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NYT

Laos Reports Enemy Drive

VIENTIANE, Laos, Dec. 21 (Reuters) — North Vietnamese troops have begun a general offensive in Laos following their capture of the Plaine des Jarres in the north, a Laotian Government spokesman said here today.

He said that the pro-Government base of Long Tieng, about 30 miles southwest of the plain, was attacked early this morning by 20 enemy commandos.

The attackers damaged three reconnaissance aircraft, killed three Laotian soldiers and wounded nine before they withdrew, leaving three dead behind, he said.

Several battalions of North Vietnamese troops were reported to have overrun two Government positions in the valley of the Ou Nam, a river 20 miles northeast of the royal capital of Luang Prabang. But government forces later reported recapturing one of the outposts.

The spokesman said that the North Vietnamese had also launched a large drive in the strategic Boloven plateau in southern Laos. But he did not give details.

In the north, Laotian defenders were said to have withdrawn from the last remaining outposts in the Plaine des Jarres.