

U.S. Woman Held In Laos Is Facing 'Political' Charges

NYTimes JUN 1-1 1975

VIENTIANE, Laos, June 10 (UPI)—United States officials sought clarification from the Laotian government today of the case of an American woman held by the police on charges described as "political."

Laotian sources said the woman, identified as Rosemary Conway, 35 years old, of San Jose, Calif., was arrested in connection with a plan to fly T28 fighter-bombers, supplied to non-Communist forces under the United States military aid program, out of the country.

American Embassy officials said, however, that she was being held on unspecified "political" charges. They said they had asked the Laotian Foreign Ministry for clarification of the charges.

United States officials said Miss Conway had formerly been a teacher at a school in Vientiane but had since moved to Thailand and returned here on a tourist visa last week.

They said an embassy representative was originally told she would be expelled from the country last Saturday. Instead she was held through the weekend at the headquarters of the point police, which includes representatives of the pro-Communist Pathet Lao.

The Communist-dominated coalition Government, meanwhile, ordered the disarming of local defense forces and civil servants and declared a clean-up campaign in the capital to eliminate prostitution, close bars and stamp out gambling.

In orders published in the official press agency, the Government said weapons would be returned in at arsenals. All brothels in Vientiane would be shut and gambling banned, Lao Presse said.

The disarmament order was issued by the army commander, Lieut. Gen. Bounpone Makthepharak, under orders of acting Defense Minister Kham Ouane Bouppha, the agency said.