

## Pathet Lao Envoy Views Talks as Stalemated

VIENTIANE, Laos, Aug 17 (Agence France-Presse)—Talks between Government representatives and an envoy from the Communist-led Pathet Lao have reached a stalemate, according to the envoy, Prince Tiao Souk Vongsak.

Prince Souk Vongsak, who was sent to Vientiane from the Pathet Lao headquarters in Samneua by Prince Souphanouvong, the leader of the Communist faction, said: "Premier Prince Souvanna Phouma is not respecting his pledges and the conversations are currently at a stalemate."

Last Tuesday Prince Souk Vongsak told Prince Souphanouvong that the Government had agreed to a meeting between plenipotentiaries from both sides. On Thursday, the Government said such a meeting would include all Laotian parties interested in settling the protracted war in Laos.

Political observers said the Pathet Lao appeared to be insisting on a preliminary meeting. But Government officials in Vientiane consider this a waste of time. The Vientiane authorities want to send a full delegation.

### New Moves Ruled Out

Sources close to the Pathet Lao said that the stalemate was sufficient to rule out any new initiative for the moment. A colleague of Prince Souk Vongsak, Soth Pietrasy, was expected to leave Friday for Samneua to outline the latest position to Prince Souphanouvong, who is the half-brother of Premier Souvanna Phouma.

War has raged off and on in the remote northern sections of Laos for nearly 20 years. The fighting has persisted despite two international conferences in Geneva—in 1954 and 1962—that established the neutrality

of Laos and decreed that all foreign troops were to leave Laos and not return.

In recent years most of the fighting on the Communist side is said to have been conducted by the North Vietnamese, whose principal interest is the protection of the Ho Chi Minh supply trails through Laos into South Vietnam.

The appearance in Vientiane of Prince Souk Vongsak to conduct talks with the Government has led some observers to view with optimism the possibility of direct peace talks between the half-brothers.

The Pathet Lao also protested on Saturday against what it termed the entry of United States and South Vietnamese troops into Laos. The protest was contained in an urgent note from the Pathet Lao leader to Prince Souvanna Phouma, handed over by Prince Souk Vongsak.