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20,000 Being Evacuated From Periled Laos Area

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VIENTIANE, Laos, Feb. 11— American aid sources here say the refugee departure is leisurely. Now experienced at feeling a war zone, the evacuees are leaving in good time before the big attack comes.

But their departure, apparently with the advice of General Vang Pao and his officers, is regarded as indicative of how serious is the threat to Sam Thong and Long Tieng.

Several thousand North Vietnamese and pro-Communist Pathet Lao forces are now attacking outlying defenses of the two mountain towns daily. Some points have fallen and the environs of the two towns have been shelled.

In normal times Long Tieng has a population of around 30,000. Sam Thong is somewhat smaller.

In response to an appeal from General Vang Pao, reinforcements are being sent to him from the Vientiane area, according to reliable sources here, and United States and Laotian planes are stepping up the bombing of enemy areas.

It was announced here today that enemy forces threatening Luang Prabang have occupied another Government-held strongpoint 18 miles north of the royal capital.

With enemy forces threatening the Government strongpoints of Sam Thong and Long Tieng, 20,000 to 30,000 civilians are reported on the move from the area near the Plaine des Jarres, 80 miles north of here.

They are among the 226,000 refugees being fed, clothed and sheltered under the United States aid program for Laos. United States planes are dropping supplies to the refugees daily as they make their way in groups along mountain paths to new home sites they have picked in the mountains 15 to 25 miles south and southwest of Sam Thong and Long Tieng.

Many made the same trek last year and then returned after the failure of an enemy drive against the twin positions that guard the approaches to the Vientiane plain.

The refugees are mainly old men, women and children of the Meo and other hill tribes. Younger men of the tribes are at Long Tieng, Sam Thong and surrounding posts in the Laotian forces of the Meo leader, Maj. Gen. Vang Pao, whose special commando-type units are supported by guerrilla-warfare specialists of the American Central Intelligence Agency and supplied by United States transport planes.