

# REDS IN CONTROL, LAOTIANS BELIEVE

NYTimes

3 Moderate Leftists Step  
Aside for Younger Men  
From Rebel Stronghold  
JUL 8 1975

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Special to The New York Times

VIENTIANE, Laos, July 6—

The Pathet Lao take-over of this country, and with it the completion of the Communist victory in Indochina, is now accepted as an accomplished fact by most Laotians and foreign observers.

Having eliminated from positions of real influence the men of the non-Communist, Vientiane side in Government and the army, the Pathet Lao leadership in Samneua, its headquarters in northern Laos near the North Vietnamese border, appears to even be removing the senior men who served their side in the days of coalition.

Three ministers were officially reported last week to be ill and in need of long rest. They are Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Phoumi Vongvichit, Economy Minister Sot Petrasy and Information Minister Souk Vongsay. They were considered to be leaders of the most moderate and conciliatory wing of the Pathet Lao.

## Titles Retained

Mr. Sot said in an interview that their rest would be of indefinite duration. The absences will be long enough, he said, to require naming "minister delegates" to run the ministries in their stead. If the Pathet Lao did not do so, he said, the ministries would be run by the deputy ministers, who are from the "Vientiane side."

The "minister delegates," whose names were disclosed by a high Government source, are all younger men with a reputation for ideological firmness. They are Phoune Sipraseuth at the Foreign Ministry, Khamphai Bouphe at the Economy Ministry, and Thao Ma at the Information Ministry.

Because the history of the Laotian revolution has been

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marked by a greater degree of coexistence between the opposing sides, avoiding the complete rupture that took place in Vietnam and Cambodia, there have been two kinds of revolutionaries: One kind that participated in Vientiane coalition governments and was on good personal terms with the non-Communists and another that remained in Samneua and North Vietnam.

The three ministers going on indefinite leaves represent an older group, men of bourgeois background or, in the case of Mr. Souk, aristocratic. Those who are coming to replace them are younger men, less rooted in French colonial society and the tranquil life of Vientiane than in jungle war and the ideological education of Hanoi, Peking or Moscow.

They are taken here to represent the beginning of a development feared by many who

hoped that coalition government could survive under the neutralist premiership of Prince Souvanra Phouma and his half-brother, Prince Souphanouvong of the Pathet Lao. This development is the coming to Vientiane of the men of Samneua.

The two princes remain in their positions, but the Premier is said by close associates to have little power left except the occasional blunting of Pathet Lao measures or protecting the jobs of some of his faithful followers. But even among them there are those who doubt that the Premier's protection can last much longer and are preparing standby departure plans.

"He can try to dampen their ardor," a Cabinet official said of the Premier's power.

As for Prince Souphanouvong, his power has long been in providing a moderate image for the Laotian Communist movement, here and abroad. Real power in the Pathet Lao is be-

lieved to be concentrated in the hands of two men who have not yet come from Samneua.

They are Kaysone Phomvihane, secretary general, and Neuhak Phoumsavan, chairman of the central committee. The announcement of the ministerial changes followed a meeting unusually long of the central committee last month, which lasted two weeks.

Except for the comparative ease of fleeing the country, Laos is increasingly taking on the aspect of other Communist nations. The press and radio in Vientiane are indistinguishable from those of the "liberated" zone. Pathet Lao troops far in excess of the approximately 2,200 allowed under the Vientiane accord are seen about the capital.

What remains of the "Vientiane side" army has been largely disarmed. Officers and Government officials are subjected to courses of "political re-education" accompanied by

public self-criticism for their service in the old regime.

Americans here hesitate to visit Laotian friends because they fear that such contacts are bad for Laotians. Some Laotians visit their foreign friends' houses after dark, through back entrances. Voices are lowered in public places when politics are discussed, and officials and journalists sometimes apologize sheepishly for having to say publicly things they know are not true.

## Official Departs

VIENTIANE, July 7 (AP)—Phoumi Vongvichit left the country today and two other Pathet Lao leaders were scheduled to leave Vientiane shortly. Mr. Phoumi, who left with his wife, said that he was leaving for Hanoi and Peking for medical treatment.

Souk Vongsak also is to go abroad for medical treatment while Sot Petrasy is planning to take a vacation in the Pathet Lao zone.

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