

WXPost
Pathet Lao
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Said to Fire
At Refugees

From News Dispatches

VIENTIANE, May 30—Communist-led Pathet Lao troops fired on Meo hill tribesmen fleeing their homes in northern Laos, killing at least five and wounding dozens more, reliable sources reported today.

United Press International said the Pathet Lao soldiers fired on a group of several hundred Meo who refused to obey an order to return to their homes. The Meo refugees are followers of Gen. Vang Pao, who was allied with the Central Intelligence Agency in fighting the Pathet Lao from the huge CIA base at Long Cheng.

Lane Pathammavong, a spokesman for the rightist delegation to the joint Laotian peace-keeping commission, reported that there had been clashes between Pathet Lao troops and Meo tribesmen streaming by the thousands toward Vientiane. Lane said "many Meo have been killed" in an area about 55 miles north of here.

A UPI photographer on the scene reported that Pathet Lao troops were marching in groups of tribesmen at gunpoint back toward their homes in the hills.

One of the tribesmen told the photographer, "I want to stay with my father, Vang Pao." The general and large numbers of his relatives and supporters fled to Thailand when the Pathet Lao began to gain power within the coalition government.

(Agence France-Presse reported from Bangkok that at least 200 Meo tribesmen had entered Thailand from the Long Cheng area during the

past two days.)

Leaders of the National Federation of Students, the leftist-oriented group that played a key role in the protests that brought to an end the U.S. AID program here, said Meo charges of repression by the Pathet Lao had some justification. They said they were sending a delegation to the area to investigate.

One Meo community leader here said 68,000 of the approximately 250,000 tribesmen in the north wanted to leave.

Meanwhile, the Pathet Lao continued the slow expansion of its influence with strikes and protests at official buildings. Today's targets were the meteorological office near the airport and the provincial governor's office, where employees are demanding the dismissal of four officials who are sympathetic to the rightist side of the coalition government.

The American evacuation continued with U.S. transport planes making three flights into Vientiane to take out the belongings of U.S. citizens evacuated earlier.

Only 162 U.S. government employees remain in Laos, and an embassy spokesman said the State Department is pressing for further reductions.

There have been no anti-American demonstrations here since Tuesday, when an agreement was signed to end the Agency for International Development's program here.

Laotian officials allowed most of the American property to be loaded aboard the plane without difficulty, but police stopped the loading of one large plywood crate and demanded to inspect it. U.S. embassy officials refused, citing diplomatic immunity.

The Pathet Lao and student demonstrators allied with them have said that large objects such as air conditioners and cars bought with AID money must be left behind, while personal belongings of individual Americans may be shipped out.