“This is an important story, little acknowledged—let alone reported—in the world press.” —Library Journal

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“Tragic Mountains is a compelling read, a fine journalist's contribution to a little-known facet of America’s Vietnam War, as well as her appeal to the American conscience to honor what she passionately believes to be her country’s moral obligation to its former Hmong allies in highland Laos.” —Journal of Southeast Asian Studies

“I have read and reviewed hundreds of books on the Indochina wars, but few have had the impact of this seminal work, which vividly depicts the abandonment, betrayal, and attempted genocide of a proud and courageous people.” —Infantry

“Tragic Mountains is not only a fair and accurate account of the experiences of [the Hmong], it is an engrossing tale of humanity under conditions of danger, heroism, and eventual defeat.” —William E. Colby, former director of the Central Intelligence Agency

Tragic Mountains
By Jane Hamilton-Merritt

BLOOMINGTON, Ind. – In celebration of the 15th anniversary of its publication, a revisit to Tragic Mountains is a must. Jane Hamilton-Merritt recounts the story of the Hmong’s struggle for freedom and survival in Laos from 1942 through 1992. During those years, most Hmong sided with the French against the Japanese and Ho Chi Minh’s Viet Minh, and then with the Americans against the North Vietnamese.

The staunchest of allies, the Hmong were America’s foot soldiers in the brutal secret Lao theater of the Vietnam War, risking all to defend their homelands and to rescue downed American air crews. Abandoned by the United States when it withdrew in 1975, the Hmong have been subjected to a campaign of genocide by communist Laos and Vietnam. Tragic Mountains is a story of courage, tenacity, brutality, secrecy, incredible heroism—by Hmong and Americans alike—international cynicism, betrayal, genocide, resilience, and still, hope.

Jane Hamilton-Merritt was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in 1969 for her coverage of the Vietnam War, and in 1998 for the Nobel Peace Prize, in recognition of her long-standing efforts on behalf of the Hmong. Tragic Mountains is her account of the historic struggle of the Hmong and of their betrayal by the United States.

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By Jane Hamilton-Merritt
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