

5 IN LAOS CABINET REPORTEDLY QUIT

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Resignations Could Cripple
Rightists' Faction—U.S.
Embassy Is Stoned

NYTimes

By The Associated Press

VIENTIANE, Laos, May 9—

Five pro-American Cabinet ministers were reported to have resigned from Laos's coalition Government today.

The resignations were reported by highly placed sources amid mounting protests against United States policies, and following a demonstration by about 3,000 Laotian students and teachers protest rising prices and foreign economic influences. Some of them threw stones at the United States embassy.

There was no official confirmation of the resignations, but, according to the high sources, the five ministers included the powerful Defense Minister Sisouk na Champassak and Finance Minister Ngon Sanani-Kone; Khamphai Abphay, Minister of Public Health; Tiane-thone Chantharasy, Deputy Foreign Minister, and Houmphanh Saignasith, Deputy Minister of Public Works.

Threat to Rightist Faction

Their withdrawal from the coalition would virtually eliminate the rightist faction, which, along with neutralists and the Pathet Lao, makes up the Government under Premier Souvanna Phouma.

The reports of the resignations came after the demonstration by the students and teachers. Some students tried to haul down the embassy's American flag, but a marine guard seized the standard and Government policemen drove the students out of the compound.

The demonstration by the 3,000 began at the Victory

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Five Said to Quit Laos Cabinet After U.S. Embassy Is Stoned

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Monument, a few blocks from the embassy. Students carrying placards reading: "Yankee Go Home" and "Cut the Throats of the Rightists" paraded around the monument, chanting "C.I.A. go home."

On their way to a rally at the national stadium the demonstrators detoured to pass the embassy compound. However, Laotian and American guards could not get the gates shut, and several students climbed the fence.

The crowd paused, and excitement rose. A few stones were thrown and the attempt was made to lower the flag. But a student leader sitting on the fence, and Pathet Lao policemen, armed with rifles, shouted to the demonstrators to move on. They obeyed.

Laos has long been torn by conflict between the Communist-led Pathet Lao and the rightist faction. A cease-fire a year ago permitted formation of the coalition.

Many of Rich Are Gone

Scattered outbreaks of fighting have disrupted the cease-fire since, but Western military sources unanimously reject reports that the clashes are part of a Pathet Lao military offensive. The latest agreement to stop fighting was announced on Wednesday.

An order by Prince Souvanna Phouma forbidding rightist forces to fight Pathet Lao forces has led many Laotians to fear that their country is about to fall to Communism, as South Vietnam and Cambodia have.

Many wealthy Laotian, Chinese and Vietnamese have already left the country and others are following. Scores of automobiles have been lined

up at a ferry here, waiting to cross the Mekong River to Thailand; planes leaving Vientiane have been booked solid for days in advance.

Laotians applying for visas crowded the Thai, American and French embassies. Many shops in Vientiane's once-flourishing business district were shuttered.

Still, there was no apparent parallel with the panicked flight out of Saigon before its fall, and the United States Embassy denied that it was evacuating Americans from Laos. The embassy listed 895 Americans in Laos, all but 75 of whom were attached to the embassy, the others being businessmen and unemployed young people.

An embassy spokesman said that the number of Americans had dropped in recent months and would continue to decline, under a long-range cutback.

U.S. Remains Confident

WASHINGTON, May 9 (Reuters)—The United States sees little danger that the coalition Government of Laos will collapse despite recent difficulties there, the State Department said today.

The department spokesman Robert Anderson, voiced concern about the attack on the embassy in Vientiane today, but said there had been no damage or injuries. Asked whether the demonstration and recent strife between Communists and rightists represented a threat to the coalition, Mr. Anderson replied:

"We do not take such an extreme view as that the coalition is in danger of collapse. There are some difficulties but the fighting is not of major proportions at all."