

FULLER COLUMN  
FILED COMMENT

## Merry-Go-Round

# Laotian Warlord Financed by U.S.



**Jack Anderson**

**G**ENERAL Kouprasith Abhay, the Laotian warlord who controls the capital city of Vientiane, has become a millionaire by using American-armed troops to protect his logging operations.

The teak he cuts is delivered across the Mekong river to Thailand where it is sold for huge profits to the U.S. military establishment. He has supplemented his income, too, by supplying prostitutes at a U.S.-financed construction project.

His enterprise is dismayingly typical of the success stories of foreign satraps who have grown rich off U.S. aid.

The details are told in a confidential field report to the Agency for International Development, which dispenses U.S. aid and provides a front for the Central Intelligence Agency in Laos.

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**T**HE WILY WARLORD, whose control of Vientiane makes him the real power behind Premier Souvanna Phouma, got the timber rights by having the Laotian Assembly falsely declare the land "unused." Actually, the land is occupied by hundreds of Lao peasants.

General Abhay uses his soldiers not to fight the communist Pathet Lao but to keep them out of his forests. His troops also cow the Lao peasants who had gone there ahead of him to cultivate rice. Those who object to his logging operations, conducted in the name of the Lao Timber Society, are driven off.

The general has tried to keep his prostitution business quiet. But the AID field report alleges that he dispatched a dozen prostitutes to bring a little night life to Nam Ngum, 60 miles north of Vientiane, where the U.S. is helping to build a \$3 million dam.

To AID's horror, the prostitutes were housed in quarters next to AID's own leadership training building. When AID protested to Abhay's colonel-on-the-scene, he merely shrugged and disclaimed any connection with the women.

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**A**ID RETALIATED by cutting off the colonel's gasoline supplies. Rather than give up his own staff car, the colonel capitulated. He ordered soldiers to tear down the offending house.

They promptly rebuilt it in another part of the village, and the construction men began coming down with venereal disease.

AID sent for penicillin and set up a clinic. AID proposed to the colonel that the prostitutes be issued identification passes and be treated regularly.

To do so would have been a confession that prostitution was practiced in General Abhay's military domain. This would have offended the general's sensibilities and jeopardized the colonel's career. He flatly refused.

The disease finally became so rampant that the girls were chased away.

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