

Laos Declares Emergency As Red Pressure Mounts

By TILLMAN DURDIN FEB 13 1971

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VIENTIANE, Laos, Feb. 12—Laos declared a state of emergency today and transferred internal security matters from the police to military officers. A Government statement said that the change had been made because of "recent developments in the military situation."

This has been marked by mounting pressure from Communist troops in northern Laos, where the royal capital of Luang Prabang and the Sam Thong-Long Tieng area 80 miles north of Vientiane are threatened.

Long Tieng is the base for an army of irregulars that is maintained by the United States Central Intelligence Agency.

The order for an emergency, decided upon at a Cabinet meeting yesterday, gives increased powers to the military but falls short of martial law. Over-all authority remains in the hands of the civil authorities headed by the Premier, Prince Souvanna Phouma.

The order is believed to represent a compromise between the Premier and more militant civilians and military officers who think that his maintenance of a neutralist stance and his sporadic peace negotiations with the Communist-led Pathet Lao have weakened the Government's prosecution of the war.

As a result of the compromise, observers here believe that Government unity has been improved at a time of crisis. The observers especially note that talk about a rightist takeover has stopped.

The unity of the cabinet was

demonstrated yesterday by the adoption of a communiqué dealing with the incursion this week into Laos by South Vietnamese troops. The communiqué was in roughly the same terms as those used Monday in a declaration by Premier Souvanna Phouma.

The communiqué said that the incursion had violated the Geneva agreement of 1962, which called for no foreign troops in Laos, but said that the incursion had been a consequence of continuous violations by North Vietnamese troops.

The declaration of a state of emergency, signed by Prince Souvanna Phouma, gave Gen. Quane Rathikoune, commander of the armed forces, the power to take measures necessary for general security throughout Laos.

A high Government source said that the state of emergency would increase discipline and facilitate mobilization.

The government order cautioned the people against being unduly excited by the move and said "events are not dramatic."