

Laos Crossroad Shelled

VIENTIANE, April 28 (UPI) — Communist Shelling has prevented loyalist forces from reoccupying a strategic road junction in northern Laos despite the coalition government's order that Communist troops withdraw, military sources said Monday.

Saturday noon was the deadline for both sides to resume their original cease-fire positions near Sala Phou Koun, 90 miles north of Vientiane.

But the sources said that as of Monday the junction on Highway 13, linking Vientiane and the royal capital of Luang Prabang, was a no-man's land and closed to

traffic.

Loyalist forces tried Saturday to move back to the junction of the highway and a little-used dirt track leading eastward to the Communist-controlled Plain of Jars, but retreated under shell-fire, the sources said.

A mixed force of North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao troops was reported to be dug in near the junction. Loyalist forces were about two miles south of the junction.

Loyalist troops lost control of the junction after a week of sporadic fighting that started April 13, the Laotian new year. The cease-fire line, about 10 miles

east of the junction, had been disputed.

In other developments, King Savang Vatthana and Queen Khamphoui left Luang Prabang Monday aboard a Russian-piloted helicopter for the Communist Pathet Lao headquarters at Sam Neua near the North Vietnamese border.

The 67-year-old king's six-day visit will be his first to Communist-controlled territory since taking the throne in 1959. Such a trip was considered impossible until the formation of the coalition government last year. A number of Communist and loyalist Cabinet ministers accompanied him.