

# LAOTIAN EMPLOYEES DENIED U.S. VISAS

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Many Seeking to Emigrate  
but Are Ineligible to Get  
Refugee Entry Status

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VIENTIANE, Laos, June 4— Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Laotians, many employed for years by the United States, are being refused permission to go to the United States.

American consular officials here as well as at Udon and Bangkok in Thailand said today that they had turned away hundreds of such Laotians, while at the same time granting refugee status to hundreds of other Laotians holding South Vietnamese or Cambodian passports.

Many of the Laotians have told American officials that they fear for their lives as the Communist-led Pathet Lao movement takes over control of the country.

"It's a scandal," an American consular official said today.

The official referred to authorization for the American Embassies in Saigon and Phnom Penh to issue "letters of parole," circumventing immigration and naturalization restrictions.

The authorization allowed South Vietnamese and Cambodians to enter the United States as refugees without producing documentary evidence of needed skills or of relatives in the United States, the usual ways of gaining immigrant status.

The authorization allowed unlimited parole only for holders of passports from South Vietnam and Cambodia who were present in those countries. It allowed the American Consulate in Laos to issue such parole letters only to South Vietnamese and Cambodians who have "worked for the United States Mission."

## All Others Excluded

All other South Vietnamese and Cambodians as well as all Laotians, were kept from obtaining refugee status.

As of this morning, Lee S. Bigelow, United States Consul at Udon, Thailand, has turned away about 300 holders of Lao-

tian passports, while granting parole letters to about 300 holders of Cambodian and South Vietnamese passports.

"It is a regional and an international problem," Mr. Bigelow said in a telephone interview. "We are also encouraging them to seek assistance from other countries and from international organizations such as the United Nations High Commission for Refugees."

In Vientiane, the High Commissioner's office has thus far refused to issue travel documents to would-be emigrants.

Many Laotians with ties to Americans, as well as a large number of South Vietnamese here, are becoming increasingly nervous about the situation.

Earlier this week, several young Vietnamese working as waiters in a Vientiane restaurant approached an American reporter who was eating in the virtually empty room.

"We every afraid," one began hesitantly. "How can we get to the United States?"

Recently, he continued, the North Vietnamese Embassy here began summoning all holders of South Vietnamese passports to weekly indoctrination sessions in a meeting hall. The tone of these evening meetings has become increasingly strident in recent days, he said.

"They could ship us back to Saigon, and then what we do?" another of the youths added.

There are cases like this throughout Laos, particularly in the capital. An American consular official here pointed to a Laotian secretary who had worked for the office several years.

"What about her?" he asked. "She is scared, but she is Lao and I have had to tell her the law does not allow me to help her—to parole her to the United States."

## Many Flee to Thailand

Last month, Laos imposed a total ban on all emigration by holders of foreign passports and has virtually eliminated issuance of exit visas for Laotian nationals.

Thousands of Laotians have crossed the Mekong River illegally into Thailand and have begun to appear at the American Consulates at Udon and Bangkok, only to be turned away.

The Thai Government, sensitive about relations with Laos, South Vietnam and Cambodia, has said that the Laotians may stay in transit for a limited time. Many have begun to look desperately for countries that will accept them.

It seems unlikely that Thailand will compel them to return to Laos and it is doubtful that the leaders of the Pathet Lao particularly want them back. As a result they are people without a country.

## U. S. Studying Situation

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June 4— State Department officials said today they were aware that growing numbers of Laotians, many of them former or present employees of the United States, wanted to come to this country.

For the moment, the department lacks legal authority to admit them because the parole authority was limited to South Vietnamese and Cambodians.