**Information on dissertation submitted for the PhD degree**

**of National Research Tomsk State University**

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**Title of the dissertation:** The Lao People’s Democratic Republic in the System of International Relations (1975-2021)

**Date of defense:** 14:00, June 14, 2023

**Location of defense:** Tomsk State University,

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84939344036?pwd=SlUrVlExRTI4WTl6K2RHYk1udjMzQT09>

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**ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION**

Laos is one of the priorities of Russia’s policy in Southeast Asia. Historically, the Lao PDR and the Soviet Union had intensive cooperation based on the common ideology and shared interests. After a brief period of estrangement in the early 1990s, the steady development of multi-faceted cooperation resumed. In 2011, the Lao-Russian relations were elevated to a “strategic partnership”.

Developing relations with Laos requires a comprehensive understanding of the evolution of the country’s foreign policy, its national interests and foreign policy resources. In many ways, Lao PDR’s foreign policy is a problem for an analyst of international relations. It is the only landlocked country in Southeast Asia and one of the few countries with Marxist-Leninist ideology in the world. It combines openness to foreign investment and increasingly close cooperation with China with a political and military alliance with Vietnam. Despite legacy of border conflicts with Thailand and Cambodia, Laos maintains peaceful relations with neighboring states. It benefits from membership in ASEAN and ASEAN-centered networks of partnerships. The country demonstrates continuity and stability of foreign policy over more than 40 years.

The objective of this dissertation consists in discerning the specifics of Lao PDR’s foreign policy and its role in the regional subsystem and global system of international relations. The research tasks are as follows:

* analyzing the factors that shaped the evolution of Lao PDR’s foreign policy from 1975 to 2021, including the country’s political system, major trends of economic and social development, the legacy of the relations with neighbouring countries and great powers;
* tracing the influence of the conflicts and regional rivalries in Indochina on the formation of Lao PDR’s foreign policy in the late 1970s – early 1990s;
* analyzing the impact of ASEAN membership on Lao PDR’s economic and social development, the evolution of its foreign policy, regional and international roles;
* assessing the security challenges, both traditional and non-traditional, faced by Laos in the nowadays regional milieu and global environment;
* analyzing the evolvement of Lao – Russian political, military, economic and humanitarian relations from 1991 to 2021.

Chronologically,the research focuses on the period from 1975 to 2021.Methodologically,the research relies on the principle of historicism. Systems approach as developed by Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, the historical-descriptive and political-descriptive methods, discourse and event analysis as well as the analysis of economic data were used to conduct the research.

The novelty of the researchlies in its being the first comprehensive study of Lao foreign policy embracing more than four decades of its evolution and applying the systems approach to evaluate the changing stance of Laos in the regional and international systems. A number of primary sources have been introduced into the academic circulation for the first time. It is also the first comprehensive study of Lao-Russian relations in the post-Cold War period.

*Keywords:* Lao People’s Democratic Republic, foreign policy, international relations, regional integration, ASEAN, cooperation.

**List of articles:**

1. Pogorelskaya, A.M., Phonekeo, V. (2022) Laos in international development aid flows. Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta – Tomsk State University Journal. 478. рр. 99–107. (In Russian). doi: 10.17223/15617793/478/13
2. Phonekeo V. (2022) Conflicts in Indochina and Lao PDR’s Entry into ASEAN (1975-1997). Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Istoriya – Tomsk State University Journal of History. 77. pp. 95–98. doi: 10.17223/19988613/77/11
3. Yun, S.M., Phonkeo, V. (2022) Educational Cooperation between Russia and Laos. Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Istoriya – Tomsk State University Journal of History. 79. pp. 196–200. (In Russian). doi: 10.17223/19988613/79/24

**List of conferences:**

1. Scientific and practical conference “The international humanitarian cooperation: the directions, the challenges, the prospects and the impact of the pandemic” (the Institute of Oriental Studies of the RAS, Moscow, 24 March 2022). The report “Humanitarian cooperation between Russia and Laos” (together with Sergey M. Yun).
2. V International Scientific and Practical Conference “Topical Issues in the Study of History, International Relations and Cultures” (Novosibirsk State University, Novosibirsk, 7-8 October 2022). The report “International development aid to Laos: some donors, achievements and challenges” (together with Anastasia M. Pogorelskaya).
3. V International Scientific and Practical Conference “Topical Issues in the Study of History, International Relations and Cultures” (Novosibirsk State University, Novosibirsk, 7-8 October 2022). The report “The Lao PDR and the challenges to regional security in the 1990-2010s” (together with Evgeniy F. Troitsky).
4. International conference “Russia and ASEAN in the Asia-Pacific Region: Dynamics of Cooperation, Regional Processes and Global Context” (MGIMO University, Moscow, 13-15 October 2022). The report “Lao PDR and Regional Security Challenges”.