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Laotians Said To Threaten 3 Americans

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VIENTIANE, May 15 (AP) —Student demonstrators have threatened to kill three American hostages unless the Laotian coalition government, increasingly dominated by the Communists, removes alleged corrupt officials and right-wing reactionaries from power, diplomatic sources said Thursday.

Government officials flew to Savannakhet in southern Laos to try to negotiate the release of the Americans, who were seized there Wednesday.

A U.S. embassy source said that although the students are not likely to carry out their death threats they are being taken seriously.

The State Department in Washington said it has received word that the Laotian government plans to intercede on behalf of the Americans. "At last official report, they're confined to their homes, they're safe," a State Department spokesman said.

The U.S. embassy identified the Americans as Sanford J. Stone, 58, of Cleveland, Ohio, area coordinator of the Agency for International Development; Daniel P. Ster, 28, of Columbus, Ind., an economic affairs officer; and Charles R. Pearcy, 63, of Salem, W. Va., a property officer.

The Laotian coalition government, whose leading rightist ministers quit last week, has apologized to the United States for the seizure of the men, which followed anti-American demonstrations in Savannakhet and Luang Prabang, the royal capital.

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Laotian Captors Said To Threaten Hostages

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The students demanded the removal of provincial officials they consider corrupt and the ouster of "right-wing" reactionaries from the central government.

They also demanded the closure of AID establishments, the removal of Prince Boon Oum Na Champassak, the third-ranking Laotian of royal blood after the king and the crown prince.

Reliable sources said the students also want Savannakhet and Pakse, large towns on the Mekong River, neutralized. Under a 1973 cease-fire agreement, the two towns were regarded as rightist enclaves and the student demand in effect would give them a Pathet Lao presence.

Premier Souvanna Phoma's Cabinet met and accepted the resignations of the leading rightist ministers and army commanders who fled the country last week because of growing Communist pressure.

A spokesman said the Cabinet decided that the neutralist premier would take over the portfolios of the ministers who resigned. He said the Cabinet also decided that the coalition set up by the 1973 peace agreement - six rightist ministers, six from the pro-Communist Pathet Lao and two neutralists - would be maintained. Observers concluded that the vacancies would be filled by rightists of no particular strength who would not oppose the Communists.

The spokesman said the military situation was calm throughout the country.

The mixed Laotian commission set up to administer



By Joseph P. Mastrangelo
—The Washington Post

the 1973 peace agreement voted Wednesday to urge the Cabinet to insist on the withdrawal of U.S. officials supervising American aid programs, Reuter reported. The commission said U.S. aid should go direct to the government which would handle its administration.)

An American who headed the AID operation in Luang Prabang, which was sacked Wednesday by a crowd of students, said the joint Pathet Lao-Vientiane government security force had made no effort to protect the AID offices or the provincial headquarters.

Jack Huxable, 37, of Richfield Springs, N.Y., AID area coordinator in Luang Prabang, said: "If either side had wanted to maintain security they could have done it. The lack of protection was outrageous."

Huxable said the students, who numbered about 250, had smashed windows, typewriters and office equipment in the Luang Prabang compound. He said they apparently were unarmed.