

LAOTIAN COALITION SEEN NEAR AN END

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Prime Minister Is Reported
to Have Left Capital as
Leftists Stage Rallies

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VIENTIANE, Laos, Dec. 1 (Reuters)—The neutralist Prime Minister, Prince Souvanna Phouma, was reported to have left Vientiane in semiretirement as more rallies were held demanding the end of the coalition Cabinet in preparation for full rule by the Communist-led Pathet Lao.

The rallies have been going on since Friday amid increasing reports that the end of the coalition was near. Prince Souvanna Phouma reportedly left for Luang Prabang, the royal capital, 130 miles northwest of here.

Other prominent Laotians have fled to neighboring Thailand. The latest of these is Prince Mangkala Manivong, a brother of King Savang Vatthana. The Prince crossed into Thailand yesterday after the Pathet Lao called for a national conference at which rightists would be purged from the Government.

A decision to dissolve the Government was reportedly made last week at a meeting of the Cabinet and the Joint Political Council held at Viengsay, the pro-Communist headquarters in northeastern Laos. The council, a policy-making body headed by the Pathet Lao leader, Prince Souphanouvong, the Prime Minister's half brother, dates from the 1973 accords that ended more than a decade of civil war in Laos.

Dissolution of Council Asked

Speakers at today's rallies called as well for the dissolution of the Council to make way for an administrative system free of all vestiges of rightist influence. (Agence France-Presse reported from Vientiane that thousands of demonstrators also demanded the abdication of the King, and the dis-

patch quoted a Pathet Lao source as having said that a transition government would be formed shortly.]

The present coalition Cabinet, which is 19 months old, was originally designed to give equal representation to the Pathet Lao and the Vientiane rightists elements. But this year three of the rightist ministers resigned after what the Pathet Lao called an unsuccessful right-wing coup attempt.

Men acceptable to the Pathet Lao were then brought into the Cabinet, tipping the balance overwhelmingly in favor of the pro-Communist elements.

The Pathet Lao political organization also moved into the countryside to take control of provinces and towns that had been under rightist administration.

In apparent preparation for moves to oust the remnants of the rightists, local elections were held throughout Laos recently in which only persons with what the Pathet Lao described as revolutionary or progressive records were allowed to run. Reports circulated today that all those elected would meet soon in a general assembly to request the establishment of a transition government.

General elections are due to be held next April 4.

Refugees a Problem for Thais

BANGKOK, Thailand, Dec. 1 (Reuters)—The arrival of prominent Laotians here has caused embarrassment for Prime Minister Kukrit Pramoj amid growing tensions between Thailand and Laos.

Mr. Kukrit said today that Thailand did not want to accept former high-ranking Laotian rightists but would have to provide some facilities for Prince Mangkala Manivong, since he was a close relative of the Laotian King.

A son of Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma, Prince Panya Phouma, fled to Thailand last week by swimming across the Mekong River.

The Laotian police chief and another senior official associated with the rightists in Vientiane also crossed the Mekong to Thailand last week to join more than 50,000 Laotians who have sought refuge since the Pathet Lao began their take-over last May.