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American Freed by Laotians

From News Dispatches

The Communist-dominated government of Laos yesterday freed Rosemary Conway, a former English teacher in Vientiane, who had been held for more than two months under suspicion of spying.

The government described the release as a "goodwill gesture" toward the United States.

Miss Conway, 37, of Chicago and Las Vegas, was not immediately available for comment on her detention. She was to leave today for Thailand.

A note from the Laotian Foreign Ministry to the U.S. embassy said she had confessed to "subversion, espionage, endangering the internal and external security of Laos, inciting to desertion abroad of Laotian air force officers with their planes and attempting to spread division among the Lao army and create disorder."

Shortly before her arrest Miss Conway reputedly was seen in the company of a right-wing Laos air force officer.

The U.S. embassy said following receipt of the Laotian note that "whatever statements Miss Conway signed while being detained without formal charges, she is not an agent of the U.S. government."

Miss Conway also denied being an agent when she spoke to reporters through a jail window shortly after her arrest in the first week of June.

U.S. officials at the time linked her detention with what they said was a pattern of officially sanctioned anti-American actions growing out of the ascendancy of the Communist Pathet Lao in the government. The government never did file formal charges against her and denied several requests that a U.S. official be permitted to visit her in jail.

The official Lao news agency said yesterday that police had begun a campaign to

purge Vientiane of CIA agents.

It said the campaign was also aimed at agents of anti-government propaganda and those who incite Laotians to emigrate.

Meanwhile, Thailand said yesterday that it had ordered its ambassador in Laos to deliver a "final protest" against last week's arrest of two Thai military attaches who are being held without charges.

"This is our final protest and if there is no positive reply from the Laotian government, our ambassador will be immediately recalled," a Foreign Ministry spokesman said.

The spokesman went on to say, however, "We believe that Thai-Lao relations will continue since the two countries have to live together."

In Saigon, the first privately run daily newspaper to appear since the Communist victory April put out its first edition Sunday. It is called Tin Sang (Morning News).

Its director—Ngo Cong Duc, a former legislator and outspoken critic of the defeated government of President Thieu—went into voluntary exile in 1971.

The paper's first editorial criticized the U.S. administration insisting that North and South Vietnamese applications for U.N. membership be conditional of admission of South Korea.

South Vietnam's Foreign Minister, Mrs. Nguyen Thi Binh, has left Saigon for the conference of nonaligned countries' foreign ministers in Lima Aug. 25 to 29, the official Liberation Radio reported.

Cambodia's Radio Phnom Penh said that about 70 factories in that country had resumed production after being idle for three months.

An underground radio broadcasting from Cambodia claimed yesterday that the clandestine Khmer Liberation Movement—believed to consist of supporters of former President Lon Nol—recently attacked a unit of the ruling Khmer Rouge government.

The broadcast, monitored in Bangkok, said the attack took place on the road between Siem Reap and Sisophon. The radio claimed that communications between the two towns had been cut because of the attack.