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Laos Bars

Exit by U.S. Aide

VIENTIANE, June 19 (UPI)

—Communist-controlled police today prevented the departure of an official of the U.S. AID program that is being phased out in Laos.

At the same time, French officials disclosed drastic cutbacks in their military and diplomatic missions in Laos.

Informed American sources said Pathet Lao-controlled police stopped Michael Rogal, finance officer for the U.S. Agency for International Development, from boarding a flight to Bangkok at Vientiane airport.

Communists began tightening their control in Laos last month after Communist victories in Cambodia and Vietnam. Leftists occupied the AID compound, leaving only after the United States agreed to turn the facilities over to Laos by June 30 and to meet other demands, including extra severance pay to the 2,700 Laotian employees.

The sources said the action against Rogal was taken at the request of dissident Laotian employees. Rogal had been dealing with severance payments, and the sources said the protest committee's request to the police asserted that he was "still involved in the problems of USAID which have not been solved."

The sources said it was not known whether the dissident employees were seeking to reopen the severance question, which has already seen the United States agree to employee demands for an extra three months' pay.

They said Rogal's case was taken up with Foreign Ministry officials who promised a reply Friday.

French officials, meanwhile, reported the French military mission was being reduced from about 100 men to around 50 at least temporarily and that about 60 civilian advisers in various departments of the Laotian government were departing this week for "annual leave" in France.

About 770 U.S. mission employees and their dependents have left since last month's anti-American demonstrations and fewer than 80 officials and no dependents now remain in Laos.

U.S. officials said there were also believed to be about 67 nongovernmental Americans in Laos.