961-1963
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Bibliographic Level Mode of Issuance: Monograph
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Frontmatter -- Contents -- Acknowledgments -- Introduction -- 1. "A Long Country Inhabited by Lotus Eaters": Washington Encounters Laos -- 2. "A Soft Buffer": Laos in the Eisenhower Administration's Grand Strategy -- 3. "Help the Seemingly Unhelpable": "Little America" and the U.S. Aid Program in Laos -- 4. "Foreigners Who Want to Enslave the Country": American Neocolonialism, Lao Defiance -- 5. "Doctor Tom" and "Mister Pop": American Icons in Laos -- 6. "Retarded Children": Laos in the American Popular Imagination -- 7. "No Place to Fight a War": Washington Backs Away from Laos -- Epilogue -- Notes -- Index
Sommario/riassunto	During the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations, Laos was positioned to become a major front in the Cold War. Yet American policymakers ultimately chose to resist communism in neighboring South Vietnam instead. Two generations of historians have explained this decision by citing logistical considerations. Laos's landlocked, mountainous terrain, they hold, made the kingdom an unpropitious place to fight, while South Vietnam-possessing a long coastline, navigable rivers, and all-weather roads-better accommodated

America's military forces. *The Universe Unraveling* is a provocative reinterpretation of U.S.-Laos relations in the years leading up to the Vietnam War. Seth Jacobs argues that Laos boasted several advantages over South Vietnam as a battlefield, notably its thousand-mile border with Thailand, whose leader was willing to allow Washington to use his nation as a base from which to attack the communist Pathet Lao. More significant in determining U.S. policy in Southeast Asia than strategic appraisals of the Laotian landscape were cultural perceptions of the Lao people. Jacobs contends that U.S. policy toward Laos under Eisenhower and Kennedy cannot be understood apart from the traits Americans ascribed to their Lao allies. Drawing on diplomatic correspondence and the work of iconic figures like "celebrity saint" Tom Dooley, Jacobs finds that the characteristics American statesmen and the American media attributed to the Lao—laziness, immaturity, and cowardice—differed from the traits assigned the South Vietnamese, making Lao chances of withstanding communist aggression appear dubious. *The Universe Unraveling* combines diplomatic, cultural, and military history to provide a new perspective on how prejudice can shape policy decisions and even the course of history.

---