



AP Wirephotos

SANFORD J. STONE

DANIEL P. STER

CHARLES R. PEARCY

Americans went willingly into house arrest after their release

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Central Laos

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3 Americans Released

Vientiane

Student demonstrators in the central Laotian town of Savannakhet yesterday freed three American officials they had seized hostage. But they kept control of U.S. government offices

seized in an anti-American rampage, U.S. sources said.

The sources said the three Americans — including Sanford J. Stone, the senior U.S. official in central Laos — reported by phone they were in good health and spirits.

The demonstrators had them return to their homes under house arrest pending arrival of coalition government officials to negotiate their demands.

A Laotian government spokesman yesterday apologized for the anti-American

outbreak, saying "the government is very sorry about the incident."

The sources said the demonstrators are still apparently in control of U.S. government buildings in Savannakhet, a Mekong river community of about 30,000 persons.

U.S. sources said Stone and the other two Americans, who had been held over night in the provincial governor's residence, agreed to remain in their homes until the Laotian government reaches agreement with demonstrators on their demands for the ouster of the U.S. Agency for International Development mission and the replacement of a number of Laotian government officials they accuse of being corrupt and rightwing.

Stone is from Cleveland. The other two Americans are Charles R. Percy, 63, of Salem, W. Va., an administrative officer, and Daniel P. Ster, 28, of Columbus, Ind., an economist.

Ouday Souvannouvong, spokesman for the coalition cabinet, said the Pathet Lao and non-Communist ministers who remain after last weekend's collapse of pro-American elements in the government had not yet made any decision about a future American presence.

But a Pathet Lao spokesman for the Joint Peace-Keeping Commission told newsmen that the group unanimously recommended yesterday abolition of the U.S. AID mission. The commission's recommendation will go to the cabinet, possibly for consideration next week.

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